

February 18, 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,

The Oregon Innovation Council programs (administered by the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Division of the Oregon Business Development Department) are Oregon's answer to the national and global competitive imperative to successfully commercialize research and technological innovation in order to create high-wage opportunities for residents and valuable tax bases for communities.

As a comparatively low-wage and low-cost west coast state, at a time when there is a welcome resurgence in venture capital interest in "hard technology", we are at an important moment of opportunity to improve our economic position. Oregon InC continued and improved programs will help brand-new growth companies land their first significant commercial investment round.

Since 2003, ONAMI has been the beneficiary of Oregon InC support and has used it to become a nationally recognized expert at technology commercialization. We were recognized in 2012 by the State Science and Technology Institute with their prestigious "Best in Technology-Based Innovation" award for Commercializing research.

Companies receiving intensive mentoring and significant "first-money-in" support from ONAMI have raised or earned over \$450M from private investors, customers and federal agencies. Today, ONAMI companies employ over 325 in Oregon, and past ONAMI investments are still resulting in significant funding rounds. *None of this would have been possible without Oregon InC, as there is no other significant source of public or philanthropic funding for these purposes.*

I strongly support continued funding and strategic advancement of Oregon InC and particularly commend to your attention the excellent preliminary benchmarking report it commissioned and received on 12/10/18 from Scruggs and Associates and the Research Triangle Institute.

Sincerely,

Robert D. "Skip" Rung
President and Executive Director