



March 17, 2025

Representative David Gomberg  
Senator Aaron Woods  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97031

**RE: Port of Portland Testimony in Support of Funding for the University Innovation Research Fund**

Dear Co-Chair Gomberg, Co-Chair Woods, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Port of Portland and our partners in the Oregon Mass Timber Coalition (OMTC), we strongly support continued investment in the University Innovation Research Fund (UIRF), a vital resource that enhances Oregon's competitiveness for federal research grants and drives economic development. The UIRF helped secure a \$41.4 million U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant for the OMTC by providing \$5.9 million to support projects at the University of Oregon (UO) and Oregon State University (OSU). These UIRF funds were essential in securing the grant and advancing Oregon's mass timber industry.

This funding is transforming Oregon's economy by advancing research, driving private investment, and creating high-wage jobs. It supports university-led research on mass timber housing, including UO's Acoustic Research Laboratory and OSU's Oregon Fire Testing Facility. It also supports the development of a mass timber manufacturing facility for modular housing at the Port's Mass Timber and Housing Innovation Campus, along with prototype housing development and forest restoration in the Willamette National Forest. This ecosystem has already drawn private investment, with TimberLab citing regional research assets as key in establishing its \$120 million cross-laminated timber facility in Millersburg.

UIRF has leveraged over \$45 million in federal awards—nearly a six-fold return on investment—positioning Oregon as a leader in innovation and research. Oregon universities have \$39 million in approved potential matches, including three NSF Regional Innovation Engine Development awards, with a \$10 million request by each of UO, OSU, and PSU for NSF proposals. If awarded, these projects could bring up to \$537 million in federal funding, further amplifying Oregon's return on investment.

Continued UIRF funding is essential to sustaining this momentum. Without it, Oregon risks losing competitive federal funding to other states. The UIRF has already driven transformative projects like the OMTC's work, which is advancing mass timber innovation, expanding economic opportunities, and creating high-wage jobs. Further investment in this proven program will strengthen Oregon's economy and maximize these opportunities. We urge your continued support to build on this success.

Sincerely,

*Ken Anderton*

Ken Anderton  
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Port of Portland