



April 27, 2023

To: The Honorable Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Re: HB 5025 - Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF)

From: Kyle Ritchey-Noll, Education & Workforce Policy Director, OBC

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

For the record, I'm Kyle Ritchey-Noll, and I am the Education & Workforce Policy Director, for the Oregon Business Council. I'm here today to urge the Legislature's continued funding for the Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF).

The ETSF supports engineering and technology programs across the state's seven public universities. It has supported innovation and equity in technology education and helped build a competitive workforce. At this time when Oregon is making historic investments to ensure its competitiveness in the semiconductor sector, the ETSF is a critical tool to strengthen and diversify the state's semiconductor workforce.

More than 20 years ago, the Legislature made the wise decision to make sustained, targeted investments in engineering and technology education. Since that time, legislative investment has tripled the number of engineering graduates and research expenditures, and diversified faculty and student bodies.

Last year, OBC convened the Oregon Semiconductor Competitiveness Task Force, co-chaired by Senator Ron Wyden, Governor Kate Brown, and Maria Pope, President & CEO of PGE, to develop a strategy to prepare for the opportunity presented by the CHIPS Act. We learned through that process that the success of Oregon's semiconductor industry depends on building a world-class workforce. Talent is often called out as a top factor driving decisions about where to invest. The CHIPS Act and the Legislature's recent passage of SB 4 are already spurring expansion of Oregon's semiconductor industry, which makes support for technology talent development even more urgent.

An investment in the ETSF is an investment in Oregon's future workforce. Please support a base funding increase to the university state programs budget, which includes the Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF), in HB 5025. Thank you.