

Chris Beck

Candidate for Congressional District 2

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Business Competitiveness & Regulatory Predictability

Central Oregon businesses are navigating rising costs, regulatory complexity, and economic uncertainty. The Bend Chamber supports policies that strengthen business resiliency while providing greater regulatory and tax predictability.

What federal tax, regulatory, or economic policies would you prioritize to improve the business climate and help Central Oregon businesses invest, grow, and create jobs?

My priority in Congress is delivering federal policies that lower business operating costs, provide long-term planning certainty, and protect key regional economic drivers:

Tax Predictability & Small Business Growth: Small-to-medium enterprises need tax stability to plan long-term investments. I support expanding immediate federal tax deduction (Section 179) thresholds for equipment purchases, technology upgrades, and facility modernization. I will also work to preserve predictable pass-through rates for small businesses, startups, and sole proprietors.

Regulatory Streamlining & Compliance Relief: Federal regulations must deliver clear outcomes without burdensome administrative friction. I will support establishing a Small Business Regulatory Advisory Board to review proposed agency rules for cumulative compliance costs before implementation, ensuring rural and mid-sized community businesses are not disproportionately burdened.

Protecting the Recreation Economy: Outdoor recreation, tourism, and specialty equipment manufacturing are vital to Central Oregon's economy. I will advocate for federal liability frameworks—mirroring state-level Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability (ORCA) efforts—to establish fair, predictable liability standards on public lands, protecting outdoor businesses from frivolous claims while lowering commercial insurance costs.

Cutting Infrastructure Red Tape: I support streamlining federal environmental reviews (NEPA) and permitting timelines for locally backed INFRA- and RAISE-funded transport,

utility, and modern infrastructure projects to ensure federal investment moves into the local economy rapidly.

Workforce Availability & Readiness

Central Oregon employers continue to face challenges recruiting and retaining workers due to housing, healthcare, childcare, and workforce training needs. The Chamber supports policies that increase housing production and childcare access while strengthening career-connected learning, workforce training, and credential portability.

What federal policies would you support to strengthen Central Oregon's workforce by addressing housing and childcare barriers? How would you support improving access to education, training, apprenticeships, and other pathways aligned with employer needs?

Central Oregon's businesses cannot expand if workers cannot find affordable places to live, reliable care for their children, or technical training matched to open jobs. As a centrist Democrat, I treat housing and childcare not merely as social issues, but as critical economic infrastructure necessary for workforce participation.

Expanding Workforce Housing Supply: I will fight to expand federal tax incentives that stimulate mixed-income and middle-income housing development, including expanding the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and creating a Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit (MIHTC) aimed directly at teachers, first responders, tradespeople, and service-industry workers. Additionally, I support federal grants that assist local municipalities in funding the water, sewer, and transport infrastructure required to unlock new land for residential development.

Childcare as an Economic Enabler: Employer capacity is directly constrained by the lack of local childcare capacity. I will advocate for expanding the Employer-Provided Childcare Tax Credit (Section 45F) to give local businesses larger incentives to provide or subsidize childcare options for employees. I also support federal micro-grants for local startup facilities to expand certified home- and center-based care providers in rural and suburban communities across CD-2.

Employer-Aligned Workforce Pipelines: To meet immediate talent needs in high-demand sectors—such as construction, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and technical trades—I will advocate for expanding the federal WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) grant funding. I support expanding federal support

for registered apprenticeships and career-connected learning partnerships between local businesses, secondary schools, Central Oregon Community College (COCC), and OSU-Cascades.

Skilled Labor Integration: I will push for targeted pell grant eligibility for short-term career and technical certifications, enabling workers to gain career-advancing credentials without taking on long-term student debt.

Infrastructure That Enables Regional Growth

The Chamber supports coordinated infrastructure planning and investments that enable housing, private development, and long-term economic growth.

What federal transportation, utility, and infrastructure investments would you prioritize for Central Oregon, and how would you work with local and state partners to secure funding for projects that support housing, business growth, and regional mobility?

Infrastructure is the backbone of regional competitiveness. Smart infrastructure investment in CD-2 is directly tied to lowering housing development costs, improving freight movement along vital commerce corridors, and increasing climate resiliency:

Key Commerce & Mobility Corridors: I will champion competitive grant applications (such as INFRA and RAISE) to modernize major trade routes, specifically focusing on the U.S. 97 corridor—including safety, freight flow, and intersection upgrades on the Bend Parkway and connections north toward Redmond. Improving these bottlenecks protects regional supply chains, reduces congestion, and enhances transit safety.

Utility Infrastructure for Housing Expansion: Housing affordability is severely restricted by the high upfront costs of expanding sewer, water, stormwater, and electric grid capacity. I will advocate for federal USDA Rural Development and EPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funds to help local municipalities absorb grid and utility extension costs, directly unlocking land for middle-income housing and commercial developments.

Regional Multi-Modal & Transit Networks: I will support federal transit funding to expand regional bus-rapid-transit connections (via CET) connecting workforce populations in Redmond, La Pine, and Madras with employment centers in Bend,

lowering commuting costs for workers while expanding employer access to regional labor pools.

Resilient Energy Grid & Broadband Access: Expanding rural broadband access and modernizing power grids are critical for local business retention and emergency management. I will support expanding NTIA broadband deployment grants to close digital dead zones across CD-2 and target federal energy grants to harden regional electrical infrastructure against wildfire risks.

Working with Local and State Partners:

Securing federal investment requires an active, persistent coalition effort. My approach will be driven by regional alignment:

I will maintain continuous coordination with regional leadership—including the Bend Chamber, Central Oregon Cities Organization (COCO), COIC, and ODOT—to ensure local projects are fully staged, shovel-ready, and prioritized well ahead of major federal grant deadlines."

Streamlining Bureaucracy: I will champion technical assistance programs within the DOT and EPA to help mid-sized and rural Central Oregon communities successfully navigate complex federal application processes, ensuring local tax dollars return to our region.