

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Kathleen H. Hicks
Deputy Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1010

The Honorable Heidi Shyu
Under Secretary of Defense, Research and
Engineering
3030 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-3030

Dear Deputy Secretary Hicks and Under Secretary Shyu:

We appreciate the Department of Defense's recent efforts to bolster America's national security and competitive advantage. The Department's efforts to help connect with the country's innovators, entrepreneurs, and academics through the Strategic Capital Office and regional innovation hubs will help unleash the creativity needed to meet the complex global challenges facing our nation.

As you know, Section 236 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 directed the Department to develop a strategy to foster and strengthen the defense innovation ecosystem and a plan for implementing such strategy.

As the Department develops that strategy and plan, we would like to highlight the strengths and capabilities of North Carolina's thriving state-wide defense innovation ecosystem, our defense-related research at our top-notch academic institutions, and our culture of collaboration. North Carolina has several unique initiatives, best practices, and strong state support that may inform your path as you develop innovation partnerships and models for the future. For example, North Carolina offers:

- An active collaboration model among government, industry, and academia including the recent colocation of a small private sector incubator, the State's defense technology transition office, NSIN and AFWERX. This colocation offers a network of formal and informal institutional relationships, education, and information sharing that contributes to technological and economic development in several defense technology sectors;
- One North Carolina Fund, a state program that matches SBIR and STTR funds for small business innovation;
- Plans to further enhance support for defense innovation by creating and funding a NC Ecosystem for Defense Innovation (NC EDI) including a Defense Strategic Review Council, an operations center and a related advocacy campaign;
- Major universities (including HBCUs) with long-standing DoD research partnerships, including supporting the innovation needs of local military bases; and
- Robust partnerships with major military bases located in North Carolina.

We are interested in learning more about your strategy and initiatives in defense innovation. Of course, we would also be delighted to provide you with additional information about North Carolina's efforts to better serve the nation in this area. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,



Ted Budd
U.S. Senator



Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator



Don Davis
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



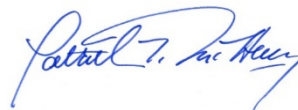
Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



Chuck Edwards
Member of Congress



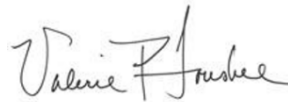
David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



Valerie Foushee
Member of Congress



Deborah Ross
Member of Congress



Kathy Manning
Member of Congress



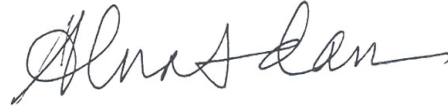
Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Jeff Jackson
Member of Congress



Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



Alma Adams
Member of Congress