



February 20, 2019

Representative John Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Economic Development  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC)

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Bonham, Vice-Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC) programs administered by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) division of the Oregon Business Development Department. Oregon InC provides critical guidance into how best to invest limited dollars to support innovation in Oregon. In addition, Oregon InC provides critical funding for early-stage companies trying to commercialize technology and create the next generation of Oregon businesses. Funding for businesses at this stage is very difficult to find, and Oregon InC's programs help fill these gaps.

BioSpeech is an Oregon Health & Science University startup company that creates software products that serve diagnostic, screening, assistive, and remedial purposes for individuals with verbal communication (listening and speaking) challenges, including but not limited to individuals with hearing loss, autism, and Alzheimer's. The company thus occupies the intersection of two important Oregon industry groups: Software/IT and Bioscience. Unique features of BioSpeech are (1) its focus on behavioral, as opposed to physical, manifestations of these challenges and (2) its expertise in innovative speech signal processing and machine learning algorithms.

BioSpeech recently received a matching grant from Oregon InC's for our NIH funded SBIR project The Prosody Assessment Toolbox. This matching grant specifically focuses money on commercialization of our product which was extremely helpful since the NIH does not provide for marketing and commercialization. Our product offers an objective, accurate, efficient and cost effective solution to clinical health practitioners in assessment of pragmatic language disorders. It is a part of an expanding suite of innovative diagnostic, screening, assistive, and remedial Apps that serve individuals who have verbal communication challenges – resulting from hearing loss, speech/language impairment, being a non-native speaker, or social communication difficulties. The success of this product will help bolster the overall vision for BioSpeech.

The continued successful expansion of BioSpeech's product line helps to ensure continued growth in the company. This growth of BioSpeech enables the continuation of producing well-paying jobs for a diverse collection of professionals: data scientists, programmers, UI/UX designers, speech

professionals and scientists, voice talents, and other folks needed to create an expanding suite of multimodal Apps for health. In addition, it will infuse the local software community with opportunities to expand into Apps in the rapidly growing field of applications of machine learning and data science to language and speech.

Oregon InC's programs help ensure that Oregon's entrepreneurs are not at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other states that have similar types of support programs. In addition, Oregon InC's funding leverages private investment and federal government grants, which magnifies its impact on Oregon's start-up community. We are solid supporters of Oregon InC and its programs and will continue to work with the Council and the I&E division in the coming biennium to help Oregon's entrepreneurs be as successful as possible. We strongly encourage the Legislature to continue to fund this critical effort.

Sincerely,

Kirsty Lindaas-Hamilton, MS, CCC-SLP

VP for Product Development

**BioSpeech**

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