

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

July 27, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin:

I am pleased to write in support of the application submitted by the NYS Microelectronics Defense Manufacturing, Supply Chain, and Workforce Consortium ("Upstate Defense") to the Department of Defense's Defense Manufacturing Community Support ("DMCS") program. The Upstate Defense consortium is seeking \$5 million over 5 years to coordinate and develop the region's defense manufacturing assets in talent, entrepreneurship, and supply chains to support the nation's resilience in microelectronics, which is critical to national security. This proposal aims to leverage an ongoing, once-in-a-generation transformation in the Central New York and the Mohawk Valley microelectronics industry to strengthen national security innovation and expand defense manufacturing capabilities across the region.

This proposal will build on Central New York and the Mohawk Valley's legacy of leadership in defense manufacturing. The region features a remarkable industrial base of high-end technical expertise, including a Smart Systems Cluster, comprising over 15,000 employees at companies with a heavy focus on semiconductor chips, UAS, and 5G technologies. Additional existing regional expertise in microelectronics includes critical defense applications developed and manufactured by the Griffiss Institute, AIM Photonics, JMA Wireless, TTM Technologies, Saab, and Lockheed Martin, all of whom are partners in, and staunch supporters of, this proposal. Moreover, consortium members and partners will have the advantage of engaging with the leading defense community commercialization engine, the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate, located in Rome, NY.

This proposal leans heavily into addressing the current and future workforce needs of this rapidly growing industry. In doing so, it also focuses on communities and workers who are underrepresented in these high tech industries. To achieve these goals, CenterState CEO, Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), and the Griffiss Institute are partnering to orient their workforce development strategies and programming around the region's defense firms. This includes the coordination of curriculum development and career readiness among over 30 training partners by CenterState's Workforce Innovation team; the expansion of IVMF's Aerospace Defense and Semiconductor training pathways to include new partners; and the growth of the Griffiss Institute's STEM training fellowships, internships, and camps, with a focus on basic coding and skills for the UAS industry.

This proposal will also build on existing regional entrepreneurship efforts, including the GENIUS NY Accelerator, which is the world's largest accelerator focused on smart systems and microelectronics, the Syracuse SURGE Accelerator, which is a pioneering accelerator focused on advancing minority and women-owned startups, and the HUSTLE Defense Accelerator, which is a nationally-renowned defense accelerator focused on artificial intelligence and machine learning, cybersecurity, quantum computing, and other critical technologies. Additionally, with strong support from FuzeHub and their MEP partners, this proposal will create data-driven applications and workshops to identify, catalog, and connect suppliers of in-demand products and services with defense manufacturing companies across the region, strengthening the nation's domestic supply chains.

I have worked tirelessly to position Central New York and the Mohawk Valley to lead in high-tech manufacturing, including in microelectronics, by partnering with federal, state, and local leaders to build off the region's legacy expertise, with high profile accomplishments, including securing the largest private sector investment in U.S. history with Micron's \$100 billion project for building four advance memory microchip fabs in the region, as well as the New York State UAS test site and the Innovare Advancement Center at Griffiss, Lockheed Martin's Sentinel A4 Contract, and more. Ensuring the success of this unprecedented federal investment demands an all-hands-on-deck approach, and I am calling on the DOD to contribute to that success – and bolster the American economy and national defense – by funding the Upstate Consortium's DMCS application to build out the region's defense manufacturing capabilities.

With the above in mind, it is my firm belief that this proposal advances the DMCS goal of supporting long-term community investments that strengthen national security innovation and expand the capabilities of the defense manufacturing industrial ecosystem. As such, I applaud the Upstate Defense Consortium for their foresight, and I sincerely hope this application meets your standard for approval.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my grants coordinator in our Washington, DC office at 202-224-6542.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator