

February 6, 2020

House Committee on Economic Development
900 Court Street NBE, Room 333
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4157 Outdoor Industry Competitiveness
Fund



ERIC MEADE

PURPOSEFUL CONSULTING

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Fahey,

My name is Eric Meade and I live and work in Bend, OR. I have lived here for 25 years and have been an outdoor business professional for all those years.

I first moved to Bend to join Entre Prises USA, a climbing wall company where Governor Brown ceremoniously signed the bill supporting the Office of Outdoor Recreation in 2017. I was there for 16 years and eventually owned and operated the business while leading the global climbing wall market from Bend with a staff of 72 people. During those times there was virtually no support or access to investment or learning opportunities. I sold that business in 2008 with a successful exit and I plan to stay in Bend and have always been drawn to beautiful outdoor recreational resources.

Since then, I became a small business consultant working primarily with small and emerging outdoor brands in Central Oregon, and out of state from time to time. I am the co-founder of Bend Outdoor Worx and currently hold a Board position for the Oregon Outdoor Alliance.

HB 4157 would significantly move the needle to this under-supported sector in Oregon. While I watch other states like Colorado, Utah, North Carolina and Alaska surpass Oregon with State supported funding for leadership, education and grant/loan programs for these emerging companies, it breaks my heart. Oregon has the chance to be known to support Outdoor, and today it does not.

The Outdoor cluster has done amazing things on its own with shining examples like OOA and BOW, but it is now time to put some gas on the fire so we can support the growth of Oregon's next Columbia, Keen, Danner or Ruffwear. If we do not get the support other states are accessing, we will surely lose out on this massive economic opportunity, which shows a median income in Oregon above other identified clusters that are now receiving support.

Eric Meade

Business Owner
Bend Outdoor Worx co-founder
OOA Board member