

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 1, 2015

Ms. Julie Lenzer Kirk, Director  
Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW, Rm 78018  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Kirk:

We write in strong support of the Regional Innovation Strategies application submitted by the University of Connecticut (UConn) to implement the Quiet Corner Innovation Cluster (QCIC). QCIC is a new initiative strongly supported by Connecticut Innovations, the State's leading source of financing and support for Connecticut's innovative companies.

Eastern Connecticut's economy was hit hard more than five years ago after the Great Recession. In the subsequent years, workforce and economic development collaborations have boosted the region's post-recession outlook. A significant commitment among regional employers has expanded apprenticeship opportunities, the commitment of General Dynamics Electric Boat to expand its current workforce by five thousand within the next two decades and a new CURE Innovation Commons for entrepreneurs and scientists are just a few important initiatives.

A crucial proponent of eastern Connecticut's recovery is UConn, particularly in the University's support of regional rural companies on emergence of new technologies, business and manufacturing processes, and workforce training. Challenges for many small and medium-sized enterprises lie in the ability to produce competitive products and keep pace with continual innovation required by the new economy. The proposed partnership network will expand technical, financial, business support and promote rapid commercialization due to UConn's existing infrastructure.

The proposed Quiet Corner Innovation Cluster builds upon UConn's existing Proof of Concept Centers, Commercialization Centers, and extensive Research & Development. Further, the application is consistent with OIE priorities of high-growth entrepreneurship, accelerated commercialization of federally funded research, and increased regional collaboration.

As such, we fully endorse the University of Connecticut's QCIC proposal and urge your thoughtful consideration of this funding request.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress