MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Innovation Center

To: Michigan House Economic Competitiveness Committee
Anderson House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

February 3, 2026

Subject: HB 5031

Members of the Michigan House Economic Competitiveness Committee,

I write to express strong support for House Bill 5031 on behalf of the Michigan State University Innovation Center.

The MSU Innovation Center brings together corporate engagement, technology transfer, startup support, and strategic partnerships to move federally funded research discoveries from concept to societal impact. As we launched the Innovation Center in 2012, we forged partnerships with our surrounding communities to create an ecosystem that would nurture the development and growth of the companies that we spin out of the university. In the East Lansing and Lansing region, the SmartZone has emerged as the critical partner in creating that receptive, entrepreneurial ecosystem. Working together, we are connecting MSU's intellectual and technical assets with entrepreneurs, investors, and community stakeholders, strengthening our ability to translate research into economic opportunity and reinforcing Michigan's competitiveness in technology driven industries.

In my many years of service on the SmartZone LDFA Board, I have seen firsthand the impact these programs have had across our region, from supporting early-stage companies to strengthening connections between MSU researchers and the private sector. I have also seen the significant potential for even greater impact in the years ahead as these partnerships continue to strengthen and our programs continue to evolve.

Each year, our MSU Innovation Center team shepherds more than 190 new discoveries on the path to commercial impact – many emerging as startup ventures. The Lansing Regional SmartZone plays a critical role in this process; providing the community-based infrastructure, programming, and regional coordination needed to move technologies through the full commercialization pathway, from academic discovery to market ready products. This activity

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helps to ensure Michigan's investments result in new companies, high quality jobs, and long-term economic value for our communities.

House Bill 5031 will provide continuity and stability for Michigan's regional innovation ecosystems by allowing existing SmartZones to extend their tax increment financing authority. This legislation will help communities continue to leverage their research institutions, innovation assets, and regional partnerships to drive inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Speaking from the perspective of a long-time board member for the Lansing Regional SmartZone, and as the person responsible for converting MSU's research excellence into economic value, I will say that we are just now hitting our stride and developing a best-in-class ecosystem in the State of Michigan. MSU, the MSU Research Foundation, LEAP, the LDFA, and the cities of Lansing and East Lansing are excellent collaborators – revolutionizing our region in ways I only dreamed of when we started down this path. Should this legislation fail, we will certainly suffer a loss of momentum that will be difficult to restore. For the Mid-Michigan region, and for the entire state of Michigan, I strongly advocate for this legislation and the good that it will deliver to the citizens of Michigan. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Michigan's innovation economy.



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