

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

June 10, 2021

The Honorable Stacy A. Cummings  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and  
Logistics)  
3010 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-3010

Dear Ms. Cummings:

We write in support of South Kansas to be designated a Defense Manufacturing Community with Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research (WSU NIAR) as the lead organization for the regional manufacturing consortium. The Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program (DMCSP), offered through the Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC), supports long-term investments in critical skills, facilities, research and development, and small business support to strengthen the national security innovation and manufacturing base in supporting defense manufacturing communities. South Kansas and WSU NIAR are already achieving these goals and would be a qualified partner for the DMCSP.

This region is rich in academic and commercial research and development organizations working to meet our nation's most critical national security requirements. As a national leader in defense aviation research, WSU NIAR would make a fitting centerpiece for this consortium. The proposed program plan will strengthen the national security innovation base by expanding high temperature material characterizations, capabilities, process tools, sustainment planning, and workforce and engineering competencies for the purpose of enhancing the defense industrial capabilities and accelerating prototype development. WSU NIAR will coordinate and present to the Department of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, the consensus opinion of the south Kansas consortium as well as coordinate strategy implementation. The Defense Manufacturing Community will prioritize best practices in attracting and expanding defense manufacturing by bringing together key regional stakeholders and using long-term planning that integrates targeted public and private investments in support of the defense industrial ecosystem and leads to a broad-based increase in manufacturing resilience and regional prosperity across the sector, the region, and the nation.

Several commercial defense manufacturers based in this region are leaders in research and development and would make this consortium an especially strong contributor to national security innovation. The portfolio of thirty cutting-edge companies the consortium has assembled speaks for itself. In addition, WSU NIAR has the partnership of the Wichita Manufacturers'

Association and the Kansas Aviation Research and Technology Growth Initiative to help lead this impressive team.

We strongly urge you to consider WSU NIAR's proposal. The South Kansas region already contributes outstanding research and products for national security and is a model for defense community interaction and collaboration. Formalizing its status as a Defense Manufacturing Community and providing it support accordingly would act as a force multiplier for its cutting-edge work.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran  
United States Senate



Roger Marshall  
United States Senate



Tracey Mann  
U.S. House of Representatives



Jake LaTurner  
U.S. House of Representatives



Ron Estes  
U.S. House of Representatives



Sharice Davids  
U.S. House of Representatives