

*April 17, 2021*

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee,

My name is Randy Cox and I live in Klamath Falls. I am the CEO for Klamath County Economic Development Association (KCEDA) and I am also a graduate of Oregon Institute of Technology. Not only because of my role leading economic development efforts, but also as an alum from an Oregon university, I respectfully request that you support robust investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund at \$900 million, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million.

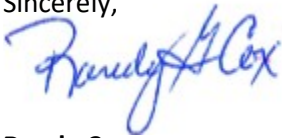
Our work at KCEDA is primarily focused on business recruitment, business retention, expansion, and scalable entrepreneurship. Our efforts to stimulate area development has in recent years been positively impacted by the talent generated through Oregon Tech University. The Oregon Tech campus produces the talent required to drive business in our region, strengthening our economic vitality and providing opportunities to grow our local economy.

Both the Public University Support Fund and the Oregon Opportunity Grant are important pieces to future success for graduates and economic vitality for Oregon. Budget cuts to higher education would be particularly harmful during this critical time. Creating access for underserved and low-income students is of utmost importance in helping the economy recover. Funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities for all Oregon students, and it is more crucial now than ever.

KCEDA has over 40 active projects in our pipeline, each of which is dependent on the talent generated by Oregon Tech. Furthermore, as we continue to see the investment in the Klamath Falls campus, we anticipate that many of Oregon Tech's graduates will join the workforce throughout our community. Our pipeline of projects potentially represents billions of dollars in capital investment, along with thousands of new jobs for Klamath County. A mainstay in our ability to attract new businesses into our community is Oregon Tech's ability to provide a skilled and progressive workforce.

I know you will be forced to make tough budget decisions this session, and I hope you will prioritize funding for public education. The willingness of policymakers to commit resources to protect the state's fragile cradle-to-career public education system may determine whether the impact of COVID-19 is measured in years or in generations.

Sincerely,



**Randy Cox**

CEO, KCEDA / Choose Klamath ~ *It's Just Better Here!*