

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 11, 2025

Hon. Howard Lutnick  
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce  
Herbert C. Hoover Building  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Secretary Lutnick,

Thank you for your continued leadership of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC). I write today in regards to the Notice of Suspension that was sent from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the DOC to the Ohio Department of Development regarding their \$6 million annual grant to support the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program.

Ohio is the backbone of American manufacturing. The manufacturing sector employs 687,345 workers, equivalent to 12% of my state's workforce.<sup>1</sup> Ohio manufacturers contribute \$137.9 billion to gross domestic product (GDP), the fifth highest in the nation<sup>2</sup> and boost American international competitiveness through \$55.8 billion in annual exports. I share the Trump Administration's goals of reshoring and onshoring critical manufacturing sectors to American soil, and in short, you cannot do "Made in America" without "Made in Ohio."<sup>3</sup>

The Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Ohio MEP) is an important component of this strength. This public-private partnership supports small and mid-sized manufacturers with technical assistance, as well as workforce and management training. With 90% of job growth concentrated among Ohio's small and mid-sized manufacturers, the support of MEP is critical for maintaining Ohio's continued manufacturing dominance.<sup>4</sup>

The data makes this reality unambiguous. In FY2024, Ohio MEP reports that it's six regional partners produced \$621.5 million in increased/retained sales, 3,175 new/retained jobs, \$117.7 million in new investment, and \$146.7 million in savings for Ohio manufacturers.<sup>5</sup> Ohio MEP applies time-tested principles of limited government and private sector collaboration to produce results that boost small manufacturers and working-class Ohioans.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ohiomfg.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/OMA\\_ManufacturingCounts2025\\_PDF\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ohiomfg.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/OMA_ManufacturingCounts2025_PDF_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> <https://development.ohio.gov/business/manufacturing/ohio-manufacturing-extension-partnership#:~:text=MAGNET:%20The%20Manufacturing%20Advocacy%20and,://www.manufacturingsuccess.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ws680.nist.gov/mepmeis/Document.ashx?SC=OH>

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Given this clear record of success, I am discouraged to hear reports that all funding for this critical program is being threatened based on ambiguous and unclear allegations. Given the administration's appropriate focus on boosting American manufacturing, I request immediate and specific clarification on why the federal funding for the Ohio MEP program is being suspended.

The Ohio MEP program relies on the support it receives from NIST and the matching grants from the Ohio Department of Development. Like you, I believe fraud should be investigated, eliminated, and the responsible parties held accountable. However, a potential months-long, blanket suspension of all MEP funding, without additional and detailed clarification on the decision to pause the funding, would amount to the possible permanent closure of these programs across the entire state of Ohio, which I hope is not the DOC's intent.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this issue, and look forward to working together towards an appropriate resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,



Jon Husted  
United States Senator