

January 29, 2019

Senate Committee on Business and General Government  
Senator Chuck Riley, Chair  
Senator Fred Girod, Vice-Chair  
Senator Mark Hass, Member  
Senator Alan Olsen, Member  
Senator Michael Dembrow, Member  
900 Court St., NE, S-303  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: SB 258 - Building Entrepreneurial Capacity in Rural Oregon**

Dear Senators Riley, Girod, Hass, Olsen, and Dembrow,

I'm writing regarding bill SB 258 as a Portland-based entrepreneur who has truly benefited from the Venture Catalyst program here in this community. I implore you to support SB 258. This bill funds a statewide network of Venture Catalysts who would focus on connecting entrepreneurs in Oregon's communities with **people** (mentors & talent), **programs** (workshops & accelerators), **physical assets** (space & equipment), and **capital** (loans & equity).

My startup company, Nexgarden, is designing high efficiency indoor farm facilities that are targeted at bringing the cost of indoor grown produce down to conventional comparable prices. This past year, my cofounder and I had the honor of working with Laura Kubisiak, a Venture Catalyst with one of the organizations identified in SB 258 that would build entrepreneurial capacity and support entrepreneurial growth in Oregon by developing regional assets and building a statewide network of resources. Laura helped us with business mentoring, connections to potential sources of capital, and with pitch coaching. Her assistance helped us refine the message and story that Nexgarden is telling, and she has made incredibly valuable introductions to strategic partners for us.

Having Venture Catalyst support available to me has meant that I could get the help I needed to grow my business without having to leave my community, and I get to contribute to boosting its economy and building the foundation for its future.

I encourage you to support SB 258 to ensure Oregon's entrepreneurs have access to resources needed to support and scale our businesses. A statewide network of Venture Catalysts will provide long-term economic stability and growth for all Oregonians.

Kindly,

*Skyler Pearson*

Skyler Pearson  
CEO, Nexgarden  
@nexgarden

