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# Blueprint for Economic Clusters, Long-term Growth Takes Shape

*Recommendations include improvements in education, workforce training and regulatory policy*

HOUSTON – Today in a speech at the Houston Technology Center, Gov. Rick Perry announced the results of a study by the Industry Cluster Initiative Task Force, a group of business leaders charged by the governor with determining how to accelerate the development of industry clusters, or groups of related technology employers located in the same geographic area. The report includes recommendations from more than 700 industry leaders across the state on improvements to education, workforce training, transportation and regulatory policies.

“Technology innovation is the lifeblood of our future economic growth. Texas has a vested interest in technology innovation and commercialization because these areas are essential to the long-term prosperity of this state and our people,” Perry said. “While Texas is well-positioned to reap some of the economic benefits of emerging technology, the proposals made by the Cluster Initiative Task Force will allow us to maximize opportunity and investments by developing industry clusters.”

The recommendations include:

- Establishing a “Just in Time” education system that equips public school students with the skills employers will need at the time of their graduation. Curriculum must be adaptable to changing workforce needs. Applied math, science and technology programs should also be strengthened.
- Helping technology employers develop apprenticeship programs for secondary students so they are ready to succeed in the workplace.
- Reassessing and revising regulatory policies that inhibit collaboration between industry sectors, government, academia and local workforce development boards, and streamlining the permitting process.
- Removing bureaucratic roadblocks that prevent university employees from participating in the management of companies that market their products. Oftentimes inventions created in Texas are licensed to out-of-state firms because of current rules, taking jobs and investment with them.

“What’s important about the Cluster Initiative and these task force recommendations is that for the first time in Texas history, we have a coordinated, market-driven economic development strategy that focuses

on the areas of the economy with the greatest growth potential,” Perry said. “Texas cannot rely on the same old methods to attract economic growth if we hope to stay competitive in the high-stakes, high-tech global marketplace of tomorrow.”

Last year, Perry proposed the creation of the \$200 million Emerging Technology Fund so that Texas can make a long-term commitment to growing our technology economy. With the Emerging Technology Fund, Texas will help universities form new partnerships with the private sector, bolster research capabilities of Texas institutions of higher learning and help start-up companies get the capital they need to transform ideas into life-changing inventions.