

June 11, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
167 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

In advance of your committee's scheduled June 5 markup, we are writing to express support for the *Spectrum and National Security Act* and the funding it provides for the Department of Commerce's Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs Program.

In the past, the U.S. enjoyed technological and economic leadership across the world. However, decades of declining investment in research and development, domestic STEM talent shortages, and offshoring of supply chain production have put U.S. leadership at risk. Investments by China and other nations in critical research and markets have left America in a more precarious economic and national security position than we have experienced since the early 1900s.

In 2023, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute published a [report](#) that shows China has taken the lead over the U.S. in 37 of 44 technologies. **China is investing heavily in developing these emerging technologies, chief among them artificial intelligence, as a core part of its long-term strategy to out-compete America and our allies.** As was made clear in the recently unveiled Senate AI policy roadmap, realizing the full potential of the Regional Tech Hubs program, authorized by the *CHIPS and Science Act of 2022*, is now more critical than ever. The Regional Tech Hubs program would boost America's overall competitiveness and security by catalyzing significant improvements in the capacity of disparate U.S. regions to develop world-leading centers of economic activity in key technology areas.

In October of last year, the Department of Commerce designated 31 regions as Tech Hubs across eight key technology areas after receiving applications from more than 190 regional consortia in 2023. This large number of applicants demonstrates a substantial national interest and desire for federal action around Tech Hubs. While the Department of Commerce plans to provide between \$40 and \$70 million to at least five of the designated hubs in 2024, these initial investments should serve only as a humble beginning to what the program must become if we are going to address the threats posed by other global actors to America's economy and security. In fact, just over five percent of the money authorized for Tech Hubs has been appropriated by Congress to date.

As the Senate builds on its bipartisan AI policy roadmap to maintain our position as a global leader in artificial intelligence, the *Spectrum and National Security Act* offers further opportunities to remain at the forefront of technological frontiers. In addition to restoring the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) auction authority, **this legislation would provide an additional \$2 billion for Regional Tech Hubs, which would enable the Department of Commerce to provide critical implementation awards to more regions working to advance key technologies.** It also provides \$3 billion to boost the CHIPS manufacturing incentives program and \$5 billion for research programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), including critical funding for the maintenance and construction of NIST facilities.

Currently, the U.S. boasts a few Tech Hubs that are world-leading in their technology activity: Silicon Valley is the undisputed leader in software development and Boston leads in biotechnology. However, many regions of the country have strengths in one or more elements of a thriving innovation economy, such as commercially relevant research or a tech-focused industry cluster. These regions desperately need the federal investment the Tech Hubs program can provide to fully realize their potential and contribute their unique strengths and assets to ensure America wins the next era of innovation over China and other competitors in the global economy.

As you mark up the *Spectrum and National Security Act*, we ask you to prioritize Regional Tech Hub funding. Ensuring America's global competitiveness requires sustained investment across important programs such as this.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for your important work on this issue.

Sincerely,

America Achieves  
Brookings Metro  
Center for American Entrepreneurship  
Engine  
Federation of American Scientists  
State Science & Technology Institute (SSTI)  
TechNet  
Technology Councils of North America (TECNA)