

**Tom Hilpert – Director Advanced Design & Central Engineering
Hawker Beechcraft
Testimony in Support of Senate Sub for HB 2149
April 27, 2011
House Appropriations Committee**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I am Tom Hilpert and I am Director Of Advanced Design & Central Engineering of Hawker Beechcraft.

Headquartered in Wichita, Kansas, Hawker Beechcraft Corporation is a world-leading manufacturer of business, special mission and trainer aircraft – designing, marketing and supporting aviation products and services for businesses, governments and individuals worldwide. Since 1932, we have produced over 54,000 aircraft with more than 36,000 still flying today. In 2010, Hawker Beechcraft generated more than \$2.8B in sales. Nearly 60% of our new aircraft deliveries were exported in 2010, making a significant contribution to the trade balance. We currently have 5,000 employees working in Kansas and employ approximately 750 in engineering.

If our company is to grow and prosper here in Kansas, we need a steady supply of trained engineers. Over the last three years, we have employed nearly 80 interns with 60 of them from Kansas Universities. We have continued to hire new graduates during that same time period. While we have hired graduates from 12 universities outside of Kansas, it is the Kansas trained engineers that desire to remain in our state long-term.

In order to continue to train engineers to be competitive in the global market, our Kansas universities need the support of our great state! The Engineering Growth Initiative supports this effort by providing the much needed seed money to our three Engineering Schools. This commitment and endorsement by the state of Kansas will attract additional funding. We are confident that the respective Deans of the Engineering Schools at Kansas University, Kansas State and Wichita State will use these funds to ensure academic excellence, practical skills applications, adequate infrastructure and enhanced scholarship opportunities for Kansans.

A major element of Hawker Beechcraft's decision to remain in Kansas last December was the ability to have a steady stream of world-class engineers. Aircraft are some of the most challenging products to design, certify and produce. Countries all over the globe desire to create an aviation cluster like we have in Wichita. These countries are providing backing to their respective universities to ensure their engineers can compete with the well established knowledge base we have.

In closing, we urge you to support Senate Substitute for HB 2149 to ensure that companies like Hawker Beechcraft can continue to meet the needs of our global customers with highly skilled engineers from our Kansas Universities. I would be happy to answer questions now or at the appropriate time.

Appropriations Committee

Date April 27, 2011

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