

November 13, 2023

The Honorable Kathi Vidal
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office
600 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Director Vidal,

I write to request that the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) establish its Northern New England Community Outreach Office (NNECOO) in New Hampshire. This selection would capitalize on New Hampshire's geography, burgeoning innovation ecosystem and existing assets and resources to serve the region's innovators in the most efficient and cost-effective ways.

Under your leadership, you have made it a priority to meet and reach people where they are so that we grow our economy through creating new jobs. Indeed, the goal is to "bring more people into the innovation ecosystem." This is precisely what we are doing now in New Hampshire at ReGen Valley. This deeply collaborative and diverse consortium of industry and academic leaders has united interests in the once-fragmented discipline of biofabrication, and it represents just one example of New Hampshire's promise as an innovation ecosystem. ReGen Valley was recently designated by the Economic Development Administration as one of 31 Regional Innovation and Technology Hubs to better ensure that the industry starts, grows and remains in the United States.

Moreover, establishing the NNECOO in New Hampshire would not only accelerate these and other ongoing efforts to include more women, minorities and veterans in New Hampshire's growing innovation ecosystem but would also fulfill USPTO's goals as required by the Unleashing American Innovators Act of 2022 (UAIA).

Your staff has confirmed on multiple occasions that at least five counties¹ in New Hampshire meet the factors Congress laid out in the UAIA for the NNECOO.² There are fewer than 15 USPTO registered patent attorneys in those counties and less than 45% of the firms in the state are owned by women, minorities, or veterans, with great potential to grow into the science and tech leaders of tomorrow.

New Hampshire can boast of people in these segments of society leading in a number of fields. Global American was founded in New Hampshire by an immigrant from Mumbai, India to address a gap in the personal computer market for industrial and long-life devices and components. For over 30 years, this minority-owned business has been a market leader in Long-Life Embedded computers and features a product line of Rugged Tablets, Fanless PCs, IP65 Rated Panel PCs and Wide Temperature Motherboards for government, military and medical

¹ Belknap, Cheshire, Grafton, Strafford, and Sullivan Counties.

² Section 104(a)(3) of the *Unleashing American Innovators Act of 2022* (UAIA) (Division W of P.L. 117-328).

applications. In 2022, the Small Business Administration named Global American its 2022 New Hampshire Minority Owned Business of the Year.

In the same vein, for more than 30 years, Hydrocomp has provided cutting edge software tools for hydrodynamic and propulsion system simulation that allows naval engineers and architects to improve boat propulsion and performance. This firm has been led by Managing Director Jill Aaron and has clients and customers in 65 countries around the world.

New Hampshire is also home to successful veteran-owned businesses. ArgenTech Solutions is a business formed by veterans in 2009 that provides unmanned aerial vehicles services (UAS) and hardware for military and commercial clients. On the commercial side of its operations, ArgenTech provides customers state-of-the-art UAS-based imaging and analytics to markets as diverse as agriculture, digital mapping and oil and natural gas.

Among the purposes a Community Outreach Office (COO) must serve, as noted in the Request for Comments (RFC)³, is to develop partnerships “to create tailored community-based programs that provide education regarding the patent system and promote the career benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship.” Moreover, a COO must educate “any geographic group of innovators that the Director may determine to be underrepresented in patent filings, about all public and private resources available to potential patent applicants, including the patent pro bono programs.”

New Hampshire is an ideal NNECOO location to fulfill these purposes because USPTO’s COO would build on top of and connect existing assets within the state that would also make it more likely for USPTO to see a return on its investment sooner. This includes the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Franklin Pierce School of Law, which ranks annually as one of the premiere intellectual property (IP) schools in the United States. Additionally, the law school operates the Intellectual Property and Transaction Clinic, which, as you may know, is part of the USPTO Law School Clinic Program. However, this clinic, just like USPTO’s leadership in the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship and its initiative on Empowering Women’s Entrepreneurship, takes a proactive approach in assisting innovators with their entrepreneurship needs. Here, law school students are also helping clients who are “confronting complex and crucial issues pertaining to business formation and organization, copyright and trademark registration and protection, licensing, and small business transactions.”

In addition, the State launched UNHInnovation (UNHI), the University of New Hampshire’s commercialization and economic development arm, to coordinate campus-wide support for entrepreneurs and the management of intellectual property, licensing and startups. Indeed, UNHI’s FOSTER (FOcused SBIR/STTR Teaching, Equity and Results) helps NH startups and small businesses pursue SBIR and STTR innovation grants, and this program has provided business assistance to 4 veteran-owned businesses, 14 woman-owned businesses and 7 minority-owned businesses. Under the FOSTER program, ten veteran, woman or minority-owned businesses received business assistance and a microgrant to help with proposal development. Moreover, between FY 2017 and FY 2021, UNHI has signed 690 licensing agreements to transfer technology based on UNH research. To date, 14 companies have been founded using UNH intellectual property. What’s more, Dartmouth’s Technology Transfer Office (TTO) plays much the same role for Dartmouth-led research and development.

³ Request for Comments on Southeast Regional Office and Community Outreach Office Locations, 88 Fed. Reg. 38847 (June 14, 2023).

In addition to the ReGen Valley Tech Hub that “seeks to advance biofabrication-related therapies, invest in manufacturing facilities, and incubate technology startups to secure domestic regenerative therapy development and biofabrication,” other promising entrepreneurs who can serve as a magnet for future innovators and communities that have often been overlooked. This includes, Creare LLC, an engineering research and development firm which provides services ranging from applied research to prototype design, fabrication and testing. Initially the company specialized in fluid dynamics serving the turbomachinery and nuclear industries during the 1960s and 1970s. Creare then moved into the energy, aerospace, cryogenics, and materials processing industries in the 1980’s and then into software, controls, and biomedical applications in the 1990’s. Creare has filed for and received a number of patents, including some used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Additionally, per the RFC, COOs should develop partnerships with local community organizations and educate prospective innovators. The conditions exist currently in New Hampshire for the NNECOO to partner with the local community stakeholders and engage and encourage innovators and entrepreneurs. To cite one example, the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship in Keene provides the space, tools and connections that innovative entrepreneurs need to build strong businesses, thriving local economies and vibrant communities. In 2022, in collaboration with the SBA and River Valley Community College, the Hannah Grimes Center implemented the Navigator Pilot Program for the Western Southern New Hampshire Spoke to conduct more outreach to underserved communities in Sullivan and Cheshire counties, allowing them to grow their capacity for entrepreneurship.

Equally important, geography makes New Hampshire the natural choice because it lies between Maine and Vermont. In order for the NNECOO to serve Northern New England most efficiently, it makes the most sense to put it in New Hampshire so that the entrepreneurs and innovators of each state may most easily access the USPTO’s resources.

Last, one of the stated Tech Hubs benefits is for the USPTO to identify an Ambassador for each Tech Hub to highlight Tech Hubs at regional USPTO events. Given that Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine each have a designated Tech Hub, the Ambassador(s) could be based in the New Hampshire COO to serve all three states while potentially saving USPTO funds.

In short, for all of these reasons, New Hampshire would be an ideal location for USPTO’s NNECOO. I thank you for your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate