

March 26, 2025

Representative Daniel 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:

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.

I am the CEO and Founder of Rewire AI, a high-tech AI startup based here in Portland. Our platform, provides specialized artificial intelligence tools for biomedical imaging, improving the speed and accuracy of microscopes and diagnostic devices. Rewire's technology directly supports advancements in healthcare diagnostics, positively impacts patient outcomes, fosters economic growth through job creation, and attracts significant federal funding to Oregon.

Rewire AI owes its early success and ongoing growth largely to the support we received from OTRADI/OBI. While initially offered incentives to establish Rewire in Washington state, the supportive infrastructure provided by OTRADI—including mentorship, affordable office space, and connections within Oregon's entrepreneurial bioscience community—made Oregon our clear choice. Critically, OBI introduced Rewire to our earliest investors and facilitated a pitching workshop and competition, which Rewire subsequently won. Prior to this event, I had pitched dozens of investors nationwide with little success. However, the visibility and credibility we gained from winning the pitch competition led to multiple term sheets, enabling us to secure sufficient funding to launch our AI platform and start generating revenue. It is clear to me that without OBI's direct support of this event and encouragement for me to participate, Rewire likely would not have ever succeeded in securing outside investments.

OTRADI has continuously provided critical support in obtaining federal grants, investor relationships, and commercialization strategies, contributing significantly to Rewire's approximately \$4 million in revenue and numerous jobs created in Oregon. Securing initial NIH SBIR funding is notoriously challenging without prior NIH awards, especially for early-stage companies with facilities that may otherwise be limited to a garage. OBI's letter of support and its professional lab and workspaces were instrumental in establishing credibility with NIH

reviewers, significantly enhancing the overall quality and competitiveness of our grant applications. Given the current uncertainty surrounding NIH funding and federal SBIR awards, companies like Rewire face increased challenges in securing funding, making us even more dependent upon the essential resources and support provided by OTRADI. Continued investment in OTRADI as a Center of Innovation Excellence is more critical than ever, ensuring Oregon-based bioscience companies remain competitive and effectively navigate these challenges.

We are supportive of OTRADI/OBI's continued funding as we are seeking to stay and grow our operations here in Oregon. We look forward to a continued close partnership with OTRADI and the OBI in the future. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



John Harkness, Ph.D.  
Founder & CEO, Rewire AI  
1618 SW 1st Ave, Ste. 403  
Portland, OR 97219