

WORKERS' COMPENSATION  
MANAGEMENT-LABOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Full Committee Meeting**

August 21, 2025

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

***Committee members present via zoom:***

Co-chair Scott Strickland, Sheet Metal Workers Local #16

Co-chair Patrick Priest, Citycounty Insurance Services

Sara Duckwall, Duckwall Fruit

Ryan Hearn, Roseburg Forest Products

Stacy Lewallen, Fortis Construction, Inc.

Sarah Merrick, City of Salem Fire Department (**Absent**)

Kim Schlessinger, Samaritan Health Services

Lorne Bulling, IronWorkers Local 29

Margaret Weddell, Labor Representative

Emily Rivas, Oregon Nurses Association

Sean O'day, interim DCBS Director, *ex officio* (**Absent**)

***Staff:***

Teri Watson, MLAC Committee Administrator

Baaba Ampah, MLAC Assistant

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Opening</b> (00:01:57)	<b>Affirmation and roll call</b> Co-Chair Patrick Priest called the meeting to order, and shared an affirmation. Teri Watson called the roll of members. A quorum was present.
(00:02:21)	<b>Public comments</b> No public comment.
(00:02:58)	<b>Review minutes - June 6</b> The June 6 meeting minutes were deferred to the Oct. 2 meeting.
(00:09:57)	<b>Department updates</b> <b>Workers' Compensation Board updates – Autumn Blake</b> There were no updates. The <a href="#">WCB report</a> and <a href="#">newsletters</a> are available on the <a href="#">MLAC website</a> . Lauren Eldridge, WCB, will be available during the Oct. 2 meeting for a quarterly WCB report.
(00:05:58)	<b>Workers' Compensation Division (WCD) updates – Teri Watson</b> <b>MLAC calendar 2026</b> Teri Watson announced that the <a href="#">2026 calendar</a> is available. WCD Administrator Matt West also announced that the division will be moving to the Department of Revenue building in March 2026 due to renovations in the Labor and Industry

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building. He updated that there are two final candidates remaining in DCBS director recruitment. Both participated in a Q&A session and will meet with the governor's office soon.

(00:11:17) MLAC members will report back any concerns with the 2026 calendar.

**Off-site meeting – September 15, Central Oregon Safety & Health Conference in Bend**

(00:12:21) Teri Watson announced that members spending the night will have travel forms available during the meeting. Matt West mentioned that he and Teri will be at the OSHA conference promoting the MLAC meeting. He is suggesting a town hall style format, where he will give an overview of MLAC's purpose, having members introduce themselves, and possibly opening the meeting to Q&A. After the meeting, MLAC members can join meeting attendees for a social hour.

(00:15:15) Co-chair Patrick Priest supported the town hall format of the meeting and asked if we have heard community interest in the meeting. Administrator West anticipates interests in the meeting, and by using the OSHA conference is anticipating open forum on workers' compensation experiences.

(00:17:31) Co-chair Scott Strickland suggested starting the meeting with a short overview of MLAC, followed by member introductions, a Q&A, and then an open forum with prepared question to encourage engagement. Ryan Hearn also suggested providing the MLAC workplan during the meeting.

(00:19:55) There will be a virtual option for online participants.

(00:21:21) Main participants of the conference will be a mixture of people in the construction industry, Human Resources (HR), and career safety and health individuals. An email will be send out to conference participants as well as an announcements to conference participants during the conference about the MLAC meeting.

(00:23:22) In response to Ryan Hearn's questions, MLAC members don't have access to attend the conference, except on their own.

**Presentation – History of Exclusive Remedy, WCD Policy Analyst Aaron Fellman**

(00:24:40) WCD Policy Analyst Aaron Fellman presented the [History of Exclusive Remedy](#).

(00:44:06) Margaret Weddell asked for an explanation of whether Oregon's exceptions to the exclusive remedy rule are similar to California or have other exceptions, such as gross negligence. Aaron Fellman offered to research the issue and follow up.

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(00:44:48)	Co-chair Strickland had a comment related to the symbolism of the portrait of Governor McCall with the helicopter and the marker out in the water, and the reference to the state ownership of public beaches, and how it relates to the offshore wind industry.
(00:45:32)	Sara Duckwall asked about SB 174 and how it would have affected exclusive remedy. Administrator West explained that the bill did not have a carve-out for workers' compensation, and the drafter believed it would not affect the exclusive remedy. If it had passed, any impact would have been left to the courts to decide.
(00:47:15)	It was clarified that SB 174 did not move forward.
(00:47:52)	Patrick Priest showed his appreciation to the presentation. In response to Patrick Priest's question, Teri Watson did not know if the exclusive remedy topic will return next session, only that SB 174 died in the 2025 legislative session.
(00:49:08)	Ryan Hearn showed his appreciation to the presentation. Margaret Weddell also shared her appreciation and commented that, while considering the evolution and protection of exclusive remedy, MLAC should also examine changes to the compensability standard. Both are mutually exclusive.
	<b>MLAC subcommittee updates</b>
	<b>• Access to Care (ATC)</b>
(00:51:15)	Emily Cronan updated that several provider meetings have been held to gather feedback on barriers in the workers' compensation system. Participants include an occupational health provider, a nurse practitioner, and an upcoming surgeon presentation. Early trends are emerging, and the subcommittee is beginning to review relevant statutes and orient towards policy discussion.
	<b>• Average weekly wage (AWW)</b>
(00:52:25)	Stacy Lewallen updated that the subcommittee is finishing its data collection phase with input from several stakeholders and plans to wrap up soon. Afterward, they will shift focus to applying the collected information particularly exploring changes to the average weekly wage, with focus on supporting low-income workers. Co-chair Strickland showed his appreciation to WCD analysts, researchers, and additional stakeholders.
	Patrick Priest showed his appreciation to both subcommittees.
	<b>Upcoming meetings – Sept. 15 (in-person), Riverhouse Lodge Conference Center, Bend, OR, and Oct. 2 (virtual).</b>
(00:54:20)	Subcommittees will report their recommendations on Oct. 2.
(00:55:07)	Stacy Lewallen moved to adjourn the meeting, and Sara Duckwall seconded the motion. Motion passed.

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**Meeting** Co-chair Priest adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.  
**Adjourned**

\*These minutes include time stamps from the meeting video found here:

<https://youtu.be/m-q7sCfi7FA>

\*\*Referenced documents can be found on the MLAC Meeting Information page here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DCBS/mlac/Pages/2025-meetings.aspx>