

**Testimony of Raihana Ansary
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Portland Business Alliance
Before Planning and Sustainability Commission
Regarding Economic Opportunity Analysis
April 28, 2015**

Good evening Chair Baugh, Commissioners.

My name is Raihana Ansary, here on behalf of the Portland Business Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the updated 2015 Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA).

As we stated in an earlier letter addressed to the commission, we are gravely concerned about a number of unrealistic assumptions that have been made to artificially fulfill the state of Oregon's planning Goal 9 requirements on economic development. In summary, we are concerned about the following:

1. **The proposal to accommodate a low marine cargo forecast** despite recent trends that indicate otherwise. Since the early 1960's, the lower Columbia River Gateway, including the Portland Harbor, have experienced sustained cargo development with an annual growth rate of 3 percent. Recent commodity flow forecasts show continued growth at 3 percent. Yet, the revised EOA projects an annual growth rate of 1.3 percent.

The low marine cargo forecast is not justified by recent market trends nor is it consistent with existing plans that have been approved by this body and / or Portland City Council including the city's *Economic Development Strategy, Portland Plan, We Build Green Cities Campaign*, and the *Greater Portland Export Plan*. These plans all aim to promote our traded-sector economy and yet, the EOA assumes a low marine cargo forecast.

As we have shown in our Value of Jobs reports, 90 percent of Oregon's exporters are small and medium sized businesses, and export-related jobs pay on average 18 percent more than non-exporting jobs across sectors. In particular, the production of traded-sector goods is still the backbone of Portland-metro's traded-sector employment. Manufacturing

jobs are also found to provide higher wages and better benefits than non-manufacturing jobs, particularly for communities of color and those with less than a four-year college degree. A low marine cargo forecast does not support middle-income job growth or our city's equity goals.

2. **Aspirational brownfield redevelopment.** Second, the revised EOA assumes that 60 percent of brownfields will convert over the next 20 years. This is dependent in large part, however, on the ability of the Oregon Legislature to enact and fund legislation and programs. Additionally, brownfields do not often convert to industrial land due to cost burdens and cumbersome regulations associated with their redevelopment.
3. **Aspirational golf course conversion.** The revised EOA also relies on golf course conversion to meet its employment land forecasts and in particular, industrial land needs. Golf courses are privately owned and an owner must be willing to sell their property. It is our understanding that the only golf course that has expressed a willingness to sell is the Colwood Golf Course and that the owners of other golf courses that are being counted in the EOA to help meet industrial land acreage have not confirmed an interest to sell.

While we appreciate efforts to meet the shortfall, these strategies are aspirational at best and do not reflect market realities. We urge that the EOA and comprehensive plan reflect market realities in an honest attempt to ensure a prosperous and equitable future for our region's residents.

Thank you.