

February 4, 2025

TO: Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
FR: Duke Shepard, Oregon Business & Industry
RE: OBI Opposes HB 2961

Chair Lively and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Duke Shepard, I am a senior policy director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

I would like to address this bill on two fronts. First, in 2023 the legislature adopted HB 3409, which among many other things established a new regulatory regime for commercial building energy performance standards. The rulemaking for that legislation only concluded at the end of 2024. So, before the metaphorical ink has dried on new building requirements for commercial development, this bill proposes to add another costly requirement to prospective commercial developments.

More broadly, responsibility for building out Oregon's hopes for widespread electric vehicle adoption should not fall on housing and commercial developers who aren't in the vehicle fueling business. Adding to the existing mandate will raise costs.

Increasing housing costs will not accelerate anyone's ability to afford the cars the state wants them to drive. Mandating charging infrastructure doesn't change the sticker price of cars of people can't afford. [According to S&P Global Mobility](#), the average age of a passenger car on the road is 14 years; for light trucks, the average age is 11.9. People can't afford new cars whether electric, hybrid, or gas.

We have an affordability problem in this state, particularly with housing. Housing volume, affordability and availability should be the priority, and no legislation should be contemplated that could possibly exacerbate those issues.

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