

Oregon House Democrats' Job Creation and Family Support Plan

As our economic fortunes have tumbled, Oregon Democrats believe the answer to working our way out of this economic downturn exists in three areas:

- **Providing jobs to rebuild our economy**
- **Protecting families facing tough times in an uncertain economy**
- **Preparing for the future**

When we begin the Legislative session on January 12, Oregon House Democrats will work to pass a series of bills designed to jump start job creation, protect families facing economic misfortune and establish long term programs that will keep our economy healthy and strong. Alongside our Roadmap for Oregon's Future, this plan will continue moving the state forward and improving the everyday lives of

Providing Jobs:

Accelerate start dates on state-funded construction projects already in the pipeline.

As of today, millions of dollars of construction projects have been approved and not yet started. House Democrats will work with agency directors and the Governor's office to jump-start those projects and get Oregonians back to work. We will also identify ways to appropriately speed up new projects we approve in 2009.

Increase bonding to get people back to work and make Oregon more efficient:

Recent estimates are that Oregon has approximately \$1.4 billion in additional bonding capacity for 2009-2011. Every \$100 million in construction projects will directly create more than 1,000 jobs and indirectly add another 650 jobs to the Oregon economy. Thousands of Oregonians can be put back to work. In the process, we will repair our deteriorating roads and bridges, make our schools safer and create 21st century college campuses.

A comprehensive Transportation Plan that moves Oregon forward:

Oregon can modernize our out-of-date transportation system in order to put Oregonians to work as we reduce congestion and improve air quality, provide better emergency service and move goods safer and more efficiently. A comprehensive transportation plan that rebuilds our long-neglected transportation system, prioritizes the potential for federal matching grants, and aims at reducing our greenhouse gas emissions has the potential to pump over \$3 billion dollars into our economy and sustain more than 6,700 jobs annually over the next five years.

Energy Efficiency and the Green Economy:

Energy efficiency holds great potential to confront climate change and create good-paying jobs. We will provide opportunities for homeowners and businesses to upgrade their homes or businesses, creating fast growing local markets for Oregon's booming renewable energy industry.

Oregon's innovation has made it the world's leader in the manufacturing of solar technology, wind energy, wave and tidal, geothermal, and biofuels. Oregon is now home to the largest wind farm in the world in Gilliam and Morrow counties, six biodiesel companies in Boardman, and numerous solar panel and hydrogen fuel cell manufacturers located throughout the state. House Democrats will work to expand on these successes.

Affordable Housing Construction Program:

Oregon can put construction workers back on the job by building affordable housing units for families, seniors, people with disabilities and others left behind by the housing market crash and credit crunch. A broadly supported \$15 increase on the fee paid on real estate documents could fund construction of new affordable housing units, preserve existing affordable housing and confront the rise in foreclosures.

Apprenticeships and Job Training:

We will work with BOLI, business partners, trade unions, schools and community colleges to provide additional apprenticeship and job training opportunities for Oregonians, specifically in the rapidly-growing green building, renewable energy and health care fields. This fall, enrollment at community college campuses is up 10% to 15% as we have helped them become more responsive to the needs of students. Additionally, we need to ensure the education and training veterans garner during their service can be used to qualify them for jobs that require similar training.

Creating healthier forests, a cleaner environment and stronger rural economies:

Up to 4 million acres of overgrown forests have the potential to provide biomass for renewable energy projects that can help our rural economies, reduce the potential for severe forest fires and put people to work. Programs like the successful Siuslaw Stewardship Pilot project provide us with a model of innovative partnerships between the federal government, the forestry department and local governments. In addition, continued support for Farm-to-School will provide children with healthy, local food options while helping Oregon farmers stay profitable.

Protecting Families

Provide health care for more uninsured children & working families; controlling costs for businesses:

We can secure federal matching funds to reduce the number of uninsured, and reduce the financial burden on Oregonians who currently help pay for uninsured care through higher insurance premiums. Every state dollar spent brings at least \$1.40 in federal matching funds, helping working families afford health care during these difficult times, as well as stimulating our economy by creating and filling thousands of health care jobs in Oregon. Expanding health insurance options for children is also a key to developing entrepreneurship in Oregon, for as anyone who has contemplated leaving a job to start a new venture knows, there are few obstacles more daunting than the fear of losing your family's health insurance.

Unemployment Insurance:

Unemployment continues to rise in Oregon and across the nation. Congress just passed an extension of Unemployment Insurance that will help Oregon workers whose UI benefits had run out. Working with the Obama administration, the 2009 Legislature can help many more laid-off workers by expanding eligibility for UI to those currently left out of the program.

Help for retraining displaced workers, veterans and single parents:

During these challenging economic times we need to support and encourage vocational and professional development for displaced workers and returning veterans. We are also committed to providing support services that make it easier for unemployed workers and single parents to secure work, including child and dependent care. We recognize the need to aid low income families with energy assistance, and the continuing need to promote the Hire Vets First program.

Preparing for the Future:

Provide Oregonians with increased opportunities to attend our state universities, community colleges or vocational schools:

This fall, a record 85,546 students were enrolled in the Oregon University System, while community college enrollment has skyrocketed. Investments targeted at making higher education more affordable led to a doubling in the number of students receiving Opportunity Grants—now over 15,000. Through our Shared Responsibility Model of financial aid, we will continue to ensure that Oregonians are ready to take advantage of new economic opportunities when recovery occurs, especially in growing sectors like renewable energy and health care. And we will work to give universities and community colleges the support they need to education and train these students.

Invest in and encourage innovation and collaboration:

We will protect and expand traditional family wage jobs in Oregon's rural communities by helping farmers, loggers, fishers, and manufacturers find innovative ways to expand markets, secure well-trained employees, and reduce costs. We will help build the economy of tomorrow by supporting Oregon's signature research centers to give scientists and entrepreneurs with new ideas, inventions, and discoveries a fast track from the lab to the marketplace. And we will continue to find ways to facilitate the commercialization of university-supported research.

Oregon House Democrats

Working To Rebuild Oregon's Economy