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Jeanine Wenning
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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,

My name is Jeanine Wenning and I am an entrepreneur in Lebanon 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 current company is Wenning Solutions, a small manufacturing business. Almost two years ago, April, 2017, I met Caroline Cummings at her first RAIN 'Meetup for Startups' at Conversion Brewing in Lebanon, Oregon. RAIN is 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.

Initially I started attending RAIN events hoping to connect with new startups and offer manufacturing and purchasing services to help them as they ramped up production. Caroline gave me several leads for potential customers. At the same time I was learning amazing things about entrepreneuring ideas. While attending these, the desire to create my own product to manufacture and ship was birthed. I attended almost all the meetings, training and mentoring I could get to, not hesitating to travel to other rural cities as well, in the new venture process. My

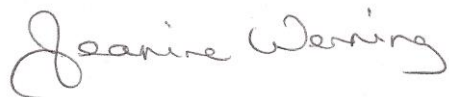
first initial idea was a chicken tractor that could be used in city or rural areas. It was a mentor that RAIN provided that uncovered the recent product called “Omlet Eglu” that already had all the features I was planning on, saving me considerable time and money for a product that already existed.

About a year ago I started investigating a new product idea, “Recliner Bedding”. Caroline Cummings and Corey Wright, who was hired last June, have both helped me tremendously. The training, the mentoring, the contacts, and the “possibilities thinking” have been invaluable. The education and encouragement I’ve received... I wish I’d had decades ago.

I’ve been a small town enthusiast for most of my life. Raised in a logging community, I’ve seen the devastation of struggling economies and watched my kids leave for the “big cities” where they could find careers. I’m empassioned about having business and living wages available for struggling communities. Too many years we’ve heard “we can’t” and the realization that “we can” is such a necessary component to our society. Recently I was reading the history of Linn County. There was so much entrepreneurship that used to go on. We need the help from our politicians to thrive again.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanine Wenning". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

Jeanine Wenning
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