

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 27, 2023

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: EDA's Build to Scale (B2S) program

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

We write to express our strong support of the efforts of Delaware Innovation Space, Inc. (DISI) to bring innovation and the development of jobs into the State of Delaware. DISI is submitting a proposal for the Build to Scale – Capital Challenge Deploy funding program administered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

As is evident in Delaware's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy issued by the Delaware Economic Development Office, Delaware is focused on growing its economy through (1) enhancing business resources through initiatives that focus on providing the critical education and infrastructure resources necessary to attract and retain growing, sustainable businesses and the workers they require; (2) retaining the critical core through programs that focus on the retention and expansion of existing business and industry; (3) recruiting through approaches that focus on the attraction of new business and industry compatible with Delaware's future economy and sustainability in the long term; and (4) rejuvenating the state economy through programs that focus on job creation through revitalization of established business centers, innovation, entrepreneurship, research and development, and commercialization of new products and processes. DISI's activities will address all four of these strategies by attracting new industry to the area and encouraging the development of and retention of jobs in Delaware along with the corresponding tax revenue it will contribute to the state and federal governments.

Delaware has worked for years to try and build jobs for its citizens, recognizing economic development is a burden of the State, but the State cannot do it alone. Like many states across the country, Delaware recognizes its primary responsibility in the area of economic development and job creation. The State also recognizes the need for collaboration with higher education and industry leaders to sustain growth and bring innovation to fruition, in that vein the State sought the alliance that formed DISI, a nonprofit, nonstock corporation to incubate and foster start-ups in Delaware and to help build a better workforce through STEM education and research. DISI is relieving part of Delaware's development and job creation burden by taking on a part of the role the State would otherwise play by partnering with the State and the University of Delaware. In addition, the federal government through the Economic Development Administration has been an enthusiastic partner by awarding a \$3 million grant in 2018 to assist in the build-out of the Laboratories and a \$1.5 million grant under the Venture Challenge program in 2020.

With your support and partnership, the progress of the Delaware Innovation Space has been truly remarkable over the last 6 years with support for the creation and retainment of over 700 jobs, stimulating over \$1 billion in funding and private investment, and supporting over 100 startup companies.

The purpose of this new request under the Capital Challenge section of the Build to Scale program is to enhance and expand DISI's First Fund Investment Program which will catalyze and accelerate the development and growth of new startup companies in Delaware and across the Mid-Atlantic region. The First Fund Investment Program will further capitalize on the incredible physical assets of the Delaware Innovation Space as well as its expert business-building accelerator and mentoring programs. Collectively, the 3-prong strategy of incubation, acceleration, and seed funding programs will enhance and expand the front of the funnel of new opportunities that will feed the next generation of high-growth startup companies that are scalable by nature, challenge the status quo, commercialize novel technologies, and further job creation.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this proposal and ask that you contact us once a decision is rendered. Should you have any questions, we can be reached through our respective staff members John Gentile in Senator Carper's office at (302) 573-6291, Andrew Dinsmore in Senator Coons' office at (302) 573-6245, and Iris Turner in Congresswoman Blunt Rochester's office at (302) 830-2330.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress