

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
H-309 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Acting Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Honda:

As you develop the Commerce, Justice & Science (CJS) Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2017, we write to respectfully urge you to provide continued and sufficient funding for the Regional Innovation program within the Economic Development Administration (EDA). A targeted investment in this program will help further leverage existing federal resources designed to support the development of regional innovation ecosystems and high-growth industry clusters – networks of interconnected firms and institutions working to accelerate job growth, business formation and expansion, innovation, workforce training, and small business development.

Recently, the Fiscal Year 2016 Omnibus included \$15 million for the Regional Innovation Program. This is a welcome recognition of the important role regional industry clusters and innovation strategies play in job creation and economic growth, and Congress must continue to fund it sufficiently.

Sufficient funding for the Regional Innovation Program would further support EDA's effort to build regional innovation clusters, strengthening initiatives such as the i6 Challenge – a competitive grant program initiated in 2010 to support job creation and regional economic growth.

Models of innovation networks at the state level continue to demonstrate significant results. We believe that federal initiatives and investments must advance the lessons learned through these models and on the successes being achieved through the EDA Challenges thus far. Providing sufficient funding for the Regional Innovation Program will allow EDA to continue its investment in high-growth regional strategies, and leverage other public and private resources intended to accelerate innovation, job creation, and regional economic development.

We know that you have a difficult task ahead of you as you make funding decisions. However, we believe high priority should be given to initiatives like the Regional Innovation program that are designed to generate public-private partnerships, stimulate private investment, empower state and local stakeholders, and support economic renewal and job creation in high-growth industries. We respectfully request continued and sufficient funding for the Regional Innovation Program in the FY 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you for the Committee's kind consideration.

Sincerely,

David N. Cicilline

Member of Congress

Randy Hultgren

Member of Congress