OREGON SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER NETWORK
Helping Build Oregon's Best Businesses
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Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Testimony relating to SB 5524

To: Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg and Subcommittee Members:

One service provided to Oregon businesses through the Small Business Development Center Network (OSBDCN) is the Market Research Institute (MRI), located at Southern Oregon University. This service has been a part of the OSBDCN since 2014, and has delivered a variety of research reports directly to Oregon businesses to assist them to make informed decisions for strategic and market planning activities. This service is provided through the Oregon Business Development Department and is one way that Oregon businesses are able to remain competitive with their peers from across the nation. Oregon businesses have been able to access new markets, obtain the intelligence for building new products and services, establish new operations and benchmark their performance against peers to figure out specifically where to make improvements in their companies.

Examples of recent MRI work include:

- Identified top export countries for a high-performance metal part manufacturer in Jackson County to support their website and marketing campaign development.
- Collected supporting research for a Portland area business' SBIR grant for a new educational product to support minority students' early childhood literacy development.
- Provided local wage and benefit data, and consumer behavior and spending data, to help a Columbia Gorge retail store retain employees and reach new customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Feasibility analysis for a start-up manufacturing business in Eastern Oregon, including target market segmentation and size and competitive landscape.
- Supported a health service provider relocating from California by identifying and comparing top locations in the Portland Metro Area for her business.
- Developed and conducted a survey of local businesses for a county government to identify key areas for improvement to create a more business-friendly environment

One challenge has been meeting the increasing diversity of needs expressed by client businesses, which ultimately has provided opportunity to improve as well as extend the usefulness of the service. The past two years have proven especially difficult, as the stresses expressed by businesses regarding their experiences have increased. As Oregon is a small business state, the need for business support is critical to the ability of our businesses to survive in an increasingly difficult environment. In the past few years, clients have had the following things to say about the support they have received from the MRI:

" The information you have gathered is priceless, and there is no way I could have gleaned it on my own."

“ Thank you so much for the market research report. I really appreciate the work that you have put into this. It will be extremely helpful for my business plan.”

The OSBDCN’s statewide services not only support businesses directly through the Network, but are increasingly being used in tandem with other service providers across Oregon in collaboration and partnership to leverage all the investments made by Federal, State, local and private parties for the benefit of the greater Oregon economy. These services continue to be directed at helping the Oregon economy grow to remain competitive on a National and World stage.

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