



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074
molly.woon@state.or.us

Buy American Transit preference will help create Oregon jobs *SB 1556 gives state & local agencies greater flexibility to buy in U.S.*

SALEM – The Senate unanimously approved legislation this morning that will allow state agencies and local governments to give greater preference to American products when making orders for transit vehicles. SB 1556 has the potential to help U.S. companies that make buses, ferries, and streetcars – like United Streetcar in Clackamas County, the only modern streetcar manufacturer based in the U.S.

“The growth of companies like United Streetcar can have ripple effects throughout Oregon’s economy, benefitting local manufacturers and creating jobs down the supply chain,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chief sponsor of the bill. “Oregon’s communities deserve the opportunity to invest more of their public transit funds in American jobs as they see fit.”

Because of Federal rules, if an agency or local government wishes to give a preference to a bidder whose vehicle has more U.S.- made content than the 60 percent currently required by federal standards, the agency needs to be authorized to do so in statute to ensure eligibility for federal funds. SB 1556 is a permissive bill and does not impose a new mandate on local transit agencies. Instead, SB 1556 gives Oregon’s communities greater control over how their public resources are spent and provides transit agencies with the opportunity to contribute further toward the creation and ongoing sustainability of good, well-paying jobs in Oregon and nationwide.

“Mills Innovations, a small employer in Junction City, is just one example of a company that can be helped down the supply chain by legislation like SB 1556,” said Senator Chris Edwards (D-Eugene). “Their work with United Streetcar is revitalizing their previously struggling business. By enabling greater latitude for contracting, SB 1556 helps encourage growth in domestic manufacturing.”

The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

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