

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 Jared Cobb and I am the City Administrator for the City of Lowell. Lowell 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.

Lowell 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. Our Venture Catalyst started this January and, even in a community as small as Lowell, he has already identified and started assisting several small trade sector businesses.

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,



Jared Cobb