

March 12, 2025

TO: Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

FR: Duke Shepard, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: OBI Supports HB 3246 -3

Chair Nguyen, vice chairs, and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Duke Shepard, and I am a senior policy director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI). OBI is a statewide association representing businesses across a wide variety of industries from all 36 of Oregon's counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 75% of which are small businesses, employ over 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private-sector businesses drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

OBI is happy to support House Bill 3246 in the -3-amendment form. Every business OBI works with wants to reduce or eliminate waste, find more cost-effective and efficient material inputs, and lower energy and other utility uses and costs. Industrial symbiosis is a critical strategy for achieving these goals. In simple terms, industrial symbiosis involves businesses in different sectors working together to exchange resources such as materials, energy, water, and by-products that would otherwise be considered waste. This approach creates a circular flow of resources, turning waste from one business into a valuable input for another, reducing environmental impact while improving overall economic efficiency.

Many OBI members, particularly in manufacturing, agriculture, and food processing, recognize industrial symbiosis as just the way they do business – it hasn't really had a formalized name before. It's just good business. Businesses always seek opportunities to reduce costs and improve efficiency, and industrial symbiosis is simply an extension of that practice. There are many more businesses across sectors that may have the ability to grow through existing and emerging technologies and the markets and partnerships that this bill aims to facilitate. By formalizing industrial symbiosis, this bill offers a framework for these businesses to collaborate and thrive, fostering both environmental sustainability and economic growth.

This bill hits a sweet spot between an environmentally oriented policy aim and economic opportunity. It enables businesses to innovate and collaborate without burdening them with excessive regulation. The focus on market-driven solutions rather than government mandates will allow businesses to leverage their creativity to solve problems and create new opportunities for growth.

I want to thank Representatives Helm, Levy, Osborne, Lively and the many co-sponsors of this bill for focusing on private sector creativity, innovation, and opportunity. It is encouraging to see this bill, specifically in the form of the -3 amendment, rather than an agency-led regulatory approach. I also want to thank Rep. Helm and the bill's advocates for working with us to shape some small portions of the -3 amendment to bring OBI to a position of support. This collaborative approach reflects the spirit of industrial symbiosis and sets a positive example for future policies.