March 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

RE: SB 5524 – Relating to the financial administration of the Oregon Business Development Department

Greetings,

Phoenix Oregon is a glowing example of the great assistance, good works, and successful missions of Business Oregon. After the devastating Almeda fire in 2020, Phoenix Oregon and all of Jackson County was stricken the devastation of homes, business structures, and broken-hearted lives. It took several days for the fire to extinguish, and several weeks for the smoke to finally clear. When the flames were gone and the smoke was cleared, we faced a huge chasm between our new (scorched) place on earth, and the place we needed to go in order to restore order and restore lives in our community. Business Oregon stepped in, stepped up, and created a bridge for us to cross that chasm from our current devastation to a prosperous and hopeful future. Where we once stood waste high in the ashes of devastation, thanks to Business Oregon we are now progressing forward toward successful restoration. We have come a long way but there is a long way yet to go.

Tawny Bean's forward-thinking, proactive approach, toward problem solving has served our community and all of Southern Oregon with professional successful progress forward. All of the staff of Business Oregon has contributed to helping Phoenix rise for the ashes, and we are extraordinarily grateful for the help Business Oregon has extended to us.

Because of Business Oregon we were provided much needed additional staff capacity through MWAP (Municipal Wildfire Assistant Program) funding and HB 5006 for building and planning staff. Business Oregon helped us secure funding for infrastructure needed to provide long-term solutions for water service in the area served by the Charlotte and Water District. This area which is heavily impacted by the Almeda fires was recently added to Phoenix Urban Growth Boundary, and Business Oregon continues to be instrumental in assisting Phoenix as we plan for recovery and development of the area. Clearly, without Business Oregon giving us a hand up we could never have come this far.

The City of Phoenix very much supports the passage of SB 5524, relating to the financial administration of Business Oregon in the state's 2023-25 biennium budget. We have experienced the help they give to Oregonians first hand. We have experienced it first hand, and we are eternally grateful for the experience itself.

Phoenix has come a long way but we have a long way to go. We are excited to see the provisions and sections 2 and 4 of the bill which allow carryover of the wildfire recovery funds that were allocated in 2021 for the fire impacted communities. We've been able to lay much of the groundwork needed to provide a robust recovery following the Almeda fire, but much of the

potential change is yet to occur with the entire HUD allocation of CDGBR - DR funds for the 2020 Labor Day fire recovery, still waiting to be spent on housing for the fire recovery. Without continued support from the state, preferably through Business Oregon, we will be forced to dramatically cut essential building and planning staff before we've had a chance to access the hundreds of millions of dollars that were sent to Oregon for the fire recovery housing.

The City of Phoenix strongly supports Business Oregon with grateful hearts. It is with that same gratitude from the experience of hope which they have given our city, we support the passage of SB 5524.

Thank you.

Respectfully.

Terry Baker, Mayor
Phoenix Oregon

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Phoenix Is Rising