



WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC GROWTH | INCLUSIVITY | COLLABORATION | FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce is the independent, influential voice for Washington County’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 representing over 75,000 jobs. 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

With the recent revenue forecast signaling a softening economic outlook, the need for stability and pro-growth policy is even more urgent. When Washington County businesses struggle, it impacts businesses and public services across the entire state. The 2026 legislative session is the time for urgent, targeted action to retain the industries and jobs we have and better position Oregon to attract new investment. Washington County businesses need lawmakers to act quickly to stabilize the economy, avoid increasing costs, and protect jobs. The Washington County Chamber urges legislators to focus on practical solutions that support investment and job growth, workforce participation, housing supply, and tax stability, while avoiding policies that increase costs or create uncertainty.

HIGHEST PRIORITY

SUPPORT

A legislative package to maintain and accelerate the growth of advanced manufacturing jobs (semiconductors, biotech, clean tech) in Oregon.

BUSINESS GROWTH & ECONOMIC STABILITY

Oregon is losing its competitive edge. In the 2026 Legislative Session, lawmakers must take bold action to make Oregon an attractive place for companies to remain, invest, and grow. Action is essential to stabilize our economy and safeguard high-wage jobs.

SUPPORT

- **Preserve and strengthen economic development tools:** Protect the Strategic Investment Program, enterprise zones, and urban renewal authority, and improve access to the Research and Development tax credit so employers can reinvest and hire.
- **Oregon’s connection to federal tax code:** Maintain investment incentives and protect employers from costly complexity and compliance burdens and ensure Oregon businesses are not at a further competitive disadvantage with businesses in other states.
- **Energy policy and cap-and-invest:** Support reduced regulation and aligned regional programs that ensure affordability, reliability, and competitiveness.
- **Support workforce participation:** Expand apprenticeships and re-skilling programs aligned with Oregon’s target industries so employers can hire and retain skilled workers.
- **Address Oregon’s insufficient supply of industrial land:** Create immediate industrial land capacity in locations that are desirable for industry and in sizes aligned to market realities and Oregon’s long-term objectives.

- **Promote regulatory consistency and efficiency:** Eliminate overlapping or conflicting state and local requirements that increase costs for employers.

OPPOSE

- **Any new or increased business taxes or fees:** Businesses are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to add new costs on businesses or divert revenue from dedicated funds like the Transient Lodging Tax.
- **New or expanded regulatory burdens:** Reject proposals that create delays, compliance costs, or restrictions that discourage business investment or expansion.

LAND USE & HOUSING

Employers cannot grow if they lack land to expand or if workers cannot afford to live near their jobs. In the 2026 Legislative Session, lawmakers must act to increase housing supply, modernize land use rules, and ensure Oregon has shovel-ready employment sites that support job growth and business investment.

SUPPORT

- **Access to rental housing:** Remove barriers to producing and operating rental housing, reevaluating rent caps, and simplifying legal processes to encourage new development.
- **Prioritize workforce housing supply:** Incentivize housing production near employment centers so employers can recruit and retain workers.
- **Streamline Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) requirements:** Ensure local inventories reflect land that is truly developable, remove underutilized parcels from inventories if they remain idle, and allow communities within Metro to use independent, credible sources of population data in their HNAs

OPPOSE

- **New housing planning requirements and regulatory burdens:** Reject proposals that create new regulatory requirements. Communities have been struggling to keep pace with frequent changes to housing statutes and rules without clear housing production outcomes.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Oregon employers cannot grow without a ready and reliable workforce. In the 2026 Legislative Session, lawmakers must strengthen workforce participation, expand career pathways, and provide opportunities for workers to adapt to changing industries, enabling businesses to thrive and Oregonians to remain in the communities they call home.

SUPPORT

- **Expand career and technical education (CTE) and apprenticeships:** Grow programs aligned with employer demand in high-wage industries such as semiconductors, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Invest in childcare access:** Stabilize providers and expand affordable childcare so parents can enter and remain in the workforce.
- **Support re-skilling for displaced workers:** Create opportunities for those who have been laid off to gain new skills that match employer demand, helping them remain in their communities and reducing the risk of Washington County and Oregon losing skilled talent.
- **Foster employer-led workforce partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between businesses, schools, and workforce boards to develop training programs that reflect real job opportunities.

OPPOSE

- **Cuts to workforce development funding:** Oppose reductions that weaken programs designed to keep Oregonians employed and connected to opportunity.