



CITY OF PENDLETON  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

February 19, 2019

Representative John Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Economic Development  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC)

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Bonham, Vice-Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC) programs administered by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) division of the Oregon Business Development Department. Oregon InC provides critical guidance into how best to invest limited dollars to support innovation in Oregon. In addition, Oregon InC provides critical funding for early-stage companies trying to commercialize technology and create the next generation of Oregon businesses. Funding for businesses at this stage is very difficult to find, and Oregon InC's programs help fill these gaps.

The City of Pendleton dba Pendleton UAS Range can say unequivocally that without the financial support from Oregon InC (SOAR Oregon/ODA), then the City and the State would have missed out on one of the rarest rural economic development opportunities to ever come along. Oregon InC funded the highly competitive FAA test range acquisition effort, and also the subsequent requirement for very high-skilled labor, which rarely exists in rural locations, and had to be in place well in advance of UAS operations beginning. The Pendleton UAS Range has become the most active UAS range on the West Coast (non-military). Last year alone, more than 10 aerospace customers produced over 60,000-man hours, millions of dollars in regional commerce, and over 40 permanent jobs in Pendleton. Thanks to Oregon InC's investment, Eastern Oregon Regional Airport, which has operated in the red for well over a decade, is now producing record revenues. Because of the slow market development and costly skilled labor required, without Oregon InC, this endeavor would have fizzled and died long before ever taking flight.

Oregon InC's programs help ensure that Oregon's entrepreneurs are not at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other states that have similar types of support programs. In addition, Oregon InC's funding leverages private investment and federal government grants, which magnifies its impact on Oregon's start-up community. We are solid supporters of Oregon InC and its programs and will continue to work with the Council and the I&E division in the coming biennium to help Oregon's entrepreneurs be as successful as possible. We strongly encourage the Legislature to continue to fund this critical effort.

Sincerely,

Steven B. Chrisman

Airport Manager and Economic Development Director