



Mayor Melanie Kebler
710 NW Wall Street
Bend, OR 97702

Bend City Council

Mayor Kebler and City Council Members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber, I am writing in support of the proposed Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB) 2026–2028 Workplan and the Small Business Assistance Grant Program currently under consideration by the City of Bend. These initiatives represent a strategic and forward-looking investment in Bend’s economic vitality and demonstrate a commitment to supporting the businesses that play a vital role in our community.

The Bend Chamber strongly supports the priorities outlined in the BEDAB Workplan, particularly the emphasis on business retention, workforce resilience, innovation, and inclusive economic opportunity. These focus areas align closely with the needs we consistently hear from businesses across Bend as they navigate workforce challenges, rising operational costs, economic uncertainty, and changing market conditions. We look forward to partnering with BEDAB to bring business voices to the table in the listening sessions outlined in the Workplan.

The proposed Small Business Assistance Grant Program is an especially important and impactful component of this work. The program creates an accessible mechanism for small businesses to invest in operational improvements, modernization, and resilience planning. These types of investments are critical to helping local businesses remain competitive, sustainable, and positioned for long-term success.

We also appreciate the program’s inclusion of climate-related project eligibility and its alignment with the City’s Community Climate Action Plan. Supporting businesses in implementing energy efficiency measures, sustainability improvements, and climate resilience strategies helps create a stronger and more resilient local economy while advancing broader community goals.

Small businesses are central to Bend’s economic health, community identity, and quality of life. They create jobs, activate commercial corridors, support local families, and contribute to the entrepreneurial spirit that makes Bend unique. The BEDAB Workplan and Small Business Assistance Grant Program provide meaningful tools to support these businesses and strengthen the broader economic ecosystem.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to fostering a strong, resilient, and inclusive economy for Bend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Orendel", written in a cursive style.

Sara Odendahl
CEO
Bend Chamber