

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2579

To expand the Manufacturing Extension Program to bring the new economy to small and medium-sized businesses.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 24, 2004

Mrs. CLINTON introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To expand the Manufacturing Extension Program to bring the new economy to small and medium-sized businesses.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Technology Extension
5 Act of 2004”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Federal Government developed the Ag-
9 riculture Extension Program, and more recently, the
10 Manufacturing Extension Program to help farmers

1 and small manufacturers gain access to the latest
2 technologies. Today's small and medium-sized busi-
3 nesses need a technology extension program that
4 provides access to cutting edge technology.

5 (2) There is a need to create partnerships to
6 cut the time it takes for new developments in univer-
7 sity laboratories to reach the manufacturing floor, to
8 help small and medium-sized businesses transform
9 their innovations into jobs.

10 (3) There is a need to build upon the Manufac-
11 turing Extension Program to encourage the adoption
12 of advanced technology.

13 **SEC. 3. TECHNOLOGY EXTENSION PROGRAM.**

14 (a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section—

15 (1) to encourage meaningful use of the most
16 advanced available technologies by small businesses
17 and medium-sized businesses to the maximum extent
18 possible to improve the productivity of those busi-
19 nesses and thereby to promote economic growth; and

20 (2) to promote regional partnerships between
21 educational institutions and businesses to develop
22 such technologies and products in the surrounding
23 areas.

24 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—To achieve the purpose of
25 this section, the Secretary of Commerce (in this section,

1 referred to as the “Secretary”) shall carry out a program
2 to provide, through grants, financial assistance for the es-
3 tablishment and support of regional centers for the com-
4 mercial use of advanced technologies by small businesses
5 and medium-sized businesses.

6 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—An entity is eligible to receive a
7 grant as a regional center under this section if the enti-
8 ty—

9 (1) is affiliated with a United States-based in-
10 stitution or organization that is operated on a not-
11 for-profit basis, or any combination of two or more
12 of such institutions or organizations;

13 (2) offers to enter into an agreement with the
14 Secretary to function as a regional center for the
15 commercial use of advanced technologies for the pur-
16 pose of this section within a region determined ap-
17 propriate by the Secretary; and

18 (3) demonstrates that it has the capabilities
19 necessary to achieve the purpose of this section
20 through its operations as a center within that re-
21 gion.

22 (d) SELECTION OF APPLICANTS.—

23 (1) COMPETITIVE PROCESS.—The Secretary
24 shall use a competitive process for the awarding of
25 grants under this section and, under that process,

1 select recipients of the grants on the basis of merit,
2 with priority given to underserved areas.

3 (2) APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS.—The Sec-
4 retary shall prescribe the form and content of appli-
5 cations required for grants under this section.

6 (e) SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL CENTERS.—
7 A regional center may use the proceeds of a grant under
8 this section for any activity that carries out the purpose
9 of this section, including such activities as the following:

10 (1) Assist small businesses and medium-sized
11 businesses to address their most critical needs for
12 the application of the latest technology, improvement
13 of infrastructure, and use of best business practices.

14 (2) In conjunction with institutions of higher
15 education and laboratories located in the region,
16 transfer technologies to small businesses and me-
17 dium-sized businesses located in such region to cre-
18 ate jobs and increase production in surrounding
19 areas.

20 (f) ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES.—

21 (1) COST-SHARING.—The Secretary may re-
22 quire the recipient of a grant to defray, out of funds
23 available from sources other than the Federal Gov-
24 ernment, a specific level of the operating expenses of
25 the regional center for which the grant is made.

1 (2) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—

2 The Secretary, in awarding a grant, may impose any
3 other terms and conditions for the use of the pro-
4 ceeds of the grant that the Secretary determines ap-
5 propriate for carrying out the purposes of this sec-
6 tion and to protect the interests of the United
7 States.

8 (g) DEFINITIONS OF SMALL BUSINESS AND ME-
9 DIUM-SIZED BUSINESS.—

10 (1) SECRETARY TO PRESCRIBE.—The Secretary
11 shall prescribe the definitions of the terms “small
12 business” and “medium-sized business” for the pur-
13 pose of this section.

14 (2) SMALL BUSINESS STANDARDS.—In defining
15 the term “small business”, the Secretary shall apply
16 the standards applicable for the definition of the
17 term “small-business concern” under section 3 of
18 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

19 (h) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
20 regulations for the grant program administered under this
21 section.

22 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Com-
24 merce for carrying out this section \$125,000,000 for fiscal

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1 year 2005, and such sums as are necessary for each fiscal
2 year thereafter.

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