



February 9, 2026

Support for SB 1566

Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Senate Committee on Labor and Business

Support for SB 1566: Prevailing Wage Criteria

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Hayden and members of the Senate Labor and Business Committee;

I'm writing on behalf of the **Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce**, representing thousands of employers across Lane County and the greater Eugene area. We strongly support **SB 1566**, and appreciate the Legislature's leadership in addressing unintended consequences that work much-needed efforts to address Oregon's housing and homelessness crisis.

Oregon is facing an undeniable housing shortage, and SB 1566 addresses a very specific—but very real—barrier that is preventing housing projects from moving forward: the unintended expansion of prevailing wage requirements onto privately financed housing developments due to public investment in surrounding infrastructure.

SB 1566 does **not** weaken prevailing wage protections for public works. Instead, it clarifies statute so that privately owned housing projects are not retroactively or unintentionally swept into prevailing wage requirements simply because a public agency invested in infrastructure such as roads, utilities, or site preparation. This clarification is both reasonable and necessary to ensure that existing housing policies function as intended.

The consequences of the current interpretation are not theoretical. In Eugene, a privately financed housing development at the EWEB Riverfront—more than 20 years in the making—has stalled following a Bureau of Labor and Industries determination that prevailing wage applied solely because the City invested in infrastructure. The developer had budgeted and paid market wages consistent with private construction standards, and the added cost created by this determination rendered the project financially infeasible. Today, that site remains stalled—despite years of planning and an urgent need for housing and the community benefits it would deliver. The consequence to our community is roughly 1000 planned but stalled new apartments.

This situation is not unique to Eugene. Similar determinations have stalled or killed projects across the state, including fully funded affordable housing developments. As outlined in the one-pager for SB 1566, these interpretations have added millions of dollars in unplanned costs, reduced housing supply, and left communities with empty lots instead of homes, jobs, and tax base.



Importantly, there is already precedent in Oregon law for private housing developments to move forward without prevailing wage when they are privately owned and financed. SB 1566 simply restores clarity and consistency to the statute while maintaining worker protections where they are intended to apply.

At a time when Oregon needs housing of all types—affordable, workforce, and market-rate—SB 1566 removes a critical barrier that determines whether projects move forward or die on paper. The choice is clear: housing, property taxes, and economic activity—or stalled projects and empty land.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support for SB 1566.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brittany QW".

Brittany Quick-Warner
President & CEO
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce