

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 7, 2015

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

We write to you today to express our strong support for the Illinois Regional Proof-of-Concept Network grant proposal for the 2014 EDA i6 Challenge. The EDA i6 funds will catalyze systemic infrastructure and collaboration across technologies and across the state—broadening efforts beyond a single proof-of-concept center in one region or university.

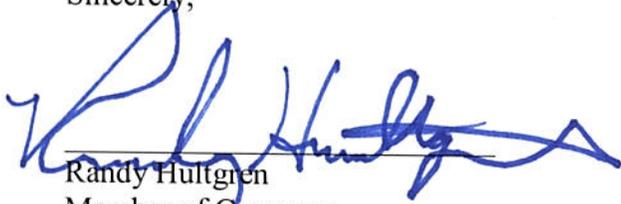
Partners in the state – including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition – have provided more than \$2 million in matching commitments extending well beyond the required \$500,000 match requirement. More than 40 research institutions, companies, and regional economic development organizations from all parts of the state have supported this proposal demonstrating Illinois’ strong commitment to technology-based economic development.

This project will build on significant State investments in innovation infrastructure to establish connections between top research institutions and accelerate deployment of top new technologies, thereby driving competitiveness in key Illinois industries including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and information technology. This unique approach will strengthen and sustain proof-of-concept activities at multiple top research institutions – nine initially – and link their researchers to technology commercialization and industry partners.

While the State administration will undergo transition in January 2015, we can assure EDA that this project and the underlying technology commercialization objectives remain central to Illinois’ economic development strategy. In addition, all funds committed through this proposal are available and will be deployed upon award. Project implementation will continue to be run through the investment arm of the University of Illinois, IllinoisVENTURES, which has a strong track record of delivering impact through publicly-funded investment and commercialization programs.

We ask that you give this proposal all due consideration. Thank you for your attention to this request, and if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,

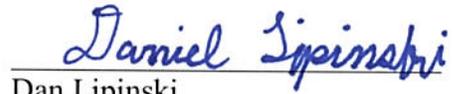

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Member of Congress


Mike Bost
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Rodney Davis
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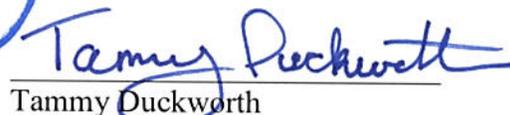

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Tammy Duckworth
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cc: Illinois Governor-Elect Bruce Rauner