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March 3, 2026

The Honorable Vince Fong
U.S. House of Representatives
243 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

RE: Support for ACCEL Center – Aerospace Workforce Training and Small Business Support Center, Mojave Air and Space Port, Mojave, CA | Requested Amount: \$2,479,000 | Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies | Community Development Fund – Economic Development Initiatives

Dear Representative Fong,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for the ACCEL Center, the Aerospace Convergence, Collaboration, Experimentation and Learning Center, and urge your support for \$2,479,000 in Community Project Funding to support its development at Mojave Air and Space Port (MASP) in Mojave, California.

East Kern County is home to an extraordinary concentration of aerospace and defense innovation assets, including Edwards Air Force Base, NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, and Mojave Air and Space Port, the world's first FAA-licensed commercial spaceport. Together, these installations represent decades of federal and commercial investment and a best-in-class platform for sustained regional economic growth. Yet East Kern has historically captured only a fraction of the economic potential these assets represent.

Multiple regional studies and employer surveys point to two consistent constraints: a shortage of locally trained workers prepared for mid- and high-skill aerospace careers, and a lack of affordable, equipped workspace to anchor the startups and early-stage companies that should be growing here. These are not distinct challenges. Communities that cannot train their own talent cannot retain the employers who access to talent. At the same time, employers without a place to grow cannot create the careers that make workforce investment worthwhile. ACCEL addresses both at once, at the physical and institutional crossroads where federal demand, private innovation, and local workforce development can finally connect.

The project itself is straightforward in the best sense: rehabilitate a deteriorating, unused building at MASP into a fabrication and prototyping lab alongside professional coworking and incubator space. But what ACCEL unlocks is unprecedented for east Kern.

On the workforce side, ACCEL gives K-12 districts and community colleges, including Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Mojave Unified School District, Muroc Joint Unified School District, Antelope Valley Union High School District, Cerro Coso Community College, and Antelope Valley College, access to the specialized tools and equipment that hands-on training in aerospace and advanced manufacturing actually requires. The long-term outcome is a region that develops more of its own talent: workers who are career-ready, locally rooted, and positioned for mid- and high-skill jobs that already exist nearby.

On the innovation side, ACCEL creates the infrastructure that small and non-traditional defense contractors and commercial space and aerospace companies have lacked: equipped, affordable workspace immediately adjacent to the test ranges where emerging technologies in hypersonics, propulsion, advanced materials, and unmanned systems are evaluated and proved. Placing prototyping capability at MASP compresses development timelines, lowers barriers to entry for companies that cannot afford to build their own facilities, and helps American-made technologies move faster from concept to operational use. Over time, the facility is designed to become a node in the regional innovation ecosystem, attracting companies to East Kern, encouraging them to hire locally, and generating the kind of sustained private investment and job creation that federal installations alone cannot produce.

This is precisely the kind of investment the Community Development Fund's Economic Development Initiative is designed to support: the rehabilitation of a deteriorated public facility to deliver measurable economic development benefit for a community that needs it. This combination—a uniquely positioned public site and contributions to the region's workforce training and small business supports needs—gives ACCEL a strong foundation for long-term impact and success.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your **SUPPORT** for the ACCEL Center and the full \$2,479,000 Community Project Funding request.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Griffis Institute
 Mojave Air and Space Port
 Townsend Public Affairs