

Testimony in Support of HB 5031 – A Well-Funded Oregon University System



For Public Hearing Scheduled on March 27, 2013, Before the
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

To Co-Chairs Komp and Monroe, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

The City of Wilsonville supports robust funding of House Bill 5031 over and above that amount suggested by the Co-Chairs' Budget. A good starting point for discussion is the additional \$86 million advocated by a coalition of business and community leaders known as The Oregon Idea.

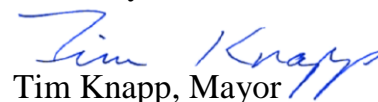
As a city with 20,000 jobs that attracts workers from across the greater Portland metro region and North Willamette Valley to work primarily for industrial firms in manufacturing, Wilsonville community leaders hear constantly from high-tech firms like Mentor Graphics, FLIR, Rockwell Collins, Xerox and others of an inability to recruit sufficient numbers of Oregon graduate students in fields like engineering, computer-aided design and software development. In order to meet the demand for students trained in these and other fields, Wilsonville employers have to go out of state and even out of the country to acquire the talents and skill-sets that enable these Oregon-based companies to compete successfully in the global economy.

This business issue of employers being unable to locate the needed trained workers in-state is so acute that the City has worked closely with Oregon Tech to assist the college in consolidating to Wilsonville, even though the facility housing Oregon Tech may eventually become publicly owned and taken-off of the local property-tax rolls. A number of our city's employers have existing relationships with Oregon Tech that are being strengthened by the new metro campus in Wilsonville.

Greater investment in post-secondary education is needed to create well-paying jobs and get Oregon's economy back on track. A highly-trained and well-educated workforce is a competitive advantage for Oregon in today's fast-paced world economy. Studies have shown that states that invest in post-secondary education are more likely to have a prosperous economy. Conversely, states that underfund their colleges and universities put their workforce at a disadvantage and shortchange their economies.

Help to strengthen the Oregon economy by building a skilled and well-trained workforce that enables our businesses to be competitive. The City of Wilsonville urges a substantial increase in the budget allocated to the Oregon University System in HB 5031.

Sincerely,


Tim Knapp, Mayor
City of Wilsonville