



OREGON STATE BUILDING &  
CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

March 27, 2020

Governor Brown  
Speaker Kotek  
Speaker Pro Tempore Holvey  
Majority Leader Smith-Warner  
Minority Leader Drazen  
Senate President Courtney  
Senate President Pro Tem Monnes-Anderson  
Senate Majority Leader Burdick  
Senate Republican Leader Baertschiger, Jr.  
Labor Commissioner Hoyle

Secretary of State Clarno  
State Treasurer Read  
Portland Mayor Wheeler  
Multnomah County Chair Kafoury  
Clackamas County Chair Bernard  
Washington County Chair Harrington  
Representative Bynum  
Representative Meek  
Metro Council President Peterson

Dear State and Local Elected Leaders,

As this invisible enemy known as Covid-19 devastates our state's economy and hardworking families, we know that we will face some grim economic hardships in the months ahead. These are indeed the times that all Oregonians expect us to all come together to figure out solutions how to best serve all our communities. Historically speaking, Oregon's building and construction industry has always helped lead the economic recovery by creating thousands of new family wage paying jobs, while helping with solutions to many of our societal and climate issues, which is no coincidence.

As you all work tirelessly across the state on critical and difficult decisions regarding responses to the spread of the Covid-19, it is important that policies don't get passed that will put hardworking Oregonians who build, maintain and repair our critical infrastructure at risk. We need you to ensure that any new legislation and policy, or changes, is crafted with the clear purpose of upholding Oregon's high safety and labor standards. The Oregon State Building & Construction Trades Council firmly believes that this crisis shall not permit any person or group the opportunity to erode Oregon's strong labor and wage standards. It is essential that we continue to standby these proven standards that symbolize the values that all hardworking Oregonians hold dear: safe working conditions, hiring local skilled workers, providing adequate health care for our families, retirement benefits, and investments in our state recognized apprenticeship programs accountable for training Oregon's next generation of construction workers.

As an umbrella organization representing tens of thousands of workers throughout the state of Oregon and affiliated with thousands of small and large contractors, and DBE, MBE, WBE, ESB certified sub-contractors, we strongly oppose the proposals brought forward to you by members of the contracting community.

**The specific ideas we oppose are:**

- *Impose an immediate moratorium on health care benefit payments and stop reductions or eliminations of healthcare benefits for certified firms*
- *Impose an immediate moratorium during the COVID-19 crisis on any BOLI claim against MBE or DBE contractors.*
- *Impose a moratorium for certified firms on the current BOLI apprenticeship ratios.*

As elected leaders, I understand how important it is to ensure that spaces are being created for impacted minority contractors' and businesses to be heard. While we do not oppose the formation of an equitable, diverse, and inclusive task force to engage in the process of shaping policies and changing rules to advance small contractors and certified sub-contractors to economic prosperity, we do oppose policies creating unwarranted division among workers of color and contractors. Which is why we strongly oppose mandating the use of select subcontractor associations on any public committee that is intended to advise on policies to help workers of color and impacted minority contractors confront the economic downfall of the COVID-19 crisis.

Furthermore, our economic recovery should not come at the expense of Oregon's workforce and our responsible businesses. Labor and wage standards that require strict ratios within the construction industry are one of the best ways to continue creating opportunities for workers of color and marginalized groups that have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented. State registered apprenticeship programs help to recruit, train and advance workers through progressive wage increases; apprentice-to-journey worker ratios promote safety; uniform training standards; mandatory safety training; and quality assurance assessments from the state.

Sadly, the proposed moratorium on apprenticeship ratios will remove important protections of the registered apprentice model and give employers free reign to implement whatever cost-cutting, low quality practices they see fit. Rebuilding our infrastructure is going to require a highly skilled workforce as they are sophisticated projects.

For 80 years, state registered apprenticeship programs have been the gold-standard for contractors in both the quality of construction and worker safety. To protect our workers, registered skilled trades apprenticeship programs emphasize safety and high-quality training to prevent accidents. Anything less than our time-tested labor and wage standards, especially our protections around our state registered apprentices will not only put workers lives at risk, but also our families, the public, and our first responders.

Having our infrastructure built with no apprenticeship ratios in place is a danger to our communities and our industry across the state. Having safe buildings and infrastructure is vital to our state's economic recovery and communities where workers reside and will be needed.

We strongly oppose any policy changes that will undermine the state's current contracting requirements, drive down labor standards, create division during a time of crisis, and start the race to the bottom for all Oregonians, businesses and contractors. As a market-driven industry, we are dependent on good family-sustaining, middle class jobs. We are not just workers, we are communities, and we want to see all of Oregon prosper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Camarillo", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Camarillo  
Executive Secretary

**Cc:**

COBID Program Manager, Carrie L Baxandall

ODOT Director, Kris Strickler

Port of Portland Executive Director, Curtis Robinhold

Prosper Portland Executive Director, Kimberly Branam

Portland Housing Bureau Director, Shannon Callahan

TriMet General Manager, Doug Kelsey

**The Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council is comprised of the following trades and regional councils throughout the state:**

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

**6 - Regional Building and Construction Trades Councils:**

1. Central Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council
2. Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council
3. Lane, Coos, Curry, Douglas Building Trades Council
4. Pendleton Building and Construction Trades Council
5. Salem Building and Construction Trades Council
6. Southern Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council