



# City of Florence

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January 28, 2019

Senate Committee on Business and General Government  
900 Court Street, NE, S-303  
Salem, OR 97301

Senator Chuck Riley, Chair  
Senator Fred Girod, Vice-Chair  
Senator Mark Hass, Member  
Senator Alan Olsen, Member  
Senator Michael Dembrow, Member

## RE: SB 258 – Building Entrepreneurial Capacity in Rural Oregon

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

My name is Joe Henry, I am the Mayor for the City of Florence Oregon. Florence has invested in and benefited from Venture Catalyst support from one of the organizations identified in SB 258. I am writing you today to ask you to support SB 258.

Florence and other cities and counties in this region have been funding the Venture Catalyst initiative. We have seen **real results** in our community and region from this initiative, including **an increase in: the number of start-ups, the number of living-wage jobs, the amount of revenue generated by these start-ups, and the amount of capital invested in these start-ups.**

Continuing to have a Venture Catalyst in our community that is free to entrepreneurs is an **essential component of our economic development strategy.** We cannot fund this alone though. We need the State to invest in the statewide Venture Catalyst network to ensure the creation of a culture in Oregon that is conducive to entrepreneurial development and growth.

A statewide network of Venture Catalysts will:

- Provide long-term economic stability and growth for all Oregonians.
- Ensure start-ups will be connected to statewide resources that will help them **start, scale, and stay in Oregon.**

I urge you to support SB 258 to ensure Oregon's *rural* entrepreneurs have access to the same resources that *urban* entrepreneurs have.

Yours Respectfully,

Joe Henry  
Mayor, City of Florence