EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

January 31, 2026

On behalf of the Eastern Michigan University College of Business, I am writing to express our strong support for **House Bill 5031**, which would authorize the renewal and continuation of **Technology Improvement Financing (TIF) through Michigan's SmartZone program**. This legislation is vital to sustaining innovation-driven economic development and workforce preparation in the City of Ypsilanti and throughout the region.

As a public university deeply rooted in Ypsilanti, Eastern Michigan University plays a central role in educating the region's current and future business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. The SmartZone program directly complements this mission by strengthening the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting business creation and growth, and expanding opportunities for experiential learning, internships, and talent retention for our students.

Renewal of SmartZone TIF authority through HB 5031 would allow Ypsilanti to continue investing in programs and partnerships that connect emerging companies with university talent, research expertise, and business support services. These investments help ensure that graduates of the EMU College of Business can pursue meaningful career opportunities locally while contributing to the city's long-term economic vitality.

We have seen how SmartZone-supported initiatives encourage collaboration among higher education, local government, and the private sector—an alignment that is essential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Continued SmartZone funding will help Ypsilanti remain competitive in attracting innovative companies, supporting small businesses, and preparing a skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving economy.

The Eastern Michigan University College of Business supports HB 5031 and advocates for its passage. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Ann Arbor SPARK and our regional stakeholders to advance innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunity for our students and community.

Thank you in advance for the support of House Bill 5031, authorizing renewal and continuation of the vitally important **Technology Improvement Financing (TIF) through Michigan's SmartZone program**.

Sincerely,

Amy B. Hietapelto

Amy B. Hietapelto, Dean