

**Public Testimony**  
**HB 1338**  
**Texas House International Relations & Economic Development Committee**  
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The Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) respectfully submits the following testimony ON **HB 1338** to the House International Relations & Economic Development Committee.

TAWB represents the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) in Texas and the more than 700 business and community leaders across Texas who serve as volunteers on those boards. The 28 LWDBs in Texas direct federal, state, and local funding to workforce development programs. They are where “the rubber hits the road” when it comes to workforce development in their respective regions, with key functions including Employer Engagement, Workforce Stakeholder Partnerships, Career Pathways Development and Coordination with Education & Training Providers.

The individuals from the LWDBs who participate in TAWB include both the professional staff that administer the boards’ activities, as well as local workforce board members from the area business community. These individuals are the ones on the front lines in Texas when it comes to aligning the needs of Texas employers with education and workforce training initiatives.

Among the many tools utilized by LWDBs to bolster workforce training efforts in their respective areas is the State’s Skills Development Fund (SDF). Through SDF, Texas invests in training programs that align with employer demand as needed for long-term regional economic vitality. This important and effective funding mechanism ensures that regional employer-led projects will support the goals of both economic development and workforce development stakeholders. The SDF grants also are a way for policy makers to institutionalize collaboration within regions.

Currently, eligible SDF grant applicants other than LWDBs are required to obtain and submit LWDB comments for their grant application except in the rare instance of competitive applications being submitted. This requirement ensures LWDBs have an opportunity to help plan, coordinate, and align training in the region and to represent to TWC that the planned use

of the grant funds appear appropriately dedicated for genuine needs of regional employers. This also allows local LWDBs to leverage regional resources and expertise to facilitate implementation of sector strategies. Local WDBs must maintain the opportunity to monitor how economic shifts affect the workforce, to adapt training investments and programs in alignment with projected employer demand, and inform business about opportunities and job prospects in particular industries.

We believe it is critical to retain this requirement for all eligible SDF grant applicants in order to maintain the leadership role and local authority of employer-driven workforce development boards in the planning, coordinating, and aligning of training within their regions, as well as their ability to leverage regional resources and expertise to facilitate the implementation of sector strategies. This requirement aligns with the bedrock principle of local control expressed in the state and federal legislation establishing local LWDBs.

We wish to thank the members of the House International Relations & Economic Development Committee for this opportunity to share information we trust will be helpful to you in your deliberations. TAWB stands ready to provide additional information during the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature.