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To: Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
From: Martha Sonato, Oregon Law Center
Re: Support for SB 5511
Date: February 18, 2025

Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development,

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) provides free civil legal services to low-income Oregonians. We help clients navigate divisions within the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS), particularly the Workers' Compensation Division, the Ombuds for Oregon Workers, and Oregon OSHA. We support SB 5511 to ensure these divisions receive adequate funding.

Worker Protections
Strong worker protections are critical for the communities we serve, including immigrant and low-wage workers in high-risk industries like construction and agriculture. DCBS programs help workers report unsafe conditions, access benefits, and challenge unfair treatment.

Workers' Compensation and Ombuds for Oregon Workers
Our clients rely on the Workers' Compensation system after workplace injuries. The Ombuds for Oregon Workers plays a key role in helping workers understand their rights, protections, benefits, and responsibilities related to workplace safety, health regulations, and workers' compensation.

Oregon OSHA
We support investments in OSHA's Agricultural Labor Housing Compliance and Outreach program. The Oregon Law Center has been actively involved in Agricultural Labor Housing Rulemaking since discussions began in 2018. The process culminated with final permanent rules in January 2025. Ensuring compliance with the new OR-OSHA standards is essential. Additional funding and staff to survey labor housing and expand outreach will help protect agricultural workers and help employers comply with the new rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to share how DCBS's work impacts our client communities.

Sincerely,
Martha Sonato
Oregon Law Center

The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.