



March 12, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for SB 602

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bohnam and Committee Members,

I am the Executive Director of East Cascades Works (EC Works), the local workforce development board appointed by the Governor to serve the 10 counties east of the Cascade Mountain Range in Oregon. We serve at the pleasure of Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Wheeler, Gilliam, Deschutes, Jefferson, Lake and Klamath counties.

We are a non-profit organization and serve as the backbone for workforce development across our region and as such we receive contracts and grants from various state agencies including Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Oregon Department of Education, Youth Development Division, and Business Oregon to name a few.

I have personally worked in the non-profit sector in Oregon since 1997. In that time I have worked with myriad state agencies through procurements of contracts and grants. In that time it has become abundantly clear that procurement in this state is broken and when the opportunity to serve on the Task Force on Modernizing Grant Funding and Contracting in Oregon became available I immediately applied.

I served on the Task Force with brilliant and dedicated non-profit leaders and state agency staff from a wide variety of geographic and sectors. Collectively we committed 100's of hours to analyzing the core issues and developing thoughtful and impactful solutions to ensure that what the legislature allocates funds to support get granted or contracted in a timely and economically responsible way. I am most supportive of recommendations around uniform application processes and reporting requirements commensurate with funding level. That can at times cost more than service delivery.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage this committee to support SB 602 as the recommendations within are those of the hardworking cross sector committee, including the talented state staff who manage procurement, grant making and contracting across many agencies in Oregon.

EAST CASCADES WORKS

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Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or clarifications. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Ficht', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Heather Ficht

Executive Director

heather@ecworks.org

541-904-5070

