



February 19, 2019

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

RE: Senate Bill 5524 - Support for the Oregon Growth Fund

Dear Co-Chairs Manning and Gomberg and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Oregon Growth Fund (OGF) administered by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) division of the Oregon Business Development Department. As a business grows, it needs to access larger sums of capital that come with specific expertise or mentoring. The OGF is the provider of this next step capital via funding through entities like angel funds, equity investments serving under-represented entrepreneurs and sectors, and nontraditional lenders serving rural and minority-led businesses. Seed and early-stage capital can be particularly difficult to access for some communities and industries, particularly traditionally underserved populations. The OGF is a critical funding tool to help fill existing Oregon capital gaps for growing businesses.

The Oregon Growth Fund has been an important part of both the establishment and continued success of the Cascade Angels Fund based in Bend, Oregon. Since our founding in 2014, Cascade Angels Fund has completed 24 early-stage investments totaling almost \$4 million. Those companies are located throughout the state including Bend, Portland, and Eugene. They employ over 200+ people with 25% female CEOs and over 50% with a female or minority on their executive team. Oregon Growth Fund contributes much needed early-stage capital to fund great entrepreneurs in Oregon.

Creating a stable funding source for the Oregon Growth Fund will ensure that private dollars continue to be leveraged, along with expertise provided, to serve Oregon's entrepreneurs. With the recent increase in later stage investors statewide, it is critical that early-stage funding options exist to fill investment pipelines, keeping growing businesses in Oregon, and employing Oregonians. We are solid supporters of the Oregon Growth Board, and urge the Legislature to continue funding the Oregon Growth Fund.

Sincerely,

Robert Pease, Partner  
Cascade Angels Fund