

February 27, 2019

Senator James Manning, Jr. Co-Chair
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Transportation & Economic Development

Re: Small Business Development Center Impact

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

I am the owner of Zena Forest Products in Rickreall, OR. I want to take a moment to share a little about my business and how my Small Business Development Center helped my business succeed.

Zena Forest Products is a multigenerational family business that works to save, restore and promote the endangered hardwood forests of the Willamette Valley. To this end, we carefully manage our own Zena Forest with a goal of creating a robust and sustainable forest ecosystem supported by the craft production of local Oregon hardwood flooring, lumber and millwork. In addition, we're committed to protecting Oregon's forestland, and help other landowners find ways to keep their forests intact through good management practices.

Zena Forest Products' model is unique: we're the only company in Oregon that's integrated all aspects of the timber process – using sustainable forest management and harvesting practices to create beautiful/heirloom/artisan products made from rare Oregon White Oak, Western Maple and Oregon Ash. We provide a beautiful, local, one-of-a-kind alternative to imported hardwoods for local building projects.

I have been working with the Chemeketa SBDC in Salem for the last 5 years now. Primarily in the Small Business Management (SBM) program, as well as a number of other classes, seminars, and consulting help. The resources available to me through the SBDC are vast, and I have been fortunate to be in a position to take advantage of much of what the SBDC has to offer. From help on employment law and hiring practices, to complex financial accounting resources, to high level marketing and branding support, the SBDC has helped me in myriad different ways.

The hundreds of jobs retained and created, along with the 10's of millions of revenue generated from small businesses in my cohort here in Salem should speak for itself. I urge you to continue to fund the SBDC programs throughout the state. There is no better way to promote and grow our local economies.

Sincerely,

Ben Deumling - Owner, Zena Forest Products

