



Washington County Chamber 2025 Legislative Priorities

Economic Growth | Inclusivity | Collaboration | Fiscal Responsibility

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce urges the Oregon State Legislature to consider our Guiding Principles and engage our members in policy conversations and decisions during the 2025 Legislative Session.

WHO WE ARE

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce is the independent, influential voice of the Washington County area's thriving business community, which is considered the economic engine of Oregon. We are a member-driven organization, proud to represent more than 800 small and large employers and nonprofits operating in Washington County, ranging from local restaurants and auto repair shops to high-tech manufacturers. The businesses we represent are integral to making Washington County an economically prosperous, safe, healthy, and innovative place to live, work and play.

OUR LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

As we approach the 2025 Legislative Session, new challenges have emerged, and many businesses in Washington County are feeling the burden. Local businesses are grappling with increased prices due to inflation and limited access to credit because of high interest rates. Housing affordability, both for rental and owner-occupied properties, is at an all-time low, exacerbating workforce issues and leaving some of our most vulnerable populations without shelter. With these critical issues in mind, we urge the Oregon State Legislature to promote policies that support the businesses of Washington County. This includes finding ways to bolster our workforce and encourage businesses to invest in our communities. Additional costs and regulations on businesses due to new taxes, fee increases, or changes in business operations could be devastating to economic recovery. We continue to ask our State Legislators to DO NO HARM to our member businesses.

OUR VALUES

Our mission is to promote business prosperity and a healthy, equitable, inclusive and diverse community in Washington County by providing information, services and advocacy for our members. <https://www.washingtoncountychamberor.com/>.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Economic Health	Promote policies that enable businesses of all sizes to thrive and grow.
Inclusivity	Engage and listen to business stakeholders on those policies that impact how employers can operate.
Collaboration	Develop policies collaboratively with a willingness to consider alternative paths and compromise agreements.
Fiscal Responsibility	Prioritize State spending based on intended outcomes and results to create a more balanced, stable budget and verify that spending goals are met.

CONTACT

Please contact us for context to our legislative positions and to engage the Chamber and our members in policy discussions.

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Advocacy & Policy Development Sponsors



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Climate and Energy

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce recognizes the eminent dangers of climate change that we face today. However, it is important that we continue to offer our residents affordable, reliable forms of energy.

Support:	A more streamlined approach that is more in sync with the speed of the market to help navigate environmental regulations for new facilities.
Support:	Tax credits or incentives for 'green' business practices.
Support:	Data driven policies that encourages and prioritizes commonsense solutions to meet climate goals
Oppose:	Legislation, rules or local regulation that would ban fuels that residents and businesses rely upon for affordable energy.
Oppose:	Legislation that curtails or restricts energy choice or resiliency.
Oppose:	Legislation or rules that would impact local Transportation System Plans (TSP) that would result in costly infrastructure investments.

Education and Workforce

Washington County and the State of Oregon face a major issue with a workforce shortage and the disruption in the global supply chain.

Support:	Legislation that would prepare and enhance the workforce of Oregon.
Support:	Legislative efforts that encourage and fund the development of career pathways within schools. We advocate for programs that equip students with the skills and opportunities to pursue well-paying jobs that do not necessarily require a college degree but instead offer viable alternatives through trade programs, apprenticeships, and direct entry into the workforce.
Support:	Legislation that would provide a tax credit or incentive to those who support qualified workforce training organizations.
Support:	Legislation that would expand crucial apprenticeship programs and direct BOLI to remove obstacles preventing the establishment of new apprenticeship programs and opportunities.
Support:	Legislative actions and investment that address the shortage of childcare providers and the rising costs that place quality care out of reach for many families. When families cannot access affordable childcare, workforce participation declines, impacting both businesses and our regional economy.

Land Use & Housing

Many developers in Oregon are dealing with State regulations, fees, permits and zoning issues that often slow and make the building process challenging. It is vital the State Legislature make it easier to develop both housing and employment land.

Support:	Legislation that would incentivize residential developers to produce more housing units.
Support:	Legislation to modify local jurisdictions' Housing Needs Analysis to better reflect the availability of actual developable land and provide a requirement to remove land from the inventory if left undeveloped through one planning cycle.
Support:	A process to move forward a modernization of the Oregon land use system that is responsive to current needs, eliminates long delays and updates regulations that inhibit development. For example, review and update the multiple Oregon Revised Statutes related to the development of industrial land and any other regulations that do not adequately reflect the growth and complexity of the current land use realities of Oregon.
Oppose:	Legislation that would directly or indirectly increase the price of housing for both rental and owned properties.
Support:	Legislation or rules that would speed up and enhance the permitting process for developable land.
Support:	Legislation that would make available more shovel-ready land that is responsive to industry needs.
Oppose:	Additional fees and other impediments that would deter businesses and housing providers from locating and developing.

Public Safety

Public safety is a vital component of economic development and healthy communities. Washington County has one of the lowest crime rates for large Oregon Counties.

Support:	The Washington County Commission’s effort to advocate for adequate State funding. For example, Public Defenders, staff for correction facilities, District Attorney’s office and Community Corrections.
Support:	The establishment of adequate facilities to assist those suffering with mental health crisis and substance abuse issues.
Support:	On-going and stable funding for Counties implementing Deflection Center Programs.

Tax Policies & Economic Development

Tax policies must consider research, data and the voices of the business community and demonstrate a direct result to Oregon’s economic recovery and growth. Economic development tools and tax credits have a direct positive impact on employers - their ability to stay in business, grow their employees, hire new employees, and expand.

Oppose:	Any new business taxes.
Support:	Legislation that would bring in new economic development tools, such a capital investment tax credit and a jobs tax credit and expand the R&D tax credit.
Support:	Legislation that preserves and supports State and local tools to help businesses expand and hire new employees, including the strategic investment program, urban renewal, and enterprise zones.
Support:	Efforts to increase the current \$1 million revenue threshold for taxable commercial activity and reduce pyramiding effects.
Support:	Legislative actions that provide relief or deferral of System Development Charges (SDCs) for housing providers.
Oppose:	Legislation increasing the corporate activities tax.
Oppose:	Any changes to economic development tools, such as the SIP or enterprise zones that are not developed in consensus with a broad base of the business community.

Transportation & Infrastructure Investments

Strategic investments in transportation and vital infrastructure will spur job and economic development growth throughout Oregon.

Support:	Funding for vital infrastructure projects that will infuse Oregon communities with critically needed investments resulting in an increase in local spending. This should be in accordance with the Oregon State Constitution and should leverage Federal funding available from IIJA and IRA.
Support:	The development of a transportation funding package that prioritizes real engagement with the business community, ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making, while maintaining a transparent process that clearly demonstrates how funds would be allocated and used to benefit all stakeholders.
Support:	Revenue mechanisms that are tied to road usage and dedicated to the State Highway Trust Fund.
Support:	The construction of a new I-5 Bridge featuring additional space for all modes of transportation – including motor vehicles – to help ease congestion challenges while doing so in an equitable way.
Support:	Modifications of the highway cost allocation formula to ensure road users are paying according to impact on the transportation system.
Monitor:	The tolling conversation at the Legislative level.