



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
25TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

December 18, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Cuomo,

Today, I am asking for your support in leveraging the Rochester region's unique photonics business cluster, talented workforce, and world class research facilities to secure a significant federal investment that will create thousands of jobs in Rochester and throughout New York State. In order to be successful in this effort, I urge your administration to make a transformational investment of \$250 million toward this Rochester-led state-wide initiative.

During my time in Congress, I have fought to create, protect, and expand manufacturing around the country and in my congressional district. In March of 2012, I began leading a bi-partisan effort in Congress to convince the Obama Administration to create a photonics innovation manufacturing institute. The United States, and in particular the Rochester region, has been the world leader in deploying photonics research – the science and application of light - to power cutting edge technologies, but global competition has put this leadership position at risk.

For nearly three years, I have been meeting, calling, and writing officials in the Obama Administration to urge increased collaboration and coordination among industry, government, and academia to identify and further advance areas of photonics critical to regaining American competitiveness and maintaining national security. During that time, I have brought senior Obama Administration officials to Rochester to tour our unique manufacturing infrastructure and brought local stakeholders to Washington, D.C. to further make our case. On October 3, 2014, the president announced that a federal investment of \$110 million would be used to create an Integrated Photonics Manufacturing Institute.

Rochester can and should be home to this institute. Starting with photonics and optics giants such as Kodak, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb, and Corning, the greater Rochester region has long been a leader in this field. From the University of Rochester's Laboratory for Laser Energetics and advanced research at RIT to companies such as Harris Corporation and Exelis, 17,000 of our community's jobs are in the photonics and optics industries. What the world needs most in optics and photonics is already being developed right here in Rochester.

Rochester's innovations are not only a source of local pride; they make our nation more secure at home and abroad. Innovations pioneered in Rochester led to the development of the night-vision goggles used during the raid that killed Osama bin Laden and the sniper scopes that took down the Somali pirates that held Captain Phillips captive. These two particular achievements were developed on decades-old equipment salvaged from an old manufacturing line – imagine what these local innovators could create with proper equipment.

To advance the photonics industry in our region, I have brought together diverse local stakeholders and we have already achieved remarkable success. In late 2012, we secured a \$2.6 million grant to fund the Rochester Regional Optics, Photonics, and Imaging Accelerator. A \$500,000 federal investment was awarded to fund the Rochester-based New York Photonics Manufacturing Initiative and earlier this year, our region received a coveted “Manufacturing Community” designation from the Economic Development Agency.

Locating the Integrated Photonics Manufacturing Institute in Rochester would create an environment that promotes research, development, and commercialization by bringing together researchers and innovators in academic institutions, small and large companies, and government laboratories. State-wide stakeholders, including those from Rochester, will soon be submitting a concept paper to the Air Force Research Laboratory – the sponsoring agency of this opportunity – and it is our hope that we will be invited to submit a full proposal early next year.

Your administration has demonstrated that it can and will take dramatic action to spur economic development in upstate New York communities. The Rochester area is deserving of this transformational investment and with your strong support, is poised to compete and win the Integrated Photonics Manufacturing Institute.

By taking a leadership role in the formation of this institute, we can not only stimulate economic growth and jobs in New York, but also launch a new frontier of opportunities for innovation.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,


Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress