

FCR 14

Office of the President
June 13, 2024

Members, Board of Trustees:

IMPROVE CENTER FOR APPLIED ENERGY RESEARCH FACILITIES
(CARBON FIBER DEVELOPMENT FACILITY) CAPITAL PROJECT

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve the initiation of the Improve Center for Applied Energy Research (CAER) Facilities (Carbon Fiber Development Facility) capital project.

Background: Pursuant to Administrative Regulation 8:2, any capital project with an estimated cost of \$1,000,000 or more must be approved by the Board prior to initiation.

The University's CAER is working in partnership with Oak Ridge National Laboratory Carbon Fiber Technology Center (ORNL) to construct a new laboratory building to serve as a pilot-scale process development unit for converting coal to high-value carbon products. The new laboratory will be approximately 5,000 square feet and located at the CAER location adjacent to the Spinline and Pitch Lab buildings. In partnership with ORNL, the CAER will produce high-value carbon fiber from raw coal at the largest scale in the United States. This new purpose-built facility is necessary to process tons of coal efficiently and safely into mesophase pitch, recover and utilize by-products, and develop new sustainable technologies to generate high-value carbon fiber, binders, and other materials for composite structures.

At its February 2020 meeting, the Board approved the initiation of this project with an original scope of \$2,500,000. Due to increases in construction costs, the Board approved a \$1,000,000 scope increase in June 2022. Unfortunately, due to both inflationary increases in the construction market and delays in approvals for the federal funds, the scope of the project has further increased by \$1,200,000 bringing the total estimated cost to \$4,700,000.

This \$4,700,000 project, authorized by the 2024 Kentucky General Assembly, is within the total legislative authorization of \$75,000,000 and will be funded with a combination of federal funds from the Department of Energy and agency funds. Pending Board approval, the University will report the use of federal funds for the project to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____



Fayette County



Imagery Source: EagleView (Fall 2023)
Created by UK Facilities Information Services
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