



February 20, 2019

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Economic Development
Oregon Legislature

RE: City of Eugene Support for HB2641

The City of Eugene supports the passage of HB 2641, which would provide state assistance to a successful business accelerator program in Eugene and Corvallis.

Eugene is working to grow its key industries, with a variety of investments, programs, and partnerships. For example:

- The City has recently invested local resources to construct a municipally owned fiber network that has increased levels of telecommunications service and lowered costs. This fiber network has helped to grow and retain existing local companies, enabled new businesses to form, and attracted firms from out of town. The network has been a key tool to grow our burgeoning tech sector.
- The University of Oregon is building the Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact. That facility will change the UO and the community as it begins to fast-track scientific discoveries into innovations.
- The City of Eugene is also investing in the redevelopment of the EWEB headquarters site into a new riverfront neighborhood that connects the UO and the downtown. The redevelopment will transform an industrial site into a neighborhood that provides housing and commercial activity along the Willamette River.

All of these investments are contributing to a more vibrant economy in the Eugene area. RAIN Eugene plays a key role in that effort. It has been the anchor for entrepreneurship in the Eugene metropolitan area since 2014. It has established a hub for start-up businesses to find the resources they need to grow and prosper. There are successful businesses today in the Eugene area that exist because they received education, mentorship, and investors through the RAIN Eugene program.

RAIN Eugene has received essential support from the state. The City of Eugene and the University of Oregon have also provided resources to ensure that RAIN Eugene can provide its services. RAIN Eugene resides at 942 Olive Street in downtown Eugene. The building is the result of a partnership between the City and the University. The City gave the building to the University, a value of \$750,000. The University subsequently renovated the building, investing \$2.7 million to create a space for entrepreneurship to grow. The University provides RAIN Eugene with a physical home, by gifting the cost of rent.

RAIN Eugene has a small second space that offers wet laboratory space for our growing bioscience industry. The City of Eugene owns that physical space, and gifts the majority of its rent, a value of approximately \$15,000 per year.

In addition to providing physical space, the City has contributed over \$100,000 in direct financial assistance to support pre-accelerator programming and general operations costs over the last three fiscal years.

RAIN Eugene is one of the most impactful tools the City has implemented for economic development. It has helped to create new firms, new jobs, and new income. It has connected capital investors to businesses so they can grow faster. These firms will continue to grow, and they will positively contribute to our Oregon economy for many years.

Thank you for your support of HB 2641 and innovation ecosystems in the Southern Willamette Valley.

Sincerely,

Submitted Electronically

Anne Fifield
Economic Strategies Manager
City of Eugene