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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,

I am the City Manager of the City of Lebanon. Lebanon has invested in and benefited from Venture Catalyst support from one of the organizations identified in SB 258. I am writing today to ask you to support SB 258.

Lebanon 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. For the first time in many years nearly all storefronts in downtown Lebanon are filled or have recently been purchased with plans to establish new businesses soon. We also have other budding entrepreneurs working on new business concepts and products who have not yet made to move to brick and mortar facilities.

Having Venture Catalyst support available to these start-up businesses that is free to entrepreneurs is a crucial element in helping to increase their odds for success.

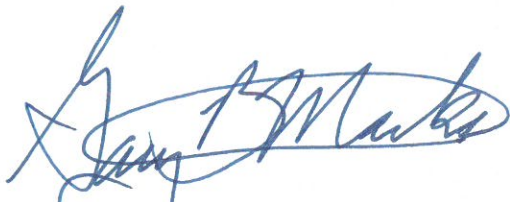
We are not able to fund this alone, though. We need the State to invest in the statewide Venture Catalyst network to ensure the creation of a culture in Oregon that is conducive to entrepreneurial development and growth.

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.

Sincerely,



Gary B. Marks

Gary B. Marks  
City Manager