

The Honorable Tim Kaine, Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

April 9th, 2008

Dear Governor Kaine:

On behalf of the undersigned business leadership organizations and the approximately 360 senior business leaders who comprise our respective Boards, we are writing in strong support of an amendment to the budget that would restore the \$5 million in proposed cuts from research funds for modeling and simulation at Old Dominion University.

As you know, the current two-year state budget provides ODU with \$8 million for modeling & simulation research, which has enabled ODU to hire 15 research faculty members and successfully compete nearly \$10 million worth of research grant projects. The Commonwealth's modest investment has been a major contributor to the growth of the modeling & simulation industry in Hampton Roads.

The proposed cut in research funds poses the very real risk of Virginia losing its competitive advantage in modeling & simulation, a rapidly growing industry that is already generating an economic return of nearly \$700 million annually to the region and the Commonwealth.

The potential loss of funding for modeling and simulation research funds comes at a time when Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth are hard at work to prevent the loss of an aircraft carrier to Florida. Florida and more specifically Orlando, is Hampton Roads' biggest competitor with respect to modeling and simulation, and the loss of research funds could very well tilt the playing field in their favor.

While we are making a compelling case for the aircraft carrier staying in Hampton Roads, that decision will ultimately be made by others outside of Virginia. Retaining our competitive advantage in modeling and simulation is within our control and the choices we make with respect to the Commonwealth's investment in modeling and simulation will go a long way

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towards determining whether the modeling and simulation industry grows here in Hampton Roads or in Florida.

Sincerely,

Franklin P. Earley
President, Greater Norfolk Corporation

Stephen R. Davis
President, Virginia Beach Vision

Dr. Donald Buckley
President, Chesapeake Alliance

Art Bredemeyer
President, Suffolk Tomorrow

William H. Hargrove III
President, Portsmouth Partnership