

MBR

MASSACHUSETTS BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

May 14, 2007

Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training Administration
US Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, S2307
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary DeRocco:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR), I am writing in support of the Massachusetts "Crescent Region" STEM Initiative Grant Proposal submitted under the Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. This proposal is led by the Metro South/West Regional Employment Board and the Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair.

In a recent report entitled "Tapping American's Potential," the national Business Roundtable confirms the fears of government and business leaders by citing warning signs that America's traditional leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is eroding. The report warns that "If we take our scientific and technological supremacy for granted, we risk losing it."

In response to these warnings, MBR has convened a series of CEO Innovation Roundtable meetings which have provided an opportunity for members of the corporate and academic worlds to share their views on the challenges facing Massachusetts in retaining its preeminence in innovation. Among the themes that were identified was the need to develop a competitiveness strategy for the region, including investments in STEM teaching and learning. This effort resulted in the convening last fall of the Regional Innovation Summit at MIT, which not only reinforced the importance of STEM but focused on the need for collaboration across communities, business sectors, jurisdictional boundaries, and academic disciplines. Our members agree that this issue is terribly important.

The "Crescent Region" proposal is consistent with the themes that have emerged from our work. Its focus on developing talent incorporates a collaborative strategy across disciplines while targeting the STEM fields that will drive our region's future innovation economy. It provides just the type of forward-thinking, integrated strategy that we need to build the talent infrastructure necessary to succeed and is an important response to the national Business Roundtable's warnings. MBR is pleased to add its support.

Sincerely,

Alan G. Macdonald
Executive Director

cc: Elaine L. Chao, U.S. Secretary of Labor
Senator Edward M. Kennedy