

ARONORA

18 March 2025

Senator Aaron Woods, Co-Chair

Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic
Development

900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

My name is Norah Verbout, and I am the Director of Strategic Partnerships at Aronora, Inc., a Portland-based biotech company dedicated to developing novel therapies for blood clotting diseases. I write today in strong support of continued funding for the Oregon Translational Research and Development Institute (OTRADI) and the Oregon Bioscience Incubator (OBI), which have played a crucial role in fostering the growth of Oregon's bioscience sector.

OTRADI is one of Oregon's Centers of Innovation Excellence, operating as a non-profit under Business Oregon and the Oregon Innovation Council. Its mission—to drive economic development by translating groundbreaking research into life-changing products and high-wage jobs—has had a direct and tangible impact on companies like Aronora and many others in our state.

Founded in 2009 as a spin-off from OHSU, Aronora has grown from an early-stage startup to a clinical-stage biotech company with multiple promising therapies in development. Our pipeline includes a phase 2 therapeutic antibody for chronic clotting conditions, a phase 2 therapeutic enzyme for acute clotting conditions, and two additional preclinical therapies. To date, we have raised \$64 million, primarily in critical funding from the NIH Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. Our next phase of growth requires additional investment, and we are actively seeking venture capital and strategic partnerships.

One of the defining strengths of Oregon's startup ecosystem is the sense of community among local biotech companies. Those of us who have trained here want to stay here, and we have built our companies with that commitment in mind. However, access to suitable lab and office space remains one of the most significant challenges for growing bioscience startups.

When I joined Aronora in 2010, we struggled to find a location that met our specialized laboratory needs. The available options either required significant capital investment on our part or were not suited for applied biotechnology. That changed in 2013 when OBI began offering space to early-stage companies like ours. Aronora was one of OBI's very first client companies, and we worked closely with the OBI/OTRADI director to design lab space that enabled us to conduct the foundational research behind two of our Investigational New Drug applications. Just as importantly, the incubator provided office space where our team could manage the administrative and operational demands of a biotech startup.

After more than five years at OBI, we have since expanded into a dedicated facility in downtown Portland, continuing our mission to develop life-saving therapies. None of this would have been possible without the support of OTRADI and the OBI. These resources are not just helpful—they are essential for bioscience startups to survive and thrive in Oregon. With recent NIH budget cuts threatening critical funding streams, the role of state-backed incubators like OBI is more important than ever.

I strongly urge you to support continued funding for OTRADI and the OBI. This investment will ensure that Oregon remains a competitive hub for bioscience innovation, attracting talent, creating high-wage jobs, and bringing groundbreaking medical advancements to market. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Norah G Verbout
Director of Strategic Partnerships

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