

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

HB 2966 TESTIMONY TOOLKIT

Public Hearing Information

Our public hearing will be in front of the **House Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection** on **Tuesday, January 28, 2025** at **1pm** in **Hearing Room F**. If you're not familiar with the layout of the Capitol, you can access a building map [here](#).

Register To Testify At The Hearing

- You will need to register yourself to testify at the hearing. **To testify live you have to sign up prior to noon on the hearing day. You can testify in person or virtually.**
 - Open the bill page on OLIS and under the heading "Measure History" you'll see "Register to Testify". You'll see a pop up. That is where you'll add your information for testimony.
 - If you are testifying in person, please allow extra time for parking and getting through security.
- More info on testifying is here:
https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Pages/How-to-Testify.aspx

Writing Your Testimony

- The messages and sample testimony in this toolkit are a starting point for you to **draft your own unique testimony**.
- If you want someone to review your testimony before you submit it or would like help drafting, email kelie@oregonpublicbanking.com.
- **Note that your written and oral testimony will be publicly available**, including your name and any other identifying information you include. *DO NOT include any personal information that you do not want made available to the public, such as your address, phone number, or health history.*

Submitting Written Testimony

- Submit your written testimony here:
<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Testimony/HCCP/HB/2966/2025-01-28-13-00?area=Measures>
- **Important:** Make sure you are submitting the testimony on **Tuesday, January 28, 2025** for **HB 2966** and not another bill on the agenda. Please make sure to mark "support" as well.
- Please also send it to chair@oregonpublicbanking.com.

Resources

- Template: [HB 2966 Testimony Template](#)
- Gamba's One Pager: [Gamba Public Finance Task Force 1-pager.pdf](#)
- Bill as Drafted: [2025 House Bill 2966 - Introduced.pdf](#)

HB 2966 MAIN MESSAGES:

HB 2699 proposes the creation of a task force that brings together a variety of stakeholders to explore different ways to finance public projects. This initiative aims to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

Below are the main messages we're using to support this legislation. In your testimony, choose at least one of these messages and **describe why you support the bill and the impact it will make**. Using your own voice and lived experience is vital.

NOTE: We are referring to this bill as a public finance task force (not a public banking or state bank bill) so that we have the opportunity to have a broader discussion, which will include public banking but will not be the sole focus. Please avoid using the terms "public banking" and "state bank" if you can.

Please choose no more than three of the messages below to discuss in your testimony. Do not try to include everything. Select from the themes that are most important to you. Feel free to put the statements into your own words.

Supporting Local Financial Institutions

- The task force could determine better ways for the State to **support local financial institutions**. For example, credit unions are limited in their ability to give out loans to the lesser of 1.75 times the credit union's net worth or 12.25% of the institution's total assets. A strategic partnership with a state or revolving loan fund entity could enhance the capabilities of local credit unions and community banks, allowing them to have a longer reach to provide municipal and small business loans that would help stimulate local economic activity in our communities and raise revenue for the state not derived from property and income taxes.
- Public financial infrastructure could provide critical support to local credit unions and community banks. For example, the task force will study the creation of secondary loan markets and depository services for these institutions. This would allow them to expand their lending capacity, better serve small businesses and families, and strengthen the local economy.
- The task force will ensure that public financing strategies complement, rather than compete with, local financial institutions. This approach will strengthen these institutions and ensure they remain vital partners in Oregon's financial ecosystem.
- The task force will study different governing and corporate structures for public financing entities. This could lead to innovative solutions that are specifically tailored to Oregon's needs, ensuring the state remains a leader in public finance innovation.
- In unstable national and international climates, it's more important than ever to support local financial stability to create an economically resilient Main Street focused state.

Affordable Home Ownership Options

- The task force could explore opportunities to create **affordable home ownership options** for residents. By partnering with local banks, we could offer **participatory homeownership loans** at more favorable rates than those offered by large Wall Street banks. This initiative would make it easier for Oregon families to achieve the dream of home ownership, which contributes to community stability and generational wealth.
- The task force will examine ways to fund affordable housing projects, particularly during economic downturns when private investment often dries up. By ensuring that housing construction continues even in tough times, Oregon can address its housing crisis and provide more families with stable, affordable places to live.
- Many Oregonians face barriers to securing traditional mortgage loans. The task force will explore participatory loan programs, which could partner with private financial institutions to offer more accessible homeownership options. This would help more families achieve the dream of owning a home and contribute to community stability.

Cost Effective Infrastructure Development

- The task force could identify strategies for **cost-effective infrastructure development**. Local governments across the state face significant infrastructure needs, and by working directly with local financial institutions, we can help fund these projects at a lower cost than traditional large banks. This approach ensures that public funds are used more efficiently. Profits from these kinds of projects would be more likely to remain in Oregon, ultimately benefiting our taxpayers, communities, and schools.
- The task force will explore how public financing practices can reduce the costs of major public projects, such as infrastructure development and affordable housing construction. By cutting down on the high fees and interest rates often associated with traditional financing methods, Oregon can stretch public dollars further and complete more projects that directly benefit residents.
- Local governments often face high costs when financing large infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, and utilities. The task force will study how public financing options could lower these costs, allowing local governments to complete more projects while saving taxpayer dollars.

Broader Economic Growth for Oregon

- The task force could investigate ways to stimulate **broader economic growth**. By strengthening the local financial ecosystem, we can create a more resilient economy that supports small businesses and fosters job creation. This holistic approach not only boosts local businesses but also enhances overall community well-being and will make us more resilient as we face future disasters and instability nationally and globally.
- The task force will consider public financing options for student loans, which could reduce costs for students and families. By offering lower-interest loans or other innovative solutions, Oregon could make higher education more affordable and accessible for its

residents. They could also consider programs introduced in prior sessions, such as the Guaranteed Opportunity Program and the Public Defense Loans Repayment Program.

- Public financing could also support family farms by offering agricultural loans that incentivize sustainable farming practices and allow locally owned farms to stay in operation. This would not only help farmers thrive but also promote environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability in Oregon's agricultural sector.
- The task force could explore the creation of a green bank, which could capture federal funds and leverage private capital to finance renewable energy and environmental projects. This would help Oregon transition to a more sustainable economy while creating jobs and reducing the state's carbon footprint.
- By implementing public financing methods, Oregon could stimulate greater economic activity across the state. This includes creating jobs, supporting small businesses, and fostering a more resilient and equitable economy that benefits all residents.

Transparency & Oversight

- Public financing entities would be managed by experts, publicly controlled and operated for the benefit of Oregonians. This ensures that decisions are made transparently and with the public's best interests in mind, rather than prioritizing profits for private financial institutions.
- The task force will explore various ways to fund public financing entities, such as acting as a depository for public funds, leveraging cost savings, or receiving appropriations from the General Fund. These flexible options ensure that public financing initiatives are financially sustainable.
- The task force will also apply for public and private grants to fund its activities. This could bring additional resources to Oregon and help the state implement its public financing strategies more effectively.
- The expertise gathered by the task force is crucial for navigating the complex financial issues involved. By involving stakeholders from municipalities, tribal governments, and private institutions, the task force will foster collaboration and ensure that public financing solutions are inclusive and effective. Their collective knowledge will help ensure that we approach these financial solutions effectively and responsibly.