



March 18, 2019

House Committee On Economic Development

Chair Representative Lively, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Bonham, Representative Fahey, Members of the Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 3251

Chair Representative Lively, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Bonham, Representative Fahey, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Outdoors, I write today in support of HB 3251. Oregon Outdoors (www.oregonoutdoors.org) is a recently-established and rapidly growing coalition of more than thirty outdoor recreation businesses, recreation organizations, and conservation groups committed to the preservation of Oregon's outdoor assets for future generations.

Our coalition has established legislative priorities that members have determined fit several components of Oregon's outdoor industry that are of particular importance to the coalition and represent our collective voice and long term interests for the future of the industry in our state. These priorities include, but are not limited to: outdoor recreation access, recreation infrastructure, economic vitality, and support for responsible recreation.

HB 3251 represents a clear opportunity to grow an important component of Oregon's economy by providing funding for matching grants for outdoor recreation industry business accelerators and membership organizations. These grants will focus on assistance to emerging outdoor recreation businesses in our State, under the mentorship of experienced professionals and will require a 1:1 match, ensuring these companies have a sound business plan and thus an ability to contribute to the long-term economic health of the State. Outdoor Industry businesses often do not fit the profile for investments from venture capitalists and Angel investments, and therefore do not have the same opportunities to grow in their initial stages as some of the other innovative industries in that state do, such as technology start-ups.

Oregon Outdoors views the proposed \$500,000 as a wise investment, given that the Outdoor Industry Association estimates that outdoor recreation provides 172,000 jobs in Oregon and contributes \$749M in State and local taxes each year. In addition, as outdoor industry start-ups are given the tools to succeed, they will contribute to thriving communities, rural economies, stable jobs and the overall economic engine of the state. The positive benefits of the outdoor industry is evidenced in areas like Bend, OR - that other states now look to as a model for growing the outdoor industry in their own communities.

For these reasons, I ask that you please support the amended HB 3251. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Hugh Morrison
Network Coordinator - Oregon Outdoors

Oregon Outdoors Members



outdoor project



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