OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

February 5, 2026

House Economic Competitiveness Committee
Re: HB 5031

Chair Hoadley and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the University of Michigan, 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 an important tool for advancing innovation, commercialization, and economic growth in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, and across the State of Michigan.

As Michigan's leading public research university, the University of Michigan is committed to translating research and discovery into real-world impact. Michigan's SmartZone program plays a critical role in this process by supporting the entrepreneurial infrastructure that helps transform new technologies and ideas into scalable companies, high-quality jobs, and long-term economic value for communities.

The City of Ann Arbor's participation in the SmartZone program strengthens regional collaboration among local governments, universities, and economic development partners. Renewal of SmartZone TIF authority through HB 5031 would allow our region to continue investing in programs that support startup formation, business acceleration, and connections between university-based research, talent, and industry.

SmartZones have proven to be an effective mechanism for fostering innovation districts, retaining entrepreneurial talent, and attracting private investment. Continued support for this program ensures that Michigan remains competitive in emerging and advanced industries while enabling communities like Ann Arbor to benefit from the economic activity generated by research-driven enterprises.

The University of Michigan supports HB 5031 and advocates for its passage. We value our ongoing partnerships with Ann Arbor SPARK, the City, and regional stakeholders and look forward to continued collaboration to strengthen the innovation ecosystem and economic vitality of Southeast Michigan.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information or support.

Sincerely,

Best,



Chris Kolb
Vice President for Government Relations

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