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Testimony on Behalf

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SB 5528 – Support of Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds

Members of The Ways and Means Education Subcommittee:

For your record, I am Scott Ashford, dean of the College of Engineering at Oregon State University.

I am here today on behalf of a coalition of engineering deans at PSU, OSU, and OIT, and the executive director of the UofO Knight Campus. We are asking you to please support a 7.42% base funding increase to the university state programs budget, which includes the Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds.

The Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds (ETSF) enable us to continue to increase the number, and improve the quality, of engineers in the state. Further, the stability provided by ETSF allows each institution to invest in key priorities, including the recruitment and retention of an inclusive, diverse student body and faculty.

For 22 years, the legislature has provided Oregon's public engineering and computer science programs with critical support through directed funding. These funds have transformed engineering programs in the state, supported innovation, and boosted the state's economy with a competitive workforce. Because of this support, the state's programs have kept pace with demand for a growing workforce, which has remained high even during difficult times.

The state's historical investment through the Engineering Technology Industry Council, and now through the ETSF, has produced significant ROI. It has:

- Tripled the number of engineering graduates in the state.
- More than tripled research expenditures.
- Successfully enabled a focus on diversifying faculty and student populations, as evidenced by:
 - Oregon State University doubling the number of women on the engineering faculty, ranking second nationally among land-grant universities for percentage of tenured or tenure-track faculty who are women and ranking third among the nation's public highly research active R1 universities.
 - Portland State University increasing underrepresented minorities to 37% of students.
 - Oregon Institute of Technology doubling the number of women on the engineering and technology faculty.
 - University of Oregon increasing underrepresented minorities to 50% within graduate internship programs.
- Provided substantial economic mobility for students graduating with engineering degrees.
- Created the workforce that is fueling industries important to Oregon's economy.
- Leveraged private donor and industry philanthropic support.

ETSF funding remains essential for public institutions to provide meaningful access to engineering education, produce graduates to join the growing workforce, and fuel the economy as we climb out of the current crisis.