



Tuesday, February 10, 2026

## Letter from our Board President



### Oregon Employers Signal Urgency—and a Clear Path to Jump-Start Growth

Recent [statewide polling](#) underscores significant economic headwinds that directly affect Oregon businesses and the workforce pipeline. Only 26% of voters believe the state is headed in the right direction, while large majorities say foundational cost pressures are worsening - 85% report rising cost of living and 77% say housing affordability is deteriorating. These challenges undermine both household stability and employers' ability to attract and retain talent.

Economic sentiment is equally concerning: 73% of voters rate Oregon's economy as poor, up sharply from 60% in 2021, and 68% believe conditions are continuing to decline. Nearly half of Oregonians say they struggle to pay for basic

necessities such as groceries, healthcare, utilities, insurance, and housing—conditions that directly influence workforce reliability and labor-market participation.

Voters overwhelmingly identify structural issues behind Oregon's slow growth, especially high taxes and excessive regulations. More than half believe Oregon's economy is expanding slower than the national average, and the top reasons cited, both high taxes (23%) and heavy regulation (21%), mirror concerns long expressed by employers.

When asked how Oregon should address upcoming budget deficits and stimulate growth, a majority (52%) said the state should focus on reducing regulatory barriers and creating incentives for investment, innovation, and job creation—a strategy supported across party lines.

The proposed **Oregon JOBS Act** offers a blueprint aligned with both employer needs and voter priorities. The bill would:

- Expand tax credits for semiconductor R&D and advanced manufacturing.
- Create clear, predictable permitting timelines, increasing transparency and reducing costly delays.
- Support high-tech, clean-energy, biotech, and advanced manufacturing clusters—critical for high-wage job creation.

Business associations, chambers, and economic development organizations already support the measure, recognizing its potential to strengthen Oregon's competitiveness and expand opportunities for workers statewide.

As President of Westside Economic Alliance, I urge to join the call in support of this effort.

Sincerely,

Nina Carlson, Board President  
Westside Economic Alliance

Members can find out more about this bill at this week's Policy (formerly Government Relations) Committee. Contact: **Teddy@WestsideAlliance.org**.

Committees are open to members only. Not a member yet? Reach out to **Danielle@WestsideAlliance.org** to sign up.

## Registration is Open: 2026 Policy Conference

# WEA POLICY CONFERENCE | 26



Thursday, March 19 | 12:30 - 6:00 pm  
Hidden Creek Community Center

✉ [danielle@westsidealliance.org](mailto:danielle@westsidealliance.org)



[WWW.WESTSIDEALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.WESTSIDEALLIANCE.ORG)

## **Energy is on everyone's minds.**

Whether transmission, transition, resilience or grid capacity - both the private and public sectors are grappling with urgency to meet the need.

As a region - and a state - we proudly tout the Silicon Forest as a driving force for our economy, while simultaneously making policy and regulatory decisions that make this a challenging place to build critical capacity and resiliency.

Join us as we talk to experts about how this energy being used and who is using it. We will dive into conversations about what investments are needed to stabilize our infrastructure - and when those investments are needed.

And we will try to answer the question about how we right-size a regulatory world that allows us to both manage for the environment and promote growth.

Join us for an afternoon of solution-driven conversation.

**Registration is now open. This event will sell out. Grab your ticket today.**

**Register Today**

Reach out to [Dani](#) about Policy Conference sponsorships.

## Upcoming Committees - open to members only

### Important Committee Updates

At the December Board of Directors annual retreat, the Board voted unanimously to evolve the Government Relations Committee into a "Policy Committee". While this will continue to be the venue where WEA members can get up to speed and provide direction on legislation and ballot measures, this change will also allow this committee to convene conversations around other critical issues. Topics that will now reside within the Policy Committee include the state and regional economy, workforce, economic development and tax regulations. While this list is not exhaustive, we hope it provides some context for this change.

If you are a WEA member and would like to get involved in our Committees, reach out to [Teddy@WestsideAlliance.org](mailto:Teddy@WestsideAlliance.org).



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS **COMMITTEE MEETING**



### **Oregon JOBS Act Discussion and Transportation Funding Updates**

Featuring Senator Janeen Sollman (SD 15) and  
Representative Susan McLain (HD 29)

**Thursday, February 12, 2026 | 7:30 - 8:30 am**

*This Meeting will be  
ONLINE ONLY*

**WEA Committees are open to  
Members only.**



**Sen. Janeen Sollman**  
Oregon Senate District 15

Discussing the Oregon  
JOBS Act (SB1586)



**Rep. Susan McLain**  
Oregon House District 29

Providing Updates on State  
Transportation Funding

### **Last Chance: WashCo Residents Share Your Thoughts on Tourism**

Explore Tualatin Valley is gathering feedback from Washington County residents to better understand how tourism impacts our community.

## EXPLORE TUALATIN VALLEY

The survey is open until **TOMORROW**  
- **February 10** - takes about 10 minutes,

and respondents who complete the survey will be entered to win a Hillsboro Hops Ticket Pack for four or one of six \$100 gift cards to a local tourism-related business.

Add your voice—take the survey today: [etvor.com/survey](https://etvor.com/survey)

Please let us know once it's been sent, or if you have any questions at all. We're happy to help. And please send us the newsletter or social announcement, once you've sent it out.

**Want to know more about how you can support WEA's work?**  
Reach out to [Dani](#) about Membership and Partnership Opportunities.



[Westside Economic Alliance](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [www.WestsideAlliance.org](http://www.WestsideAlliance.org)

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