



121 SW Salmon St,
Portland, OR 97204

February 3, 2025

House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards
Oregon Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer, Vice Chair Muñoz, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Clean Energy Workforce Coalition, I am pleased to write in support of HB 2972. In 2023, the Oregon Clean Energy Workforce Coalition was established to support building the workforce continuum needed to support Oregon's energy transition with a goal of focusing on those who have been underrepresented, lacked access, and/or may otherwise not have been exposed to the breadth of jobs available within the clean energy sector. Today, we have nearly 100 organizations across the state dedicated to this work including governments (local, state, Tribal), workforce boards, education providers, community based organizations, industry, and labor unions who are working collectively together to achieve our mission of building the workforce of the future.

At the end of 2023, the Coalition was fortunate to be selected by the US Department of Labor grant to support our work. A critical component was funding the Union Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training (U-PACT) program at Coffee Creek and expanding that program to two additional correctional facilities in the second and third years. The 12-week program offers training in three construction trades that are critical to the clean energy sector – ironworkers, cement masons, and bricklayers. Upon graduation and release, the graduates either have preferred entry or direct entry into the pre-apprenticeship program of one of the three participating crafts. The work that U-PACT has done over the last year has been nothing short of amazing. The participants are hardworking, passionate about the crafts they are learning, and excited about their employment prospects upon release. We have seen firsthand the transformational impact of having vocational training within the correctional system and the value that it provides both to those who are receiving it and their future employers.

Those who are reentering society upon release from the justice system experience a multitude of barriers. HB 2972 is a critical component in reducing one of the most significant barriers - employment. In 2016, the Rand Corporation, a nonpartisan research organization, published a report noting that adults in custody "who participate in any kind of educational program behind bars are up to 43 percent less likely to return to prison." An investment of \$3 million will allow Worksource reentry services to be available across all of the correctional facilities in the state. This program is a win/win for Oregon, our economic prosperity, and the future workforce of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooke Brownlee".

Brooke Brownlee
Executive Director

