



April 19, 2023

Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Oregon State Legislature
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Letter of Support for HB2908, for formation, improvement and operation of Small Business Development Centers

Dear Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

Oregon's Small Business Development Centers have helped 626,000 businesses over the course of their existence in this state and House Bill 2908 – if it passes – could help them have an even greater economic impact in helping to solve our state's biggest problems and create jobs in every corner of the state.

The bill sets aside \$10 million for Business Oregon to create a grant program for the state's SBDC Network—the largest business assistance provider in the state, with 20 regional centers and a Global Trade Center in more than 43 locations across the state—to help individual centers better meet the needs of small businesses in their local communities.

Under House Bill 2908, Oregon's SBDCs can apply for grants to fund economic projects such as business incubation for certain industries, extra support for businesses still recovering from the pandemic, regional economic development initiatives and expanding SBDCs' abilities to serve underrepresented businesses. Results of the grant-funded initiatives will be measured by the SBDC Network's robust reporting system.

Driving economic development and expanding services to small businesses is the goal of the bill. The centers partner with local and regional governments and organizations to ensure small businesses have access to the best technical assistance resources available. Many clients of SBDCs are in the critical early stages when many business ideas are either made or broken. SBDCs provide expert advice and assistance to help good ideas flourish.

Redmond Economic Development Inc. (REDI) is a 501c6 private, non-profit organization serving the Redmond community with a mission to create prosperity through community and business development. REDI has been partnering with the regional SBDC based at Central Oregon Community College for many years and worked with them in the effort to address the state's childcare crisis as they rolled out a successful training program which is being duplicated at many other SBDCs across the state.



As the former Associate State Director for the Oregon SBDC Network, I can say that the services provided by the SBDCs are invaluable to small businesses across the state as well as in the Redmond community where we partner regularly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Curley", is written over a faint, light gray signature line.

Steven R. Curley, Director
Redmond Economic Development, Inc.