



July 30, 2009

Chairpersons  
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Re: Oregon Emergency Jobs Program

Dear Board Chairs:

I want to thank you for your efforts in preparing for the implementation of my Emergency Jobs Program and to suggest other ways that we may advance the goals of that program in the months ahead.

As you know, when our unemployment rate reached record levels several months ago, I proposed the creation of the Emergency Jobs Program to put Oregonians back to work, improve our communities and help families in crisis. I asked your boards and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) to solicit and review proposals for projects to be funded by this program, contingent on approval by the legislature.

Yesterday, the legislature adjourned without approving the program. I have publicly expressed my disappointment at their failure to do so. However, the goals of the program remain relevant and urgent. And the final design of the program, developed in cooperation with key legislators, revealed great potential for incorporating skills assessments and educational incentives for workers who participate in community jobs projects.

I understand that your boards and CCWD received many worthy proposals for the Emergency Jobs Program in the past month. Also, the program raised the visibility of the iMatchSkills system® with job seekers and employers alike. Further, the legislature's approval of the Career Readiness Certificate program will give us another tool with which to address our workforce development goals.

Finally, the proposed use of an education and training benefit for Oregonians who perform temporary community service jobs is an idea that should not be abandoned. It has emerged as a creative and cost-effective way to both encourage and support our longer-term "40/40/20 goal" for post-secondary education and job training. We should be willing to invest in that approach to test its effectiveness.

Chairpersons  
July 30, 2009  
Page Two

To these ends, I urge you to give due consideration to the proposals you have received for community jobs projects, even if only a small fraction of those projects can be approved with available funding. For my part, I am willing to commit up to \$300,000 of the Workforce Investment Act funds to support such projects. In particular, I would like to see projects go forward this summer with the educational benefit designed for the Emergency Jobs Program.

I look forward to working with you this summer to identify and fund worthy projects that can demonstrate the effectiveness of an emergency jobs program in addressing community needs and advancing the educational goals of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theodore R. Kulongoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

TRK:tn:lr