



March 14, 2025

Representative Danie Nguyen, Chair
House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Nguyen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Heather Ellis, and I am the Executive Director of OTRADI – the Oregon Translational Research and Development Institute – and the Oregon Bioscience Incubator (OBI).

OTRADI is one of Oregon's Centers of Innovation Excellence. OTRADI is a non-profit institute funded primarily by the State of Oregon, under the umbrella of Business Oregon and the Oregon Innovation Council. OTRADI's mission is to fuel the economic development of Oregon's bioscience industry by enabling the translation of innovative research into products and companies that benefit human health and create high-wage jobs for Oregon.

Oregon's biotech industry has experienced incredible growth. In a recent economic impact survey of the 21-year period between 2002 and 2023, private bioscience employment increased 127.1% (+7,921 jobs), total wages increased 376.3% (+\$1B), and average annual wages increased 109.7% (+\$48,501). In 2023, this powerhouse industry generated over \$11.5B in economic activity. (see *Oregon's Bio Boom 2025 Economic Impact Report* [here](#)).

OTRADI was created to help startup companies and university researchers in Oregon find funding partners with the underlying goal of attracting, growing, and keeping bioscience companies and jobs here in Oregon. Since our inception in 2007, OTRADI has leveraged \$23.3 million in state funding into more than \$928 million company federal and private funds, and more than \$133 million in company generated revenue. OTRADI works with more than 75 bioscience companies across Oregon.

We listened to the needs of these companies and found that there was a serious unmet need for bioscience incubation space in Oregon. Small bioscience companies need to use their limited funds to hire employees and produce the research that will launch their products. These businesses are limited by capital, and they cannot afford to spend their resources on building out and equipping their own wet labs and office space. Therefore, incubators are a necessity for helping to grow bioscience startup companies, but a business incubator is about much more than just providing labs and offices. It is also about providing all the critical services companies often lack in the early stages of business expansion. To meet these ongoing and needs, OTRADI



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4640 S MACADAM AVENUE, SUITE 240 PORTLAND, OREGON 97239 • 503-227-1814



has expanded to 29,000 square feet of wet lab and office facilities and provides hundreds of thousands of dollars of cost-prohibitive equipment in shared labs and conference facilities. In addition, OBI provides mentor programs led by seasoned entrepreneurs and business experts, entrepreneurial education programs, and networking events. Most importantly, the OBI is a community of companies at different stages ranging from single employee companies to those receiving their first rounds of private venture funding. The camaraderie and lessons learned by companies sharing space has proved to be invaluable to growing bioscience businesses. Since its inception, OTRADI and OBI have been fueled by collaboration.

In 2024, OTRADI received 30% of the new Center of Innovation Excellence funding invested by Business Oregon, which enabled us to leverage \$79.8 million. As a result, OTRADI accounted for 55% of total funds leveraged by all Centers of Innovation Excellence that year. Since we are only one of five such centers, this reflects our significant contribution. Additionally, we achieved an impressive 64% return on investment from the state funds we received. This return means more jobs, more innovative products, and more economic vitality in Oregon.

However, continued state funding is crucial at this pivotal moment. We must continue to build, scale, and enhance the bioscience industry in Oregon. By investing in OTRADI and OBI, we provide the tools and resources needed for entrepreneurs to thrive and facilitate groundbreaking research that can lead to real-world solutions for pressing health challenges.

The OBI is committed to listening to the evolving needs of our bioscience community and to being an integral part of our growing bioscience ecosystem in Oregon. Supporting OTRADI and the Oregon Bioscience Incubator is an investment in the future of Oregon – one filled with high-wage jobs, economic activity, and healthier communities. Thank you for being our partners in these exciting days to come.

Sincerely,

Heather Ellis

Executive Director
OTRADI and Oregon Bioscience Incubator
4640 S Macadam Ave., Ste. 240
Portland, Oregon 97239
main: 503-227-1814
hellis@otradi.org



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