

United States Senate

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

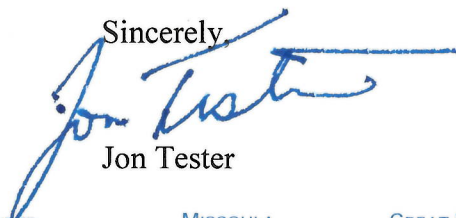
Bringing jobs back to the United States, securing our domestic supply chains, reducing our dependence on China, and developing next generation technology right here at home remains critically important to our future. That's why I am thrilled to see the work happening at the Headwaters Tech Hub, and why I stand in strong support of their application for the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Tech Hubs Program Phase 2 implementation grant.

Last fall, the EDA selected the Montana Headwaters Tech Hub to be a Regional Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub). The Tech Hub initiative is designed to accelerate the development of emerging technologies, train local workforces and support entrepreneurs who are working on cutting edge innovation. When Congress passed the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, I authored a provision to ensure the new Tech Hub initiative would focus on the incredible innovation happening in rural America. Too often, Washington D.C. only considers work happening on the coasts and fails to capture the benefit of world-class technology innovation happening in states like Montana. I made sure that would not happen this time through my low-population state amendment, and Montana is already proving it is up to the task of leading the way on the Tech Hub initiative.

The leaders of the Headwaters Tech Hub spent the last few months building a world-class Tech Hub implementation plan that will expand Montana's existing strength in smart optical sensing technologies to address pressing priorities such as autonomous systems, national defense, precision agriculture, critical resource management, and more. Montana leaders in the private sector, public sector, and academia have come together to coordinate assets, resources, and expertise to advance a broad-based project portfolio. The projects focus on training a skilled workforce, fostering rapid commercialization of new technology, developing test beds to advance the development, deployment, and rapid scaling of smart photonic sensing systems, and creating new opportunities for small, underserved communities and Tribal populations.

Harnessing untapped potential in Montana will help America stay ahead of foreign competitors like China. I am proud of the Headwaters Tech Hub team for their continued hard work, and strongly support the Headwaters Tech Hub's Phase 2 application. I respectfully request that you fully fund its application for Phase 2 funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester