



## Engineering and Technology Industry Council

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**Eileen Boerger**  
CorSource Technology

**Chris Brooks**

**Keith Brown**  
IBM

**Michael Burger**  
Cascade Microtech

**Dick Burnham**  
RF Stearns

**Tom Buzak**

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**Mike Rohwer**  
PHTech

**Mike Stadnisky**  
FlowJo LLC

February 25, 2015

Representative Tobias Read  
House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development  
900 Court St NE H-286  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Talent Council (House Bill 2728)

Dear Chair Read and Members of the Committee,

For the past 17 years, ETIC—a state-wide industry-led council of senior executives of Oregon's high technology companies—has advised the State on the investment of funds to meet urgent, emerging talent needs. The investments funded strategic and targeted industry-serving initiatives directed at building capacity and capability within Oregon's post-secondary education system.

During that period, state funds have been leveraged with private investments to double the graduates and build innovative and responsive programs to meet the high tech industry's urgent needs. Having ***shared investment dollars makes the key difference*** to responding quickly and effectively.

With the talent gaps in high technology as urgent as they have ever been, ETIC believes that ***the work must continue into the next decade***. To prepare, ETIC, with the support and commitment of industry, has engaged in a revitalization effort to ensure that our mission remains contemporary with Oregon's talent demands, while accountable for the dollars invested and as transparent as possible.

At the ETIC quarterly meeting on January 23, 2015, the council **unanimously voted to endorse HB2728**. Accordingly, this letter is written in strong support of HB2728 that creates the Oregon Talent Council and sunsets the Engineering and Technology Council.

Through an extensive three-year process ***we have examined the components required to meet the state's needs into the future***. From that effort, ETIC made the following key changes that preceded the Oregon Talent Council:

- ***Reconfirmed the purpose*** of the ETIC fund to focus on change and growth initiatives.
- ***Rebalanced the existing portfolio*** to move funds that were needed for sustaining university technical programs to the HECC. ETIC has reduced its funding size request in the upcoming biennium for the growth portion of the fund, and advocates for an adjustment upward of \$24.5 million to the HECC.

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- *Built industry's value as trusted advisors*, independent of programmatic aspects. Developed a strong statement of industry needs and forecasts to support effective strategic planning and investment.
- *Increased access* by reaching statewide and including all post-secondary education.
- *Acted as an effective one-stop for industry influence*, by partnering with other agencies and organizations that address talent, economic development and educational needs. This isn't something that one company, one agency or one region can solve alone. By partnering, we reduced inefficiencies and eliminate redundancy.

During our journey, and after many conversations, it was clear to those involved that we were missing out on an ***additional strategic opportunity***. ETIC by statute is narrow in focus; namely to meet the talent needs of Oregon's high tech community. Although that mission remains critical, it is only one industry sector that could benefit from an ETIC-like investment model. (Indeed, ETIC has funded efforts in other sectors over its history, as needs were identified.) Agriculture/forestry, healthcare, energy, construction, advanced manufacturing, and food/beverage industries: ***many other sectors, in addition to high tech, have unique talent shortfalls that are slowing Oregon's economic progress.***

These observations were foundational to the Oregon Talent Council concept and organization, and were the catalyst for subsequent engagement with industry leadership in other sectors to refine and develop the OTC.

In summary, through HB2728, the Oregon Talent Council will be located within, and work closely with, the Oregon Employment Department. Taking advantage of the expert resources within OED, the council would be able to match investments with needs, and most importantly track the impact of those precious dollars. The OTC will work with state agencies to cross silos and strengthen ties among economic development, education and the workforce system, better prioritizing investments based on industry needs. The OTC will also be responsible for assisting in the identification of industry trends and needs, allocating limited startup funds to post-secondary institutions, and advocating for accessibility to programs for all sections of the state and citizens of Oregon.

We strongly endorse HB2728 and the positive workforce benefits this measure will create.

Respectfully,



Eric Meslow  
Chair