New Hampshire’s Business and Industry Association has called on the State legislature to support the University System of New Hampshire funding request to ensure a tuition freeze for New Hampshire students for another two years. In testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, the BIA’s President, Jim Roche, highlighted several areas of concern related to the next biennial budget, including higher education and specifically the University System of New Hampshire.

“Supporting secondary education, especially STEM programs at our community colleges and universities, is critically important for ensuring our next-generation workforce is educated and prepared for 21st-century jobs,” Roche testified. “Specifically, BIA supports the University System of New Hampshire's biennial appropriations request for restoration of funding to a level that will adequately support the continuation of a tuition freeze.”

USNH Chancellor, Dr. Todd Leach applauded the announcement. “We appreciate the members of the Business and Industry Association recognizing the important role higher education plays in our state’s economy. We need an educated workforce if we are to continue to keep New Hampshire competitive in today’s marketplace. This is an investment in our state’s future.”

State support is the driving factor behind the tuition in–state students pay to attend USNH institutions. USNH had originally requested $100–million for FY2016 and $105–million for FY2017, which would have allowed the tuition freeze to continue for a fourth consecutive year and included investments in STEM programs and scholarships.

Recognizing the tight challenges of crafting a state budget in this biennium, USNH has scaled back their original request to only fund the New Hampshire student tuition freeze at a cost of $90 million for FY2016, and $95–million in FY2017.

“Student and families would greatly benefit from the continuation of a tuition freeze for New Hampshire students. Working with the business community and the NH State Senate, I hope we will be able to provide this much needed financial support,” said Leach.