

THE
NEW ENGLAND
COUNCIL

May 20, 2014

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

On behalf of the New England Council, I am writing to express support for the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation, or RAMI, Act (S. 1468), which recently passed the Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation unanimously. This legislation, sponsored by your colleagues Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Roy Blunt (R-MO), would establish a nationwide Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI) within the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). This initiative would build off the work already underway at the Department of Commerce, where the Obama Administration has thus far announced the creation of several Centers for Manufacturing Innovation (CMIs).

New England has been hard hit in recent decades by manufacturing job losses. In fact, over the last three decades, manufacturing as a percentage of overall employment has dropped from 22.5% to 7.4% across the region. That said, there is reason for optimism on the horizon. The New England Economic Partnership (NEEP) has estimated an increase of 1.3% in manufacturing employment from 2012 through 2016. Moving forward, as NEEP's Spring 2013 New England Economic Outlook noted, "to grow manufacturing (and exceed the NEEP forecasts) will require linking manufacturing more strongly to research and development strengths in the region, and ensuring an appropriately skilled work force for advanced manufacturing across the region."

The RAMI Act is exactly the kind of forward-thinking solution our economy needs to promote these critical goals. By establishing of a nationwide network of CMIs, industry, nonprofits, and academia will have an effective and responsive research infrastructure for a "teaching factory" that allows them to solve relevant problem related to advanced manufacturing. These CMIs would conduct research and development, conceptualization, and prototyping as well as work on time, cost, and risk reduction involving the commercial application of technologies and processes. And one important outcome of the CMIs would be the training of the nation's future advanced manufacturing workforce.

Like many across our region, The New England Council see advanced manufacturing as a driving force for job creation and economic growth for years to come, and has long-supported efforts to enhance that position. In fact, the Council partnered with Deloitte, one of our members, to release a report on the potential for growth in the advanced manufacturing sector for our region. As the report notes, "Through a more focused collaboration of industry, government, and education,

advanced manufacturing can be enhanced and expanded.” This is essential, as NEEP concludes that Massachusetts can expect “as many as 95,000 to 100,000 job vacancies in the state’s manufacturing sector” in the coming decade.

The manufacturing hubs established through this legislation have the potential to fulfill that goal. With its first class workforce, excellent academic credentials, and sophisticated industry, New England has much to gain by actions that promote advanced manufacturing and efforts to secure one of these centers in the region.

The New England Council would greatly appreciate any support you may provide S. 1468. Your colleagues in the New England delegation, Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Susan Collins (R-ME), Angus King (I-ME), and Jack Reed (D-RI), have already signed on as co-sponsors. We are hopeful that the full Senate will follow the lead of the Commerce Committee in working to quickly approve this bipartisan measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily J. Heisig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily J. Heisig

Senior Vice President, Communications & Federal Affairs