

Testimony to
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
By Michael P. Hollern
February 23, 2017

Good afternoon, Members of the Committee,

I am Mike Hollern. I have been Chairman of the Board of Brooks Resources Corporation since its inception in 1969 and was the former President of Brooks-Scanlon, Inc. from 1970 until its sale to Diamond International in 1980. Brooks Scanlon was the largest employer in Bend during a time when our Central Oregon economy was heavily dependent on the forest products industry. Brooks Resources is a real estate development company responsible for projects like Black Butte Ranch, NorthWest Crossing, Awbrey Butte, Mount Bachelor Village Resort and many others in Central Oregon.

We are fortunate in Central Oregon to have a great climate, abundant recreation opportunities, an enviable quality of life and a diversifying economy. We have survived the loss of most of the forest products jobs that were here 30-40 years ago. We are still subject to sharp shifts in economic cycles, up and down. We were particularly hard hit in the 2006-2010 recession with the loss of construction, recreation and hospitality industry jobs, and major reductions in real estate values.

Many of us who have been around for a long time have dreamed about and advocated for a four year University in Central Oregon for years. Under Ed Ray's and Becky Johnson's leadership and with support from our community and the legislature, we are seeing those dreams come true, but we need the \$69.5 million funding in HB 2782 to continue that momentum through the next biennium.

You are all aware of the stabilizing influence a University can have on a region's economy, both through workforce and business development and through the University's and students' own spending and economic impact.

I have had the honor and pleasure of serving as the Governor's Convenor of the Central Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee for the last four plus years. Members of that committee include elected leaders from Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties, Mayors and City Councilors from Bend, Lapine, Redmond, Prineville and Sisters, plus representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the private sector, educators and the philanthropic community. We debated the highest priority economic development activity or project we could support to create or retain well-paid jobs in our three county region. We unanimously made support of the creation and growth of the OSU

Cascades campus in Bend our number one priority. OSU Cascades has exceptionally strong and enthusiastic regional support, not just from the Bend community.

We understand and appreciate the difficult budget decisions you will need to make in this session for the 2017-19 budget, but your support of HB 2782 is critical to give OSU Cascades the ability to provide higher education capacity in Central Oregon so that it contributes to our region's and the state's economic prosperity, rather than drawing on its social services.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael P. Hollern

Chairman, Brooks Resources Corporation

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