

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 18, 2011

The Honorable John Bryson
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Bryson:

In an effort to stimulate the job-creating effects of America's innovators and inventors, better connect patent filers with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and improve the quality and efficiency of the patent examination process, Congress directed the Department of Commerce (in the America Invents Act - PL 112-29) to establish at least three satellite Patent and Trademark offices throughout the country. We write to you today, on behalf of, and in concert with, the undersigned stakeholders, to urge you to locate one of the offices in Oregon.

Oregon has a long and rich history of scientific and commercial innovation. Inventions like the now-ubiquitous Phillips screwdriver came from Oregon's deep reservoir of intellectual talent, as did Nobel Prize winner Walter Brattain's pioneering research into transistors and semiconductors. More recently, home grown innovation companies such as Tektronix and Nike have been joined by technology leaders like Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Intel, in locating major research and development facilities in the Portland region and the Willamette Valley. Due in no small part to significant investments in fiber optic infrastructure, Google, Facebook and Amazon now call Oregon home. When combined with Oregon's growing entrepreneurial community and ongoing research and development activity around electric vehicles, energy storage, alternative energy and transportation, bioscience, nanotechnology and mobile software, it is no surprise that the Portland region ranks 15th nationwide in patents issued from 2006 to 2010. Even more impressively, on a per capita basis it ranks 6th. By some measures, Corvallis, located 90 minutes from Portland, is the country's most innovative city.

Oregon is also becoming a center of growing research and commercialization activity. Total industry, university and government R&D expenditures in Oregon exceed \$4 billion annually. In the heart of downtown Portland, Oregon Health and Science University received over \$358 million in research funding last fiscal year, while Portland State University has seen research expenditures increase 80 percent in the last decade, growing from \$25.8 million in 2000 to \$58.2 million in 2010. Farther down the Willamette Valley, Oregon State University enjoyed a sizable increase in research funding of \$275 million, while the University of Oregon received \$135.6 million from external funding sources in grants, contracts and other competitive awards in 2010. More broadly, Oregon is centrally located between Seattle and the Bay Area, two of the West Coast's preeminent R&D hubs and centers of patent and intellectual property activity.

As might be expected, Oregon continues to attract and retain highly educated workers. Portland's competitive advantage in key innovative industries – advanced manufacturing, software, clean

technology, bioscience and outdoor gear and apparel – is a draw for high caliber talent. The Portland metropolitan area has a significant concentration of scientists and engineers, and these workers value job stability and seek career opportunities that result in higher rates of retention and longer tenure.

World renowned for land-use planning, transportation policy and sustainable development, Oregon has been at the forefront of visionary thinking in building a 21st century society. These innovative practices have helped many communities in the region to garner multiple “Best Places” ratings even while remaining enviable and affordable places to live and work. Building on Oregon’s pioneering spirit, trained and educated people from a variety of professions are attracted to the area both for its lifestyle and innovative ethos. In selecting Oregon for a satellite office, the United States Patent and Trademark Office will be able to benefit from competitive advantages around quality of life, affordability, access to talent and innovation, and a history of public-private collaboration, allowing examiners to enjoy a higher standard of living and helping the Department of Commerce to reduce attrition.

Oregon’s high quality of life is a key draw for talent and continues to make the region a popular relocation destination for business. With a lower cost of living, the Portland region has a higher home ownership rate and lower average rent. Office space in Portland is also very affordable. Area residents enjoy enviable access to Pacific Ocean beaches, mountains and the lush Willamette Valley. With direct air connections to Seattle, Boise, San Francisco and Los Angeles – not to mention most major cities throughout the United States – Portland is also an accessible location from which to conduct business.

Despite clear geographic and innovation advantages the region still lags behind much of the nation in job creation and suffers from both high unemployment and persistent underemployment. The economic impact of a satellite patent office would be significant, providing jobs for the region’s out-of-work skilled professionals while enhancing Greater Portland’s innovation ecosystem. Portland and Oregon, however, are not sitting idle, but continue to promote economic development through a strategic commitment to fostering innovation. For example, the State of Oregon and the Oregon Innovation Council are focused on helping innovators create high-paying jobs, entrepreneurs create companies and university researchers bring federal and private research dollars to the state through Signature Research Centers as well as state-of-the-art research and commercialization facilities focused on nanotechnology, bioscience, renewable energy and green building. Additionally, Portland recently published an *Entrepreneurship and Innovation Action Plan* focused on technology commercialization, new product development, attracting capital and supporting scalable startups.

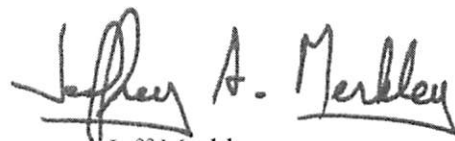
Our goal is to help the nation to lead the world in innovation. A patent office in the Portland metropolitan area would offer entrepreneurs, universities and research centers along the entire West Coast and Mountain West enhanced access to patent examiners familiar with our region’s intellectual property. Oregon’s longstanding commitment to sustainability and innovation will help the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office attract and retain skilled professionals.


We and the undersigned companies, investors, patent practitioners, researchers, universities and community representatives, are committed to a partnership with the U.S. Patent and Trademark

Office in Oregon and look forward to the commencement of the formal selection process and to providing you with a complete and comprehensive proposal for your review and consideration.


Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Jeff Merkley
United States Senator


Earl Blumenauer
U.S. Representative


Peter DeFazio
U.S. Representative


Kurt Schrader
U.S. Representative


John A. Kitzhaber M.D.
Governor



Sam Adams
Mayor of Portland

cc: David J. Kappos, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the
United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
Azam Khan, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

On behalf of:

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