



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

April 27, 2011

Testimony in Support of S. Sub. HB 2149

Regent Ed McKechnie, Vice-Chair

Chairman Rhoades, Ranking Member Feuerborn, and members of the Committee, I am here today on behalf of the Kansas Board of Regents in support of Senate Substitute for HB 2149; legislation that would create a multi-year program to directly address the critical workforce shortage of engineering graduates.

This legislation would allow Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, and Wichita State University to expand their current capacity for educating engineering students in order to meet future workforce demands and be responsive to industry needs. The Board of Regents fully supports and endorses Senate Substitute for HB 2149 and its collaborative goal to increase engineering graduates by 60% for the State of Kansas. The Board of Regents is also appreciative of the support Governor Brownback has provided for the initial year of this program.

As proposed in the “University Engineering Initiative Act,” the number of annual engineering graduates would increase to 1,365 by FY 2021, an increase of 490 annually. This legislation would also create the “Kan-Grow Engineering Fund” that would be administered by the Board of Regents. This fund would be started with the initial investment of \$1 million recommended by Governor Brownback, and grow in FY 2013 with a transfer of \$4 million from the Expanded Lottery Act Revenue Fund (ELARF). In FY 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter, a transfer of \$7 million from ELARF to the Kan-Grow Engineering Fund would be made. These funds would require a \$1-\$1 match, from non-state sources, by the three engineering schools in order to access funding in the Kan-Grow Engineering Fund.

Recognizing the significant economic return and vital role engineering programs play for our state, Senate President Morris urged the Board to begin working on this initiative a few years ago, in a collaborative effort with our campus and industry leaders. We understand industries that employ engineers will be a major engine in the economic recovery of Kansas. Expanding the capacity for educating engineering students is an investment in the economic recovery of Kansas. According to a recent independent economic impact study conducted by Goss & Associates, it takes the State of Kansas less than three years to recoup the investment in an engineering graduate.

The Board of Regents welcomes the opportunity to administer the program that Senate Substitute for HB 2149 would create, and to facilitate the development of human capital that meets the increased needs of the state. Engineering graduates play a critical role in advancing the economic vitality of Kansas, and the Board is appreciative of the leadership and vision that has produced this university engineering initiative.

Thank you for your consideration and favorable support of Senate Substitute for HB 2149.

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