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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3701

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November 15, 2017

A. Leonard Smith, Regional Director
Economic Development Administration
915 Second Ave., Room 1890
Seattle, WA 98174

RE: Oregon Institute of Technology EDA Application (CAGE code 1QZC0)

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing in support of the Oregon Institute of Technology's (Oregon Tech) application for \$3 million to retrofit the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center's Research and Development Center (OMIC R&D Center). I strongly support OMIC, which is an innovative public-private partnership with the potential to transform Oregon's economy, produce job growth, and reinforce and expand our state's leadership in the advanced manufacturing sector.

OMIC brings together industry leaders and higher education institutions to develop work-based learning programs that benefit students and workers, and fuel growth and efficiency in advanced manufacturing. I have been a strong supporter of OMIC since its inception. The center will be a tremendous benefit to the economy, industry, students, and workers in the region and state. In February of 2016, I visited the OMIC site with business leaders and local elected officials. Throughout 2016, I met with the OMIC partners to learn about their plans, and in January of 2017, I had the opportunity to meet with leaders of the four higher education institutions who are bringing to life the ambitious education, workforce development, and research components of this collaboration.

Advanced manufacturing is an important part of Oregon's economy, and a growing industry nationwide. The hallmark of the 21st century economy will be innovation, and Oregon's leadership in this arena bodes well for our future and the future of OMIC. When I visit communities in Northwest Oregon, I hear from many people who feel they do not have the skills they need to compete in today's economy, and fear that they have been left behind as manufacturing jobs have become more advanced and highly technical. This skills gap leaves too many workers unable to compete for good-paying jobs, and it also holds back businesses that need a top-notch workforce to grow. OMIC is the right approach at the right time in the right place. It will create 21st century jobs and give workers a pathway to enter those jobs. And it will develop the tools, knowledge, and expertise that American manufacturers need to continue to thrive and to compete globally.

An undertaking of this scale requires significant resources and a diverse group of committed partners. The State of Oregon has provided a strong foundation for OMIC with \$16 million in funding. Industry has stepped up with \$2.5 million to date and there are long-term commitments from a growing list of partners. The leadership and experience of The Boeing Company is invaluable, as Boeing has already created 14

centers like OMIC around the world. Oregon State University and Portland State University have invested in the R&D Center and made long-term commitments. Portland Community College's plans to create a Training Center are well underway and are designed to complement the R&D Center. Finally, Oregon Tech has invested \$1.7 million in the R&D Center and secured \$3.94 million in bonds. With an EDA award of \$3 million, Oregon Tech is poised to retrofit the R&D building to welcome the industry partners, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students who are waiting to walk through the doors.

We will be able to measure the success of OMIC in many ways, but job creation will be the most lasting benefit to local communities and the region. Oregon Tech estimates that the R&D Center will employ 50 people, create an additional 30 jobs in the region, and train 100 students in the first three years, with the potential to grow ten-fold in a decade. This is a tremendous opportunity for Oregonians, and exactly the kind of public-private partnership that brings value to our communities and the economy.

Oregon Tech has a sterling reputation and a long track record of producing cutting-edge technology and innovative, highly-qualified graduates. I applaud Oregon Tech's leadership in developing the R&D Center. Please give Oregon Tech's application for this vital component of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

CC: Angela Ewell-Madison, Congressional Affairs, EDA