

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

February 19th, 2019

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 to express my strong support for the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC) programs administered by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) division of the Oregon Business Development Department. These programs stimulate sustainable, high-value economic development in Oregon by helping innovative early-stage companies move from concept to reality.

I know first-hand how modest economic funding from the state of Oregon can help bridge early-stage funding gaps. I am the founder and Chief Scientific Officer of mAbDx, Inc., a biotech spinout from the University of Oregon. mAbDx creates diagnostic tests for human and animal diseases. I was also co-founder of MitoSciences, Inc., an earlier spinout from the University of Oregon that makes antibodies as molecular tools for cell biology and pharmaceutical research and development. Both companies have benefited from early stage funding provided by the state of Oregon, including University Venture Development Fund (UVDF) awards, and more recently an SBIR matching grant to mAbDx from the Oregon Business Development Department's Oregon Innovation Fund.

My first biotech company (MitoSciences) was awarded two federal Phase I SBIR/STTR grants (Small Business Innovative Research/Small Business Technology Transfer), both of which moved successfully through Phase II (completion of R&D) and "Phase III" (commercialization) with the help of early funding from a UVDF award. MitoSciences was subsequently acquired by a larger international biotech company (Abcam) but remains located in Eugene's University of Oregon Riverfront Research Park where it has continued to grow (now more than 40 employees) as Abcam's key R&D immunoassay division.

My current company (mAbDx) was recently awarded a Phase I SBIR grant to develop a rapid test for diagnosis of Zika virus infection. To help bridge the gap between Phase I and Phase II SBIR funding, mAbDx has also been awarded an SBIR matching grant from the Oregon Innovation Fund. These additional funds will expedite development and commercialization of our Zika diagnostic rapid test and better position mAbDx to compete successfully for Phase II SBIR funding.

These experiences are positive examples of the significant role Oregon InC programs can play to leverage federal funding and help grow Oregon's creative, high-tech community. I strongly encourage the Oregon Legislature to continue funding Oregon InC and its programs in the coming biennium.

Sincerely,



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