



January 29, 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 Rita Hansen and I am an entrepreneur in Bend, 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 Onboard Dynamics, Inc. We spun out of Oregon State University and are leading the transition from traditional energy fuels to the next generation of energy fuels to power our truck transportation needs. We develop and deploy mobile natural gas compressors to provide fleets and other industry players an easy and cost-effective solution to compressing natural gas, thereby reducing fuel costs and NOx, particulate, and GHG emissions. In the spring of 2013, the professor at Oregon State University – Cascades responsible for the original concept connected with Jim Coonan. Jim was 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.

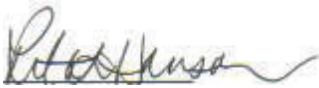
Jim Coonan helped that professor by connecting him to local entrepreneurs, including myself and my fellow co-founders, who could help bring the commercialization expertise to his ARPA-E funded innovation.

With Jim Coonan's assistance, Onboard Dynamics was eventually formed in late 2013 and has raised close to \$9M of total capital and hired 10 employees including 2 engineers from the Oregon State University – Cascades Energy Systems Engineering program. We launched our first product in 2018 and are generating revenues.

Jim Coonan has moved on but was replaced with Brian Vierra in 2014. Having Venture Catalyst support available in Bend has meant that I can continue to get the help I need 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,



Rita Hansen

CEO

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