



## **Testimony in Opposition to SB 916**

**Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards**

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rusty Rexus, and I'm 3<sup>rd</sup> generation owner and Co-President of Rexus, a family-owned and operated company based in Eugene, Oregon, that provides landscape materials, compost products, erosion control solutions, and full-service landscape construction and maintenance. We also have a small manufacturing company called Conveyor Application Systems. We've been serving Oregon communities since 1937, growing into a business that now employs +/-300 people across multiple locations, including our headquarters in Eugene and operations in Portland and Central Oregon.

The core of our work is hands-on and labor-intensive. Whether it's manufacturing and delivering product, operating equipment, or completing contracted landscaping projects, we rely every day on a stable and dependable workforce to serve our customers and complete critical infrastructure and land management work on time.

I'm submitting testimony today in opposition to SB 916 because this bill would directly and unnecessarily increase costs for employers like us, while undermining the purpose of Oregon's unemployment insurance system.

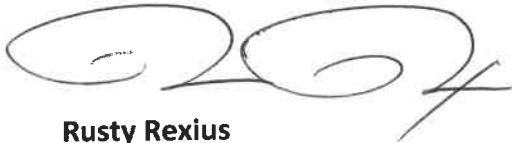
Our company already pays significant unemployment taxes under one of the most expensive UI systems in the country. That's not a complaint — we understand that the UI fund is an essential tool to help workers and keep the economy afloat during downturns. But the system was designed for people who are out of work through no fault of their own. SB 916 would change that by allowing benefits for individuals who have made the choice to go on strike. This shift goes against the intent of the program and stretches the UI fund beyond its mission. As a company that works hard to maintain strong relationships with our employees and foster a positive work environment, we are not a business likely to encounter a labor strike — yet we would still be forced to help fund unemployment benefits for workers involved in disputes unrelated to our operations. That's a hard pill to swallow — especially when we're working hard to keep our crews employed, maintain competitive wages, and stay responsive to the real economic challenges facing our industry and our region.

What's more, we believe SB 916 would make it harder — not easier — for parties in a labor dispute to come together and resolve their differences. When the financial pressure of being on strike is removed, there's less urgency and willingness for both sides to come to the table in

good faith to resolve the underlying issues — delaying solutions and prolonging conflict. That's not just bad for business — it's bad for workers, customers, and communities alike. On behalf of our team and the many other employers like us who are committed to building strong teams and investing in Oregon's workforce, I urge you to oppose SB 916 and keep Oregon's UI system focused on helping people who are truly out of work and in need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rusty Rexius', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Rusty Rexius**  
Co-President  
Rexius