



To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

Re: HB 3669

From: East Cascades Works, local workforce development board serving Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Wheeler, Gilliam, Jefferson, Crook, Deschutes, Klamath and Lake counties

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for considering HB3669, a crucial funding source supporting Oregon's underfunded and increasingly necessary public workforce system, WorkSource Oregon (WSO). WSO is a vehicle that enables tens of thousands of Oregonians to skill up and get back to work.

The initial investment in *Prosperity 10,000* through Future Ready Oregon legislation was approximately 16% of the overall funding, yet we have by far trained and supported more people in getting back to work than any other Future Ready investment. To date, we have served 6,155 people, 74% of whom obtained employment with an average wage of over \$21/hour. Furthermore, the public workforce system in Oregon is dangerously reliant on uncertain and declining Federal investments. As more Federal workers are laid off, we need to have a system to support their re-employment. In a state that relies so heavily on income tax to support the General fund, this workforce investment will yield huge returns!

Our Community College (KCC, CGCC and COCC), Economic Development (KCEDA, EDCO and MCEDD) and private sector employer partners all fully support this request. This funding will help drive a thriving economy where employers have the skilled talent, they need and Oregonians have access to living wage employment.

In these uncertain times of Federal investments, please take decisive action to support our state's workforce system. Do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Ficht", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Heather Ficht, Executive Director

[heather@ecworks.org](mailto:heather@ecworks.org)

**EAST CASCADES WORKS**

1001 SW Disk Dr., Suite 250, Bend, OR 97702

Phone: 541-604-6382

[www.eastcascadesworks.org](http://www.eastcascadesworks.org)

