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PENNSYLVANIA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 14, 2023

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

I write today to express my support for the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub program and to highlight why Pennsylvania is among the best places in the Nation to bring that program to life. For far too long, only a handful of American cities have reaped the rewards of being on the technological frontier, from high-paying jobs to investments in companies and technological infrastructure. Seeking to address this issue and also to invest in our national security and competitiveness, Congress created the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs, commonly known as Tech Hubs, in the CHIPS and Science Act. This new place-based economic development initiative will drive technology-centered growth in communities beyond the small collection of coastal cities that have traditionally led the country by designating communities as Tech Hubs and following with direct investments in regional tech economies.

In designating and funding Tech Hubs, EDA has been tasked to look for places with the potential for future growth, but where growth is not guaranteed. Pennsylvania has many high-asset, high-potential places where a Tech Hub investment can tip the scale towards prosperity. Many Pennsylvania cities are already on the cusp of breaking through to become the Nation's leader in various high-tech industries. From life sciences in the Southeast part of the Commonwealth to agricultural innovation in Central Pennsylvania to robotics, space technology, and additive manufacturing in the Southwest, Pennsylvania's next generation regional specializations are already taking shape. A Tech Hub designation and the federal investments that could come with it would deepen these specializations and unlock new jobs and regional growth, allowing Pennsylvania and the Nation to be not just regional leaders, but global juggernauts in these fields.

Additionally, Pennsylvania has key existing assets that can be leveraged to help ensure a Tech Hub's viability and ultimate success in the Commonwealth. High-capacity research universities and strong workforce training systems produce a strong talent pipeline to fill the good-paying jobs these clusters would create. The Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure also has the capacity to support the influx of economic activity born out of a Tech Hub. These assets are no historical accident—many of the Pennsylvania communities that powered the economic growth

of the past have the infrastructure needed to lead new progress. With a robust talent pipeline for advanced manufacturing, an ideal location for regional logistics, and an already growing economy, Pennsylvania is a place to grow, compete, and innovate.

In order to meet the Nation's need for investments in technology that further our global competitiveness and national security, I urge EDA to work quickly to designate and fund Tech Hubs. The Tech Hub program provides a critical opportunity to invest in sectors needed to protect our national and economic security. Like the CHIPS for America program, the Tech Hubs program is an opportunity to invest intentionally in domestic production, innovation, and workers here at home, away from adversarial countries that threaten our national and economic security. While policy planning is important, this funding cannot be bogged down in that phase for multiple years—EDA must move quickly to award designations, award regional planning dollars, and ultimately fund nationally important work in newly designated hubs throughout the country. My team and I have engaged with stakeholders throughout Pennsylvania; they are ready to compete, both for this opportunity as soon as it is available and with the global economy.

Our economy leads to natural clusters of economic specialty as certain places become experts in what they do, such as Silicon Valley. While this natural concentration has served the country well in many respects, when it comes to technology and innovation, greater intention is required to ensure that the economy of the future is geographically equitable and globally competitive. Tech Hubs will be a success if they drive equitable growth and foster renaissance or fresh growth in communities beyond existing innovation hubs. Given the intent of the program and the rich assets in the Commonwealth, I believe a Tech Hub can and should succeed in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with the EDA, in coordination with Pennsylvania state and local policymakers, to leverage the Tech Hubs program to protect our national security, drive innovation, and broaden the geography of economic prosperity in our Nation.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator