



February 09, 2020

House Committee on Economic Development  
900 Court Street NBE, Room 333  
Salem, OR 97301  
RE: Support for HB 4157 Outdoor Industry Competitiveness Fund

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Fahey:

As a long-time veteran of the outdoor industry, I'm writing to support HB 4157. My name is Gary Bracelin, and I am a native Oregonian who has worked for my entire career in our state. I grew up admiring and inspired by successful outdoor companies like Danner and White Stag, then later Nike and Columbia. Over the years, I carved my own path, working for outdoor brands from Oregon as well as other national companies on a global basis.

In 2014, driven by a passion to help sustain outdoor companies within our own state and a desire to lend my experience to my community, I founded Bend Outdoor Worx (BOW), the first outdoor specific accelerator. I also collaborated to help found Oregon Outdoor Alliance (OOA) that same year. My goal was to provide a support system, resources and capital to early stage, struggling outdoor businesses. From the start, both of these organizations gained rapid momentum and have proven models that make an impact on the industry. Both BOW and OOA have attracted companies throughout the state, but also as far away as New Zealand and Alaska for our BOW co-hort program and annual funding event.

The outdoor ecosystem that has swelled in Bend has also attracted attention from other states focusing on the outdoor sector, including Colorado, Alaska and Utah – all who have used BOW, OOA and Bend as case studies in their own economic development plans. These states and others are now deploying public capital and resources to develop this sector in their home states. We now need your help to compete with these states to stay competitive in the development of the next generation of successful outdoor companies based in Oregon.

I truly believe that the timing for an investment in the outdoor industry in Oregon is now. The commitment is proven, the momentum is at a peak and the passion is authentic. I'm confident that HB 4157 would significantly benefit our state and help solidify Oregon as the leader of the outdoor industry.

Sincerely,

Gary Bracelin  
Founder, Bend Outdoor Worx / Co-Founder, Oregon Outdoor Alliance