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for

The Joint Legislative Task Force on Unemployment Benefit Equity  
July 26, 2005

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide public comment to the Joint Legislative Task Force on Unemployment Insurance Benefit Equity. I appreciate your time and consideration.

First, I'd like to thank all of you for agreeing to serve on this extremely important task force. While you could be doing a lot of other things with your time this summer, you are here at the table working diligently to improve Washington's Unemployment Insurance System. You all should be commended for your dedication to this important cause.

As you know, The Boeing Company supported HB 2255 during the 2005 Legislative Session. That bill created this task force with the goal of bringing business and labor to the negotiating table to find a compromise on which all of us can agree by January 2006. That is a difficult task, but one which The Boeing Company believes is essential to the future competitiveness of Washington State.

Boeing believes that a two-year study of the unemployment insurance system, with both business and labor at the table, is the best way to accomplish the ultimate goal of a system that reduces business costs and ensures that those individuals who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own, particularly workers in seasonal industries, receive adequate benefits.

I am very grateful to Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown, Speaker Frank Chopp, Senator Kohl-Welles, and Representative Conway for stating clearly their joint commitment to the goal of reducing the costs of Washington's Unemployment Insurance system to 200 percent of the national average. I strongly urge all members of the Task Force to work toward this very reasonable goal and to find a way to accomplish this cost savings within four to six years. Reducing the costs of Washington's system is essential to The Boeing Company's ability to compete in today's highly competitive global marketplace and it is essential to the state's ability to attract new businesses and jobs.

Thank you again for taking on this difficult assignment. I look forward to working closely with you to find a solution we can all support.