



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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House votes to boost support for small businesses, local economies

SALEM – Today the Oregon House of Representatives passed two job creating bills that will help businesses grow in Oregon.

House Bill 4005 would increase the number of “electronic commerce zones” the state can approve from 10 to 15. The “e-commerce” designation provides additional tax incentives to encourage technology companies to locate in traditional enterprise zones.

“Oregon’s economy is showing some signs of recovery, but it’s not growing fast enough,” Rep. Joe Gallegos (D – Hillsboro) said. “This bill will provide opportunities for more communities to compete for private investment that will be critical in helping more Oregonians get back to work.”

Businesses locating in an enterprise zone can get a three- to five-year property tax waiver, and the e-commerce designation allows business owners to claim an additional credit on their state income taxes that equals 25% of their capital investment. The credit is capped at \$2 million per year, per business, for up to five years.

Another measure that passed the House today – Senate Bill 1563 – would raise the cap on a business development fund that the state offers to small businesses looking to hire and expand.

“This program has helped small businesses get off the ground throughout Oregon, but we need to do more,” said Rep. Shemia Fagan (D – Clackamas/East Portland), who was recently recognized as one of the top business leaders in the state by the Portland Business Journal. “Expanding this program will help more businesses grow and more Oregonians get back to work.”

Oregon’s Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund (EDLF) helps start-ups, micro-enterprises and small businesses expand or become established. Since 2009, Business Oregon, the agency that manages the fund, has provided more than \$1.6 million in loans to more than 50 small businesses in sectors ranging from natural resources to high tech. SB 1563 raises the amount of support that a small business can receive through EDLF to a total of \$100,000, up from the current cap of \$70,000.

“Today our legislators made a clear statement: we support small business,” said Jim Houser, co-chair of Main Street Alliance of Oregon, which is a coalition of more than 1,800 small businesses. “Our legislators who voted in favor of this bill know that access to capital can mean the difference between adding family-wage jobs on one hand, and losing those jobs on the other.”

HB 4005 passed the House unanimously and now heads to the Senate. SB 1563 won its final legislative approval today and will be sent to the Governor for his signature.

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