



March 26, 2025

**Re: Testimony in support of HB 2688**

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee:

My name is Robert Camarillo, and I am the Executive Secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 2688.

Our council is a state-wide umbrella organization comprised of 31 affiliated member Unions and 6 Regional Councils. I'm honored to speak to you today on behalf of the 10s of thousands of skilled trades workers that we represent across all of Oregon.

Currently, workers in Oregon who perform construction/fabrication work offsite, producing items specifically for public works projects, are not subject to Oregon's Prevailing Wage Law. Excluding offsite fabrication sites from the list of covered work sites subject to PWR puts Oregon workers at a competitive disadvantage with the surrounding states.

We aren't talking about standard products that you find for sale at our big box hardware stores or on the so-called general market. These items are intended for on-site installation by skilled trades and are normally part of the same contract, paid for all or in-part by the same public funds as the project and are considered "construction" within the scope of the term "construction services."

These are items being produced or fabricated in accordance with the project plans and specifications of the project engineers or on the shop drawings specifically for publicly funded projects, that differ from a standard, generic item found on the general market. Even when generic items are produced specially for a publicly funded project and modified to meet the specific requirements of that project, they have been clearly fabricated or produced specifically for the project and therefore should be subject to PW.

Prevailing Wages serve a dual purpose: they ensure that workers are compensated fairly while also preventing contractors from undercutting each other by paying lower wages or exploiting workers. This is particularly important in all facets of the

construction industry, where pay discrepancies often lead to a race to the bottom, driving wages down and potentially compromising the quality of work, safety, and creating an uneven playing field where good companies must compete against those that pay lower wages.

Studies show that prevailing wage rate laws help boost investments in registered apprenticeship training programs, increase jobsite safety and worker productivity. This investment in Oregon's workforce will pay dividends for years to come, ensuring that our state's construction industry remains a source of opportunity and prosperity for all.

Our member Unions are leaders in the nation - establishing gold-standard apprenticeship programs that continue to advance quality workmanship and high performing trades workers. However, we often see long waiting lists to get into our programs as there are not enough jobs or work hours available to justify expanding the program. There must be commitment on the part of project owners and contractors to connect apprentices with consistent work opportunities to obtain the hours required to complete their training and, in turn, advance in their careers.

House Bill 2688 would help to create more opportunities to get more apprentices to get into a career where they can learn in a safer environment and become familiar with certain aspects of the work. Additionally, as we see the increased need for skilled construction workers across our state, it has never been more important that we maintain high standards in both prevailing wages and laws - and why the Building Trades Unions strongly supports payment of Prevailing Wages for performing this work.

In conclusion, the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council strongly urges your support HB 2688. Oregon's Building Trades members that we represent, the apprentices who earn while they learn, and future apprentices stand ready to proudly work on all construction scopes of public works projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



**Executive Secretary:** Robert Camarillo

**Political & Special Projects Coordinator:** Hayley Watson

## **Affiliated Unions**

1. Boilermakers Local 242	17. OR & S. Idaho District Council of Laborers
2. Bricklayers Local 1	18. Floor Coverers Local 1236
3. Cement Masons Local 555	19. Office & Professional Employees Local 11
4. Heat and Frost Insulators Local 36	20. Operating Engineers Local 701
5. Drywall Finishers Local 101	21. Painters & Drywall Finishers Local 10
6. IBEW Local 48	22. Painters District Council No. 5
7. IBEW Local 112	23. Plasterers Local 82
8. IBEW Local 280	24. Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 290
9. IBEW Local 659	25. Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 598
10. IBEW Local 932	26. Roofers Local 49
11. Elevator Constructors Local 23	27. Sheet Metal Workers Local 16
12. Glaziers Local 740	28. Sheet Metal Workers Local 55
13. Ironworkers Local 29	29. Sprinkler Fitters UA Local 669
14. Ironworkers Shop Local 516	30. Teamsters Local 162
15. Ironworkers District Council	31. Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37
16. Laborers Local 737	

## **Regional Councils:**

- Central Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council
- Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council
- Lane, Coos, Curry, Douglas Building Trades Council
- Pendleton Building and Construction Trades Council
- Salem Building and Construction Trades Council
- Southern Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council