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Members of the Senate Institutional Sustainability & Innovation Committee  
Hearing on SB 792  
May 7<sup>th</sup> 2026  
Testimony of Steve Thorne, CSO and Founder of Kalivir Immunotherapeutics

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today on what I agree to be a very important topic.

As scientific founder and CSO of Kalivir Immunotherapeutics and founder of Duo Oncology, both Biotech companies based in Pittsburgh, I have become familiar with both the huge untapped potential and the challenges of establishing life sciences companies in this region.

Kalivir Immunotherapeutics was founded in 2019 and is a clinical stage cancer immunotherapy company, with several assets undergoing clinical testing for treatment of different solid tumors. The company has raised over 100M\$ through its partnerships (with Astellas and Roche) and VC financing. Currently we have over 20 employees, mostly based in Pittsburgh, many of whom are younger and locally educated and who would otherwise likely have left the area, as well as some more skilled employees who have been relocated to the region.

In addition, Kalivir has invested over 5M\$ in local infrastructure through construction of a manufacturing facility to produce biological therapies (such as gene and cell therapies) for clinical use. Building this facility primarily utilized local contractors.

I am here today to strongly advocate for an increase in the pool of funds set aside for the PA R&D tax credit program. Kalivir applied for the first time in 2024 and then again in 2025. The program is meaningful for Kalivir because it rewards spending with PA



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based vendors. We have built strong working relationships with the University of Pittsburgh, UPMC, Hilltop Lab Animals, Eurofins and Center for Breakthrough Medicine. Using vendors located in PA makes practical sense, and the R&D Tax credit provides additional incentive to consider service providers within PA.

When we submitted our initial application, the PA Department of Revenue sent back requests for additional information. Our Controller appreciated this as it demonstrated a commitment to spending PA taxpayer money wisely.

For the 2023 tax year, Kalivir submitted an application for \$455K, and we were awarded \$180K from the pool of funds available.

For the 2024 tax year, Kalivir submitted an application for \$267K, and we were awarded \$87K from the pool of funds available.

Kalivir did not have PA taxable income for 2024 and took advantage of the opportunity to sell our 2023 tax credit to another company. This provided capital that we immediately reinvested into our operations.

Indeed, as we have grown as a company the PA R&D tax credits have become critical to maintaining the company during several difficult periods. Kalivir therefore strongly encourages the legislature to consider increasing the pool of funds available for the R&D credit program. It has had a direct, tangible impact on our growth and, I believe, on economic activity in PA in general.

Despite our preference to continue to grow in Pittsburgh, there are other regions in the US that would also be attractive to locate to due to local tax breaks and offers of matching financial support, as well as deeper pre-existing skilled workforce (many of whom are reluctant to relocate to Pittsburgh due to concerns over the limited pool of existing life sciences companies in the area). Programs like the PA R&D tax credits will likely keep us in Pittsburgh and will continue to encourage us to work with PA-based vendors.

Sincerely

Steve Thorne  
CSO and Founder, Kalivir Immunotherapeutics



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