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Labor Commissioner Fights for TriMet Apprenticeship Program

Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle testified at the TriMet Board of Directors meeting this morning against the transit organization’s proposal to eliminate its apprenticeship program.

“TriMet is proposing to eliminate a job-training program that produces highly qualified employees and provides a pathway to middle- and high-wage jobs.” said Commissioner Hoyle. “Job training is good for everyone in our community. Employers benefit from a highly-trained workforce.”

TriMet relies on apprentices for every major construction project, including more than 200,000 apprentice hours for the nationally-lauded Tilikum Crossing.

TriMet’s program is one of the most diverse in the state: 23% of current apprentices are people of color and 13% are women.

“The Trump Administration is gutting apprenticeship programs across the nation. Oregon’s largest public transit agency shouldn’t do the same.” Hoyle said. “TriMet shouldn’t use career pathways as leverage against its employees.”

Apprenticeship programs provide on-the-job training and technical instruction to master skilled trades. Oregon Labor and Industries oversees apprenticeship programs in the state.

TriMet’s Programs:
- The average journey worker wage after program completion is $34.98, nearly three times Oregon’s minimum wage
- 56 apprentices currently in training
- TriMet’s apprenticeship programs are among the most diverse in the state
- TriMet’s apprenticeship programs graduate Rail Technicians, Heavy Duty Bus Mechanics, Plant Maintenance Mechanics, and other classifications

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