



April 25, 2011

The Honorable Marc Rhoades
Chair, Kansas House Appropriations Committee
Kansas State Capitol, Room 351-S
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Reference: House Bill 2149

Dear Representative Rhoads:

The economic success of our state relies on its ability to attract a broad range of industries to Kansas and create jobs for its citizens.

As industries consider opportunities to relocate or expand, they increasingly look at the availability of an educated, skilled and local workforce. House Bill 2149, the university engineering initiative act, directly addresses the State's ability to provide that critical workforce of the future. The university engineering initiative act and the Kan-grow engineering funds it creates, will help increase the number of engineering graduates in our state. When those graduates find their careers in Kansas, the entire State benefits as they purchase homes and raise their families here.

Collaboration between the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Wichita State University and the Kan-grow engineering funds, will show industry the benefits of doing business in our state. Universities provide entrepreneurs and existing businesses with access to world-class laboratory facilities, research and experts in their fields. Approving HB 2149 demonstrates a commitment to using the unique resources of our major universities to grow jobs and the economy in Kansas, two elements critical to its prosperity. House Bill 2149 will not increase the State's current budget deficit since it will use future funds only.

Governor Brownback's Economic Development Strategic Plan builds upon his Road Map for Kansas which stressed the importance of economic growth and education. Kansas has an opportunity to attract a broad range of industries including aviation, military support, aerospace and energy by demonstrating its commitment to its three major universities as engines of economic prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Kern". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Tom Kern
President/CEO, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce

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Appropriations Committee

Date April 28, 2011

Attachment 6