

TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR



April 18, 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez
Co-Vice-Chairs Senator Fred Girod, Representatives David Gomberg and Greg Smith
and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for Governor Kotek's 2025-2027 Recommended Budget

Dear Co-Chairs, Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith, and
Members of the Committee:

The Racial Justice Council advises the Governor and provides communities that have been historically excluded from decision-making tables with more meaningful access to and a voice in the policy making that directly impacts the lives of Oregonians of color. This advice includes the Governor's Recommended Budget.

We, the Racial Justice Council, are writing to express strong support for Governor Kotek's 2025 – 2027 Recommended Budget. **The Council urges you, as stewards of the state's resources, to be brave and courageous in ensuring we maintain—at a minimum—our current level of public services.** The decisions made by this committee will have direct and lasting impacts on the lives of Oregonians across every region of our state.

We are at a critical juncture. While progress has been made in stabilizing our economy since the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for essential services—from housing and education to economic support and behavioral health—remains high. Small businesses are the backbone of the Oregon economy, and in a time of shrinking federal resources, we need to ensure our small businesses not only survive but thrive. Disinvesting now would unravel much of the progress established and collectively achieved. Further, it would also lead to unintended and costly consequences:

- The weakening of our already weak labor market and workforce capacity, and harming of our state competitiveness;
- Widening disparities, between urban, suburban and rural communities, especially impacting frontline communities of color forced to shoulder the burden of disinvestment of public funding without further commitments; and
- A deepening sense of disconnection between government and the people we serve.

Your leadership in preserving and strengthening the state's service infrastructure is essential. We ask that you resist pressure to scale back or defer critical investments that Oregon families and

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communities rely on daily. *Every dollar cut now will cost us exponentially more in social, economic, and human terms in the future.*

Additionally, we urge this committee to work closely with Oregon's federal delegation to advocate for releasing and deploying federal funds that were promised under the previous administration. These resources were designated for transformative infrastructure, economic development, and resilience-building initiatives that our communities were counting on. We cannot afford to leave those dollars on the table.

Oregonians and people across the entire nation are all watching and hopeful that bipartisan leadership, both in the legislative and the executive branches, will rise to the moment and align together for bold action in a time of uncertainty. The Governor's Recommended Budget represents a pathway forward that protects vital services, positions us for long-term growth, and honors our shared values.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your services to the people of Oregon.

On Behalf of the Racial Justice Council,

Jan Mason, Racial Justice Council Member

Cynthia Richardson, Racial Justice Council Member

James Alan Parker, Racial Justice Council Member