



February 9, 2020

Representative John Lively, Chair
Representative Julie Fahey, Vice-Chair
Members of House Economic Development Committee

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Honorable Elected Officials,

As the largest job generating metro area in the state per capita, Central Oregon has a critical need to grow our workforce. **Job creation in the Bend-Redmond area over the last decade represented 8.2 percent of all new jobs in Oregon, and Bend has enjoyed the top ranking for economic growth from Milken Research¹, Wallet Hub² and the Centers for American Entrepreneurship³.**

The outdoor industry is a critical sector of our economy in Central Oregon, as the region supports numerous large companies in addition to serving as an incubator for small start-ups. As such, the Bend Chamber of Commerce is in strong support of HB 4157 as it will provide much needed access to capital for our local entrepreneurs.

HB 4157 would provide Business Oregon with \$250,000 in Lottery Funds for the remainder of the 2019-2021 biennium to support Oregon's outdoor products sector. The funds would provide support for start-up and early stage outdoor products manufacturing companies throughout the state, and would leverage company matching funds.

¹ Bend ranked first in five year job growth (19.9 percent) from 2012-2017. "Best Performing Cities Report 2018", Milken Research. <http://www.best-cities.org/2018/best-performing-cities-report-2018.pdf>

² Bend ranked third fastest growing city in 2019. "Fastest Growing Cities in America 2019," WalletHub. <https://wallethub.com/edu/fastest-growing-cities/7010/>

³ Bend-Redmond ranked fourth for growth rate of first financing start-ups in 2019. "America's Rising Start-Up Communities, Center for American Entrepreneurship. <https://startupsusa.org/americas-rising-startup-communities/>

Outdoor products manufacturing has been identified as a priority economic sector by the state of Oregon, and for our region in Central Oregon. However, the state has yet to provide an adequate infrastructure to support this goal. The investments outlined in HB 4157 is an important catalyst to help propel the state and the outdoor sector forward in coming years.

As the local voice for business in Bend and Central Oregon, many of our 1,700 member businesses also support HB 4157. The continued success of the outdoor industry has a demonstrated return on investment, not only for the companies receiving resources, but for the region as a whole.

We urge your support for HB 4157.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katy Brooks
CEO, Bend Chamber of Commerce