ACCELERATEUP

February 11, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Accelerate UP, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. The current Innovate Marquette TIF plan expiration date is 2029, and the SmartZone's reported TIR reflects a meaningful share of its operating capacity.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,



Alexander Kofsky
Executive Director
Accelerate UP
(906) 250-9182
alex@accelerateup.com

airdev

February 10, 2026

To the Members of the Michigan State Legislature,

I am writing on behalf of Airdev, Inc. to express our support for Michigan House Bill 5031, which would extend SmartZone funding for an additional 15 years.

As a custom software development partner of Innovate Marquette, we have seen firsthand the value that SmartZone programs bring to Michigan's innovation ecosystem. Innovate Marquette plays an important role in helping local entrepreneurs and businesses develop new technologies, connect with service providers, and create jobs in the Marquette area.

Extending SmartZone funding will allow Innovate Marquette and the other SmartZones across the state to continue fostering the kind of high-tech business growth that strengthens Michigan's economy and supports its communities.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to support House Bill 5031.

Sincerely,



Andrew Haller

Co-CEO, Airdev

Aphelion USA, LLC
3019 Shreeve Street,
Midland, MI 48642

February 13th, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Aphelion USA, LLC, I'm writing to express my strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025). This bill updates the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to give Certified Technology Parks (Michigan SmartZones) a clear way to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approval and the requirements in statute.

Michigan SmartZones were created to drive growth in targeted areas by supporting high-tech startups and job creation. They're funded mainly through tax increment revenue (TIR) under a local tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and those locally controlled dollars go directly toward proven innovation services; business planning, entrepreneur training, mentoring, incubator support, connecting companies with venture capital, and coordinating R&D with universities and industry.

In our region, I've seen firsthand how the Innovate Marquette SmartZone functions as a cornerstone of our entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem. It consistently supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses by working side-by-side with local and regional partners.

House Bill 5031 matters because continuity is everything. A clear, long-term extension option gives communities and partners the runway to plan ahead, sustain services, and keep momentum. That long-term stability is even more important in rural and smaller-market regions, where it's hard to replace entrepreneurship capacity once it's lost.

For those reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. If helpful, I would welcome the opportunity to share additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. York
Founder & Owner, Aphelion USA, LLC
ayork@aphelionusa.com

CBELL HOLDINGS LLC
Striving for Excellence.

2/10/26

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of CBell Holdings LLC, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. Personally, as an entrepreneur, investor, student, and Marquette resident, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone has made a large impact on my life, and many others. They have helped me grow substantially in every aspect of business... bringing high potential technology and ideas to life. Through the SmartZone I have been able to gain invaluable experience that aligns directly with my long term goals in life. I would like to see Innovate Marquette be able to continue on this path of helping incredible people.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

Caleb Bell
Founder and CEO
CBell Holdings LLC
(906) 362-7419
caleb@calebjbell.com

February 10, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Headwaters North Corporation, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Headwaters North SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

Nikki Storey
Chief Executive Officer
Headwaters North Corporation
906-440-6829
Nikki.storey@headwatersnorth.org

February 12, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Michigan Outdoor Innovation Fund, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. We, at the Michigan Outdoor Innovation Fund, believe that high-tech small business growth is the most efficient The Innovate Marquette SmartZone is vital to ensuring that entrepreneurs who are early in their company-building journey receive the tools and support they need to maximize their chances of success.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,



Jim Tenzillo
Managing Director
Michigan Outdoor Innovation Fund
M: 847.401.1419
E: jtenzillo@gmail.com

INVESTUP

February 9, 2026

Representative Mike Hoadley
State Representative, District 99
Chairman, Committee on Economic Competitiveness
S-1288 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025).

Dear Chairman Hoadley:

On behalf of InvestUP, along with its Board of Directors, which represent eleven industry sectors across Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.) and do business in each of the 15 U.P. counties and across the state and nation, I wanted to express the organization's collective support for House Bill 5031, which as you know would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. We have seen that vision prove true in our region, including through our partner in Marquette, with the Innovate Marquette SmartZone (IMSZ). In regularly collaborating with IMSZ, we have seen first-hand the positive impact they are making in the regional (or maybe local) economy."

However, the partnership with IMSZ goes beyond simply collaborating and supporting entrepreneurs, but has seen us work together on data collection so we can make real time decisions on economic direction and on executing shared vision, such as when we partnered to create an innovation fund, which we now estimate has created 102 jobs, resulting in $16.3 million in follow-on funding and generated nearly $31 million of revenue in the State.

This type of investment is especially important as the literature tells us that entrepreneurs and innovators are, not surprisingly, risktakers – and by virtue of that generally earlier in their career and younger. We are suffering an acute population challenge in the Upper Peninsula, as I would venture to say is the case for most of rural Michigan: Our population is aging dramatically. Thus, this type of programming is imperative to help us offset this challenge.

House Bill 5031 is vital for us to continue this type of success – the continuity and planning the bill permits are essential.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
1401 Presque Isle Avenue
Marquette, MI 49855-5301
906-227-2947 | Fax: 906-227-2605
www.nmu.edu/Business

February 13, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for Michigan House Bill 5031 – Extension of SmartZone Funding

Dear Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature:

On behalf of the College of Business at Northern Michigan University, I am writing to express strong support for Michigan House Bill 5031, which would extend SmartZone funding and ensure the continued success of Innovate Marquette as one of Michigan's designated SmartZones.

SmartZones, funded through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), serve as high-impact innovation districts designed to stimulate technology-based economic development, business incubation, entrepreneurial growth, and high-wage job creation. In the Upper Peninsula, Innovate Marquette plays a vital role in strengthening the regional innovation ecosystem.

The College of Business at Northern Michigan University is AACSB-accredited, a distinction held by fewer than six percent of business schools worldwide. AACSB accreditation emphasizes innovation, impact, engagement, and continuous improvement—principles that closely align with the SmartZone model. Innovate Marquette provides an applied platform through which our students and faculty can translate research, analytics, cybersecurity expertise, and entrepreneurial education into real-world economic outcomes.

Additionally, Northern Michigan University is designated as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense, reinforcing our commitment to advanced technology, cybersecurity workforce development, and innovation-driven economic growth. The collaboration between Innovate Marquette and NMU strengthens technology commercialization pathways, supports high-growth startup activity, and enhances talent retention in a rural and geographically expansive region.

The extension of SmartZone funding through House Bill 5031 provides the long-term stability necessary for strategic planning, deeper private-sector engagement, investment attraction, and sustained economic impact. A 15-year funding horizon enables the development of scalable innovation pipelines that connect higher education, industry, and community stakeholders in meaningful and measurable ways.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage passage of Michigan House Bill 5031 and the continued investment in SmartZone communities such as Innovate Marquette. This legislation represents a strategic investment in Michigan's innovation infrastructure and long-term economic competitiveness.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Michigan's economic future.

Sincerely,

Carol Johnson
Dean, College of Business
Northern Michigan University

NORTHERN INITIATIVES
Money and Know-How

February 12, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Northern Initiatives, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. The current Innovate Marquette TIF plan expiration date is 2029, and the SmartZone's reported TIR reflects a meaningful share of its operating capacity.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elissa Sangalli,
CEO/President
esangalli@northerninitiatives.org

SIREN Clear, powerful communication

February 10, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Siren PR, LLC, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

Adela Piper

Adela Piper
CEO
Siren PR, LLC

248.264.7022
adela@sirenstrategy.co

WARD LAW OFFICE

REGISTERED PATENT ATTORNEYS

Ward Law Office LLC – Ohio
120 1/2 S. Washington Street, Suite 207
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
Direct: (419) 408-5500

Bar Admissions: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; and Canadian Intellectual Property Office, Non-Resident
Virtual Offices Across the United States of America
legal@wardpatent.com | www.wardpatent.com

Ward Law Office PLC – Michigan
21415 Civic Center Drive, Suite 100
Southfield, Michigan 48076
Direct: (248) 579-2197

February 13, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of WARD LAW OFFICE PLC, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. The current Innovate Marquette TIF plan expiration date is 2029, and the SmartZone's reported TIR reflects a meaningful share of its operating capacity.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

/Jacob M. Ward/

Jacob M. Ward
Founder and Registered Patent Attorney
WARD LAW OFFICE PLC

248-579-2197
jake@wardpatent.com

WRITEUP LAB

February 15, 2026

Chair and Members
Michigan House Committee on Economic Competitiveness
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 5031 (2025) – Certified Technology Park (SmartZone) 15-Year Extension Option

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of Writeup Lab LLC, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5031 (2025), which would amend the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act to provide a clear pathway for Certified Technology Parks (also known as Michigan SmartZones) to extend their agreements for an additional 15 years, subject to local approvals and statutory requirements.

Michigan SmartZones were launched to accelerate economic activity in defined geographic areas and increase jobs and business starts in high-technology sectors. SmartZones are funded primarily through tax increment revenue (TIR) authorized and governed through a tax increment financing (TIF) plan, and these locally controlled dollars support eligible entrepreneurial and innovation activities, including business planning, entrepreneurial training, coordination of venture capital, business mentoring, incubator services, and coordination of research and development with universities and industry.

In our region, the Innovate Marquette SmartZone is a core component of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and supports the formation and growth of technology-based businesses in partnership with local and regional stakeholders. I have personally had the pleasure of working with many Marquette small businesses to help them access SmartZone and SBDC resources, and I have seen first-hand how valuable these entrepreneurial services are to the success of our innovation ecosystem. The current Innovate Marquette TIF plan expiration date is 2029, and the SmartZone's reported TIR reflects a meaningful share of its operating capacity.

House Bill 5031 is important for continuity and planning. A defined, long-horizon extension option enables communities and partners to sustain services, retain momentum, and maintain the long-term support systems required to commercialize ideas, develop companies, and compete for talent and investment, particularly in rural and smaller-market regions where entrepreneurship support capacity is difficult to replace quickly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance HB 5031 and support its passage. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional local perspective, data, or testimony.

Sincerely,

Laura C. Cesa, Ph.D.
Founder & Principal Consultant
Writeup Lab, LLC
(616) 315-6426
laura@writeuplab.net