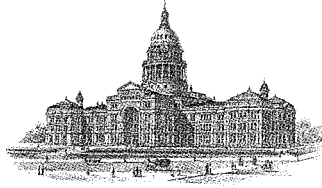


THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS



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AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS
BUSINESS & COMMERCE
NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE AFFAIRS

MIKE JACKSON

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Pete Olson
514 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: National Biodefense Training Center FY 2010 Appropriations Request.

Dear Congressman Olson,

I am writing to support The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston's (UTMB) National Biodefense Training Center (NBTC). UTMB is a leader in biodefense training and is expanding a comprehensive training program to meet the dramatic increase in demand for personnel trained to work safely and securely in biocontainment research facilities. Initiated with funding first provided through the efforts of U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison in FY 2008 and 2009, the continued growth of the NBTC will meet not only a critical need to train new staff for the Galveston National Laboratory located on the UTMB campus, but also serve the growing demand nationally and internationally for well trained research scientists.

The federal government has funded construction of more than 2.6 million gross square feet of biodefense research facilities involving Biological Safety Level 3 (BSL-3) and BSL-4 laboratories at a cost of approximately \$2 billion. Researchers in these labs are working to develop countermeasures against the threat of bioterrorism and emerging infectious diseases. Many facilities are now nearly complete, and over the coming year more will begin operations studying and advancing treatments and vaccines against some of the most dangerous infectious diseases known. It is anticipated that several hundred new scientists, technicians and engineering support personnel will be needed to staff these new facilities, and at present few opportunities exist to adequately prepare and train individuals for this important work.

UTMB is a nationally acclaimed leader in training researchers to work in this highly sensitive industry. While UTMB currently serves a limited number of collaborators in the region, the need to expand their training programs to serve others is great. UTMB is requesting an additional \$5 million to expand both the physical capacity to accommodate a larger number of students, and to enhance the faculty with additional experienced instructors and mentors. The model to be used ensures that students fully master well-defined core competencies while being taught in individual or small group settings. High level biosafety training requires hands-on training in a dedicated training facility and later under the close supervision of a senior mentor working inside the containment research facilities.

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Well trained researchers can and will advance the public health for the local, state and national community. With continued support and funding, the NBTC can meet the growing regional, national and international demand for well trained biocontainment scientists and engineers who themselves are a critical tool in our national defense and preparedness arsenal against naturally occurring and man-made biological threats. We sincerely appreciate your leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives on this project that is essential to the health and safety of Texas and the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Jackson
State Senator
District 11