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February 29, 2016

Honorable Members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ohio Congressional Delegation:

In 2014, representatives from the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Cleveland Center visited your office and discussed the services, successes, and value of the MBDA Business Center for the state of Ohio. As we continue to provide the much-needed support to help our minority businesses grow and hire more Ohio citizens, we need your support for its continued existence during the new round of federal funding for the years 2016 through 2021. Although funding has not yet been appropriated, the Department of Commerce (DOC) expects a total of \$10,227,450 in FY 2016 funding to be available. DOC/MBDA also expects \$10,227,450 per year for continued funding of this program through FY 2021.

In its five years of operations, the MBDA Business Center-Cleveland has assisted MBEs in Ohio obtain over \$101 million in contracts, and \$21 million in capital awards, and was responsible for creating 844 jobs. In addition, the MBDA Business Center-Cleveland has received an "Outstanding" rating for its performance in 2014 and 2015, and a 'Commendable' rating in 2012, and 2013. The overall results provide the State of Ohio and your district the opportunity to remain competitive in the domestic and global marketplace.

The 2016-2021 performance goals set by the DOC for the MBDA Business Center Cleveland have been raised to over \$100M of contracting and financing transactions per year and creating 940 jobs and retaining 500 jobs over five years. While the GCP provided the initial five-year match (March 2011 through March 2016) on its own for the entire state, it is now time to attract funding from beyond Northeast Ohio. The DOC has expectations that the MBDA Business Center Cleveland will collaborate with partners throughout the state, as well as with its network of business centers nationwide.

Support by Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, was instrumental in our winning the first five-year grant, and we are thankful that she has offered her ongoing support for this next proposal. She also has expressed support for additional partners across the state also contributing matching funds to enhance the Business Center Cleveland's capacity to serve MBEs statewide. We ask you to consider joining her in supporting this proposal and look forward to continuing our work to create jobs across Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Roman", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Joe Roman
President and CEO