



COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE SPACE & TECHNOLOGY REPUBLICANS

Opening Statement of Research & Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Feenstra

Research and Technology Hearing – Building Regional Innovation Economies

December 14, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens, for holding today's hearing. And thank you to our witnesses for your participation today.

I look forward to hearing your testimonies and success stories. I hope we can use this hearing as an opportunity to build upon prior work to learn how we can continue to support regional innovation economies around the nation.

I would especially like to thank Assistant Secretary Castillo for taking the time to speak to us today about how the Economic Development Agency (EDA) supports local and regional innovation economies.

We have to ask ourselves: how do we promote meaningful innovation to drive economic development not only in Silicon Valley, but in places like America's Heartland?

This is a challenge my colleagues and I have examined this Congress to learn how we can support regional innovation around the country, as every community has their own unique set of goals and challenges for developing their own innovation economy.

I've directly seen the results of investing in regional innovation in my home state of Iowa, and I believe we can provide a strong example of how public-private partnerships and a focus on local strengths can build an economy of good paying jobs while supporting innovation.

Agriculture is one of the driving forces of our economy. In Iowa we are proud to be one of America's leading states in the agriculture sector, and the nation's largest producer of pork, corn, eggs, ethanol, and biodiesel.

Iowa has developed several other key industries such as biosciences, advanced manufacturing, and transportation, to help drive economic growth and innovation.

And when it comes to enhancing both economic growth and economic opportunities, Iowa State University has done an exemplary job at cultivating an innovation ecosystem to spur growth.

Thank you, Dean Spalding, for being with us here today to discuss the role higher education plays in promoting regional innovation and economic development.

Just last month, Iowa State won an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University Award for the fourth time since 2017 from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities.

Iowa State took home the first-place award for “Innovation” for exemplary initiatives spurring innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology-based economic development.

This recognition demonstrates how Iowa State’s leadership in innovation can successfully enhance economic opportunities across Iowa and the United States.

Iowa State is also home to the Iowa State University Research Park, which serves as a technology community and incubator for businesses and provides access to countless resources at Iowa State including talent pipelines, specialized equipment, and research infrastructure.

The Research Park plays a key role in economic development at Iowa State when it comes to technology transfer, as it is part of a network that connects technology creation, business formation, and development assistance with established technology firms.

This is just one example of how public-private partnerships at Iowa State have had tremendous success to advance innovation across Iowa and the nation.

I hope we can use today’s hearing as an opportunity to discuss the importance of public-private partnerships to drive regional innovation.

I am proud of Iowa State’s tremendous work in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, and I hope institutions around the country look to them as an example of how to be successful in this space.

I also hope we can continue this important dialogue on how all communities, whether big or small; rural or urban; can have the opportunity to become leaders in regional innovation. Every American in every zip code deserves the opportunity to participate in the innovation economy, whether that’s starting their own business or building a career in a high tech, good paying job.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my support for the Metropolitan Areas Protection and Standardization (MAPS) Act, which the President signed into law last month, that ensures smaller and rural communities have a fair opportunity to receive federal funding and assistance from programs like the ones we are discussing today.

Thank you, and I yield back.