

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense  
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E880  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Esper,

As the Department moves forward with its plans to fund its next Manufacturing Innovation Institute (MII), the BioIndustrial Manufacturing Innovation Institute, we would like to highlight the *Bioindustrial Manufacturing And Design Ecosystem (BioMADE)* proposal, a partnership led by the Engineering Biology Research Consortium (EBRC) and the University of Minnesota. We strongly support this proposal and ask that you fully consider it, recognizing the potential of BioMADE to harness the collective strengths between government, academic, industry, and nonprofit organizations to tackle the manufacturing challenges associated with biomanufacturing and energize the U.S. bioeconomy.

BioMADE is a national network of industrial and academic partners spanning the industrial biotechnology ecosystem and will be led by the University of Minnesota with key contributions made by partners from around the country who account for tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic impact. BioMADE is designed to overcome the pervasive “valley of death” obstacle that prevents many promising biotechnology products from reaching commercial viability. The new MII will develop innovative scale-up capabilities and downstream processing approaches to establish a robust bioindustrial manufacturing base in the U.S.

The opportunities associated with BioMADE come at a time when the U.S. seeks to ramp up investment in its bioeconomy, or the infrastructure, products, and technologies derived from biologically related processes and science. Applications of the bioeconomy are far-ranging and include agriculture and food production (crops and animals); industrial biotechnology (fuels, materials, chemical reactions); biosensors and monitoring; advanced manufacturing, and more.

The University of Minnesota, located in the heart of U.S. industrial biomanufacturing, is an ideal host for DOD’s BioIndustrial Manufacturing Innovation Institute. Managing nearly one billion dollars in research expenditures annually, UMN is a top-10 public research university and global leader. Nationally, the Twin Cities ranks 1st in Fortune 500 companies per capita among top 30 metro areas and #2 in five-year survival rate for start-ups.

In addition to capitalizing on the business-friendly environment, BioMADE will leverage the state’s partnerships through the Minnesota Security Project. Led by the GREATER MSP Partnership, this initiative has already brought together over 15 companies, universities, non-profits, and state agencies to deliver innovative solutions that address the Department’s most critical current and anticipated national security challenges while accelerating Minnesota’s position as a home to industries of the future. This includes building on the state’s reputation of excellence in biotechnology, synthetic biology, and genomics with an emphasis on accelerating the path from fundamental research to commercialization and economic impact.

Meanwhile, the longstanding and productive partnership between UMN and its partners across the United States will form the core of the BioMADE ecosystem and its nation-wide impacts. Leveraging the unique attributes of the state and those of its partners, the BioMADE team will deliver innovative solutions to this critical national security challenge while driving growth for our companies, expanding the capabilities of our research institutions and creating economic opportunity for our region's residents.

BioMADE, under the University of Minnesota's proven leadership, complimented by elite national collaborators through EBRC, will bring to the forefront game-changing innovations that will affirm U.S. leadership in the global bioeconomy.

Thank you for your consideration and we ask to be kept abreast of any developments regarding this initiative.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar  
U.S. Senator



Tina Smith  
U.S. Senator



Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress



Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress