

FRED UPTON
6TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

ENERGY
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HEALTH

CONSUMER PROTECTION AND
COMMERCE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 27, 2020

DC OFFICE:

2183 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2206
(202) 225-3761
FAX: (202) 225-4986

MICHIGAN HOME OFFICES:

350 E. MICHIGAN AVENUE
SUITE 130
KALAMAZOO, MI 49007
(269) 385-0039
FAX: (269) 385-2888

720 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085
(269) 982-1986
FAX: (269) 982-0237

<http://upton.house.gov>

Dana Gartzke

Performing the Delegated Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development

U.S. Economic Development Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

1401 Constitution Avenue, NW

Suite 71014

Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Gartzke:

I am writing in favor of a forthcoming grant application from the Midwest Energy and Communication Cooperative's (MEC) grant request to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop the Southwest Michigan Advanced Research and Technology (SMART) Park. The MEC will be applying for the EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program as well as the EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance Program. If approved, these vital funds will allow MEC to leverage other capital necessary to complete this project which will create more than 1,000 jobs and bolster the local economy.

It's no secret that the ongoing pandemic has reduced economic growth and hurt American workers. The EDA has an opportunity to grow Southwest Michigan, increase development, and create good-paying jobs leading to more prosperity for the entire region.

Several years ago, the leadership at MEC completed an in-depth market study and engineering analysis that lead to purchase nearly 500 acres of land which is now home to their new operations headquarters. During this analysis, the board and its leadership saw the benefit of developing the remaining parcel of land to create a business park that would spur the economic growth in Cassopolis, Cass County, and the entire southwest Michigan region.

Additionally, both the Village of Cassopolis and the County of Cass have expressed support for the construction of the business park. This project will also lead to an increase in the tax base for the village and the county.

Approval of this grant is key given MEC's status as a utility and regulatory restrictions limit their access to capital. As noted above, these resources will provide the leverage necessary to obtain additional investments to complete the SMART Park.

I look forward to your support and would be happy to further discuss the project and grant request.

Sincerely,


Fred Upton
Member of Congress

This is probably the most exciting prospect for Cass County in decades - A terrific help.