



February 12, 2021

House Agricultural and Natural Resources

900 Court Street NE, Room 333 Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2171

Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson + Members of the Committee:

As a long-time veteran of the outdoor industry, I'm writing to support HB 2171. 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 and also helped found Oregon Outdoor Alliance (OOA). 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 attracted attention from other states focusing on the outdoor sector, including Colorado, Alaska and Utah who have used BOW, OOA and Bend as case studies in their 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 outdoor industry has proven to be a strong and resilient sector of our economy. People from around our state (and others who are moving here during the pandemic) are flocking to the outdoors for the wide open spaces in which to recreate, not to mention the peace and solitude. For the health of our state's economy, we need to support and grow this key industry in Oregon at this important time in our history. The commitment is proven, the momentum is contagious and the passion is authentic. I'm confident that HB 2171 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