



CITY OF HALSEY
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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,

I am the City Administrator of Halsey, Oregon. Halsey 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.

With the help of Business Oregon's Rural Opportunities Initiative, we have partnered with other cities and counties in this region to fund a local Venture Catalyst initiative. We have seen **real results** in our community and region from this initiative. For many years, Halsey's economy has been stagnant. In the last year, as part of our work with a regional venture catalyst, we've seen increased activity, made contact with new entrepreneurs in our community and connected them with resources to support their development.

Continuing to have a Venture Catalyst in our community that is free to entrepreneurs is an essential component of our economic development strategy. This kind of "Grassroots" economic development program is key to the resiliency and vitality of small, rural communities like Halsey. 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.

Yours Respectfully,

Hilary Norton
City Administrator

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