



February 18, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development:

Representative John Lively (Chair)

Representative Daniel Bonham (Member)

Representative Julie Fahey (Member)

Representative Greg Barreto (Member)

Representative Christine Drazan (Member)

Representative Ken Helm (Member)

Representative Pam Marsh (Member)

Representative Caddy McKeown (Member)

Representative Susan McLain (Member)

Representative Kim Wallan (Member)

Representative Brad Witt (Member)

900 Court St., NE, S-303

Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2641 - Increasing the commercialization of university-based or -assisted research in the South Willamette Valley

Dear Chair Lively & Members of the Oregon House Committee on Economic Development:

My name is Caroline Cummings and I am the Executive Director of Oregon RAIN (Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network). **I am writing today to ask you to support HB 2641 to ensure the momentum of innovation continues in Oregon's South Willamette Valley.**

Some background: As a result of the 77th Legislature, Oregon RAIN was created to promote strong linkages between Oregon State University and the University of Oregon's innovation and accelerator programs. To accomplish that goal, Oregon RAIN helped catalyze both of the accelerators mentioned in this bill – the Oregon State University Advantage Accelerator (OSUAA) and Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network Eugene (RAIN Eugene).

Please note: *Despite the similarities in name, Oregon RAIN is a separate organization from RAIN Eugene; each is an independent 501(c)3. Since 2015, Oregon RAIN has helped launch and scale RAIN Eugene and OSUAA by fundraising for them; referring entrepreneurs, startup companies, and mentors to them; promoting their events; and assisting their accelerator graduates by connecting them to people, programs, physical assets, and capital to increase their commercialization and sustainability.*

Oregon RAIN's board of directors voted in October 2018 to cease fundraising for RAIN Eugene and OSUAA and to focus on serving rural communities statewide (not just in our original four-county region). Due to this new direction, RAIN Eugene and OSUAA are collaborating to continue commercializing university research and assisting traded-sector startups in the Eugene and Corvallis areas. **These two accelerators serve as a critical hub to the rural communities that surround them, and it's imperative they continue to thrive in the South Willamette Valley's entrepreneurial ecosystem.**

I urge you to support HB 2641 to ensure innovations associated with RAIN Eugene and OSUAA have access to the same resources entrepreneurs and innovators have in the Portland metro area.

Yours Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caroline Cummings".

Caroline Cummings

Executive Director | OregonRAIN.org

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