

January 25, 2019

Senate Committee on Business and General Government

Senator Chuck Riley, Chair

Senator Fred Girod, Vice-Chair

Senator Mark Hass, Member

Senator Alan Olsen, Member

Senator Michael Dembrow, Member

900 Court St., NE, S-303

Salem, OR 97301

**Re: SB 258 - Building Entrepreneurial Capacity in Rural Oregon**

Dear Senators Riley, Girod, Hass, Olsen, and Dembrow,

My name is Robert Beckius and I am an entrepreneur in Grants Pass, Oregon who has benefited from Venture Catalyst support in my community.

I am writing to urge you to support SB 258, a bill to fund a statewide network of Venture Catalysts who would focus on connecting entrepreneurs in Oregon's rural communities—like me—with people (mentors & talent), programs (workshops & accelerators), physical assets (space & equipment), and capital (loans & equity).

The name of my start-up company is Apis, Inc. We manufacture air pollution monitoring sensors. In 2017, I connected with Rick Hood, a Venture Catalyst with one of the organizations identified in SB 258 that would build entrepreneurial capacity and support entrepreneurial growth in rural Oregon by developing regional assets and building a statewide network of resources.


(Rick helped me by coordinating meetings and formal pitches' with angel investors throughout Oregon.

With (Rick's assistance, Apis has received over \$500,000 in venture funding and hired engineering and marketing staff from Southern Oregon University.

Having Venture Catalyst support available to me in Grants Pass has meant that I could get the help I needed to grow my business without having to leave my community. Not only do I get to stay in the city I love, but I also get to contribute to boosting its economy and building the foundation for its future.

I encourage you to support SB 258 to ensure Oregon's rural entrepreneurs—like me—have access to the same resources that urban entrepreneurs have. A statewide network of Venture Catalysts will provide long-term economic stability and growth for all Oregonians.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Beckius', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Beckius  
President/CEO Apis, Inc.