

January 28, 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 Deven Paolo and I am an entrepreneur in McMinnville, Oregon who would benefit 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 company is Solid Form Fabrication, Inc. We are custom metal fabricators. I recently connected with McMinnville Economic Development Partnership and learned of Launch Mid-Valley a regional initiative to support start-ups and entrepreneurs. The program is currently in its inception and is in the hiring phase for a regional venture catalyst through the Oregon Entrepreneurs Network. This venture catalyst position is only funded in part but would be a valuable ongoing asset to the Mid-Willamette Valley. This Venture Catalyst is identified with one of the organizations in SB 258 and will help build entrepreneurial capacity, develop regional assets and a statewide network of resources while supporting entrepreneurial growth in rural Oregon.

Funding a designated regional venture catalyst with Launch Mid-Valley could help me by connecting me to valuable resources, such as: mentoring, a pre-accelerator program, help with pitch, capital access, etc.

With a venture catalyst as a part of the Launch Mid-Valley program, their assistance, could allow my company Solid Form Fabrication, Inc. to help my company and team grow through workshops and faster hiring. We've devoted a significant amount of effort into workforce development for our employees and the future workforce and this program would help multiply our efforts

Having Venture Catalyst support available to me in McMinnville, Oregon will mean 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,

Deven Paolo