

WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MANAGEMENT-LABOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Full Committee Meeting

June 16, 2026

Pendleton Convention Center, Pendleton, Oregon

4:30 p.m.

In-person meeting

Committee members (in-person):

MLAC members and Organization they represent:

Co-Chair Patrick Priest, CIS Trust

Co-Chair Scott Strickland, SMART, Local 16 (via zoom)

Kim Schlessinger, Samaritan Health Services

Sarah Merrick, City of Salem Fire Department

Emily Cronan, Oregon Nurses Association

Committee members (absent):

Sara Duckwall, Duckwall Fruit

Stacy Lewallen, Fortis Construction, Inc.

Margaret Weddell, labor representative

Ryan Hearn, Anduril Industries

Sean O'Day, Director DCBS

Staff:

Teri Watson, MLAC Committee administrator

Baaba Ampah, MLAC assistant

James Ramirez, WCD technical support

Agenda Item	Discussion
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Opening	Affirmation and roll call
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(00:00:27)	
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	Co-chair Strickland called the meeting to order and shared an affirmation. Teri Watson called the roll of members. A quorum was not present.
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(00:02:37)	
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	Co-chair Strickland introduced Fiona Yau-Luu, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555, noting that she had applied for the vacant labor seat but had not yet been approved. He stated UFCW has historically been represented on MLAC and referenced its past engagement. He also stated Fiona has previously participated before MLAC as a stakeholder representing UFCW 555. Fiona Yau-Luu expressed she looked forward to joining the committee given her prior experience working on workers' compensation issues in her beginning role at UFCW 555.
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	Public comment
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(00:03:24)	
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	There were no public comments.
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	Review minutes from May 7, 2026
(00:03:45)	Due to the lack of a committee quorum, the meeting minutes were not voted on.
	Department updates
(00:04:02)	NONE
	MLAC roundtable discussion
	<u>MLAC Video</u>
(00:05:01)	The Oregon's Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC) video was played.
	Matt West, WCD administrator
(00:08:51)	Administrator Matt West provided an overview of Oregon's workers' compensation system, outlining the history and impact of the 1990 Mahonia Hall reforms, which led to the creation of the Ombuds Offices, the Preferred Worker Program, and MLAC. He described MLAC's structure, guiding principles, and its role in reviewing legislative proposals, and noted the committee's subcommittee work in 2025. Administrator West also stated MLAC is interested in visiting communities throughout the state to hear directly from workers and employers about their experiences and challenges with the workers' compensation system.
	MLAC Members
(00:14:52)	MLAC members introduced themselves, sharing what industries they represent, how they became involved in MLAC, and why they volunteer their time.
(00:28:09)	Administrator West explained that the Workers' Compensation Division staff support MLAC's work, noting Teri Watson manages meeting logistics and agendas, Baaba Ampah assists with agendas and prepares minutes, and James Ramirez provides technical support.
(00:29:08)	Administrator West asked how MLAC decides on what issues to look at. Co-chair Patrick Priest answered that MLAC's agenda is determined by legislation referred to the committee, but when the legislature is not in session, MLAC also creates a work plan which includes committee interested topics such as access to care. Emily Cronan added the committee can add common issues raised by stakeholders into the work plan, discuss them during meetings, or form subcommittees to broaden within reason.
(00:30:27)	Co-chair Scott Strickland mentioned MLAC is stakeholder driven, noting the committee acts as a facilitator and identifies stakeholders to help drive its work.
(00:31:09)	Administrator West asked how MLAC works with and involves stakeholders in the MLAC process. Sarah Merrick answered that the stakeholders help provide background on issues including information on the impacts and any research or studies behind the topics.

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- (00:31:53) Robert Camarillo, Oregon State Trades Council, asked how MLAC meetings are advertised, noting he had only recently learned about MLAC despite long experience in union leadership, and many workers struggle to navigate the system.
- (00:33:26) Emily Cronan noted MLAC faces challenges connecting the community to the whole process, and the bombardment of potential resources can be confusing for injured workers. She explained MLAC is looking for areas to make the committee more accessible, and members are also working to learn more about how the workers' compensation system intersects with OSHA and other regulatory systems. Emily noted none of the committee members are experts but are trying to bridge these gaps.
- (00:35:32) Teri Watson also answered that public notice for MLAC meetings is sent through GovDelivery to about 2,500 recipients, and she also emailed Senator Nash, Representative Levy, and spoke with the chamber director to help distribute information about the meeting. She added that Barbara Anderson, the Ombuds for Injured Workers, also helps connect with workers.
- (00:36:32) Robert Camarillo iterated that effective stakeholder feedback depends on stakeholders being present and then asked whether MLAC advertises its meetings in multiple languages, noting many Spanish speaking workers struggle to access information, and shared an example involving out-of-state ironworkers who had difficulty navigating available resources.
- (00:37:27) Administrator West noted that one of the biggest challenges in workers' compensation outreach is that most people do not seek information about the system until they are injured, and he welcomed ideas on how to improve awareness. He added that this is the first MLAC group committed to visiting different communities across Oregon to hear about region specific challenges and that MLAC has partnered with OSHA/ASSP Safety & Health conferences to support this effort. Administrator West stated that the Small Business Ombudsman for Workers' Compensation and Ombuds for Oregon Workers are advocates for workers on how to navigate the system, and he also highlighted that Oregon's Preferred Worker Program is recognized as a strong return-to-work resource.
- (00:40:23) Barbara Anderson, Ombuds for Oregon Workers, mentioned that they struggle with being able to get ahold of workers and have been advertising in Spanish and English such as billboards, news interviews, social media advertisement, and travel. She noted that their office is open to travel, provides training and offers pamphlets as needed.
- (00:41:17) Co-chair Strickland noted these are good examples on some of the work done at DCBS, He noted stakeholders' concerns including making the 801-form
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accessible, developing Spanish language materials, and exploring the use of visual wayfinding tools to help injured workers navigate the claims process. He added that MLAC is working to reach communities beyond Salem and incorporate access-to-care and other stakeholder concerns into the work plan. Co-chair Strickland also referenced recent perspective of the workers' compensation system, including an injured worker panel, supported by a translator, management panel, and insurer panel, and although more work remains, the committee is excited to do the work.

- (00:43:32) Robert Camarillo recognized Co-chair Strickland and Teri Watson for promoting the meeting in the trades but noted that there are gaps. He also recognized MLAC for their work. Administrator West also showed appreciation for Robert's feedback.
- (00:44:51) Administrator West asked what happens when MLAC cannot reach an agreement within or between caucuses. Co-chair Priest answered that if MLAC does not reach an agreement, the committee does not support the proposal, which can limit a bill's ability to pass. Emily Cronan added that if an agreement is not reached within a timeframe, the committee may continue conversations through other avenues such as referring their issue to subcommittees.
- (00:46:01) Kim Schlessinger provided an example of the time loss benefit proposal, noting that there were differences between labor and management, which led to the formation of a subcommittee, which ultimately reached a mutual agreement. Co-chair Strickland added that this speaks to MLAC's multi-partisan structure, where multiple stakeholder groups with differing interests participate, and he described how the committee has worked to become more collaborative and pragmatic following the pandemic. Co-chair Strickland emphasized that since MLAC's work has broader impacts, it is in the interest of both labor and management to work together. He acknowledged the efforts by both sides to do so.
- (00:49:34) With no additional questions, Co-chair Strickland showed his appreciation to Administrator West, MLAC members, and the audience for their participation and expressed apologies for not being able to be in person. He announced the upcoming meetings:
- **No meeting in July 2026**
 - **August 6, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., virtual meeting**

(00:50:22) Co-Chair Strickland adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

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

[DCBS Management-Labor Advisory Committee \(MLAC\) June 16, 2026, Meeting](#)

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

<https://www.oregon.gov/dcbs/mlac/Pages/2026-meetings.aspx>