December 8, 2016

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, New York State
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Through the creation of the Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs) program, Governor Mario Cuomo displayed innovative leadership in recognizing the economic impact of combining university-led research in high technology with business development initiatives. Today, his vision continues to thrive with 15 CATs and 11 university-based Centers of Excellence (COEs) comprising a network of high technology economic development centers located throughout New York State.

Over the last 5 years, the Centers for Advanced Technology and Centers of Excellence have generated a combined $4.9 billion in economic impact and have helped create or retain 22,396 jobs thanks to a modest annual state investment of $25.7 million. These impacts are independently documented by the New York State corporate clients we serve and validated by NYSTAR each year and are the result of the State’s continuing investments in the CAT and COE programs, enabling each Center to establish an infrastructure and industry network that efficiently co-develops and accelerates the transition of innovations into the commercial sector.

We applaud and support your continued transformative, innovation-based approach to economic development. Your bottom-up strategy has redefined the way in which New York State is investing in jobs and economic growth and has generated impressive results. This methodology is exemplified by the way the CATs and COEs are working to transform the research and technological capabilities of our colleges and universities into commercial applications that generate jobs.

By investing in regional core competencies and strengths, we are driving high-technology business sector growth across the state. This in turn not only increases New York’s competitiveness in a global marketplace, but builds on New York’s reputation as an attractive place to develop and commercialize these transformative technologies.

Noting the emphasis your administration places on the importance of university research and technical capabilities in supporting regional economies, we request the State fund each Center at the $1.6 million level in the SFY17-18
budget in order to magnify the returns on investment already achieved through the CAT and COE programs.

Recognizing the demands on state resources, we do hope that over time, the CAT and COE programs will be funded at their full need of $2 million.

State support of $1.6 million for each Center will also support new company formation and co-development of innovations that continue the growth of existing New York companies. Further, it grows our focus and impact on the success of your strategic initiatives, such as START-UP NY, that provide us valuable tools to deliver on your mission to improve New York’s national and international competitiveness. Moreover, increased funding will lead to a compounding effect, by an increase in New York’s share of federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants and by an increase in corporate sponsored research support for commercializing more innovations emerging from the state’s academic research enterprise.

We, and our teams, are passionate about our work in support of technology-led economic development – helping to create new jobs and growing businesses in New York. The Centers leverage significant private sector and other contributions to fulfill these objectives. Major impacts can be felt across the state as a result of our respective efforts.

We are confident that an additional investment by New York State in the Centers for Advanced Technology and Centers of Excellence programs will yield significant economic returns. Thank you, as always, for your continued and expanding support of these proven programs driving scientific discovery, technological advancement, and economic development across our great state. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of us should you have questions or comments. We look forward to working with you and your team to continue to strengthen the contributions of the CATs and COEs across New York.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Bocko, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Director, Center for Emerging and Innovative Sciences
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627

Edward A. Bogucz, Ph.D.
Executive Director
SyracuseCoE
New York State’s Center of Excellence for Environmental and Energy Systems
727 E. Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13244

Denis R. Cormier, Ph.D.
Earl W. Brinkman Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering
Director of AMPrint Center: Additive Manufacturing and Multifunctional Printing Center
Rochester Institute of Technology

Michael M. Fancher
Director,
NYS Center for Advanced Technology in Nanoelectronics & Nanomaterials
NYS Center of Excellence in Nanoelectronics and Nanotechnology
SUNY Polytechnic Institute
257 Fuller Road, Albany, New York 12203
Bahgat Sammakia
Interim President, SUNY Polytechnic University
and Vice President for Research
Director, S3IP Center of Excellence
Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Binghamton University

Christina P. Orsi
Associate Vice President for Economic Development
University at Buffalo

Scott Steele, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Emerging and Innovative Sciences
University of Rochester

Michael Thurston, Ph.D.
Director, Center of Excellence in Advanced and Sustainable Manufacturing
Rochester Institute of Technology
190 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623

Pramod K. Varshney
Distinguished Professor, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Director of CASE: Center for Advanced Systems and Engineering
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244

Matthew Hall
Director, Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology
Associate Professor of Biomaterials and Glass Science
Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering, Alfred University

Shivendra S. Panwar
Director, Center for Advanced Technology in Telecommunications
NYU Tandon School of Engineering

Yacov Shamash, PhD
Vice President of Economic Development
Stony Brook University

Jian Sun, PhD
Professor, Department of Electrical, Computer and Systems Engineering
Director, New York State Center for Future Energy Systems
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Paul R. Tolley
CEO and Executive Director
Smart Systems Technology and Commercialization Center & Trusted Foundry
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Daniel F. Walczyk, Ph.D., P.E.
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Director, Center for Automation Technologies and Systems
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
110 8th Street, Troy, NY 12180