

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Secretary Lutnick:

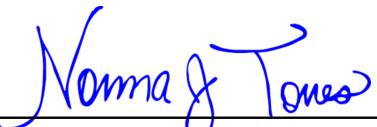
We write to express deep concern regarding the Department's lack of information regarding its plans to reestablish a Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program center in California. We urge you to immediately execute a funding competition for the state, so that our small and medium-sized manufacturers can benefit from the expertise, support, and guidance that MEP centers and their networks provide.

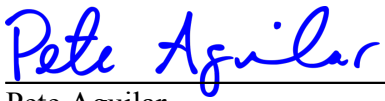
California is the largest manufacturing state in the nation, and the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, there are more than 35,000 manufacturers located in the Golden State who add more than \$391 billion to America's economy. Our manufacturers depend on help from the MEP program, and a state's MEP center plays a critical role in helping manufacturers secure their supply chains, expand connections with domestic suppliers, and develop their workforces by creating good-paying, high skill jobs. These employers create good paying jobs for Americans, and they should be given the same assistance and resources as other states.

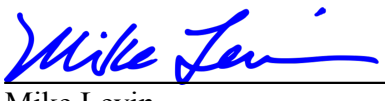
Our understanding is that NIST did not renew the contract for the MEP Center located in California in October 2025, resulting in the closure of California's MEP Center and its regional offices across the state. After that decision, we expected a new solicitation to soon be released. Instead, in December 2025, NIST solicited a new competition for MEP program centers in 8 states but did not include California.<sup>1</sup>

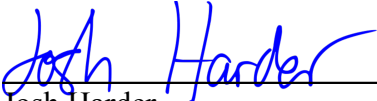
We would remind you that the *Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026* (Public Law 119-74) signed into law in January 2026, directed the Department to fund the MEP at fiscal year 2024 levels, and to "rapidly execute funding competitions" in order to minimize "the periods of time when no MEP Center is active in any State or Puerto Rico."<sup>2</sup> We look forward to receiving your plan to quickly revive an MEP state center in California and in other states currently missing them. Our manufacturers and our workers depend on it.

Sincerely,

  
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Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Harder  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-center-state-competition-fy2026>

<sup>2</sup> Page 11 of the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying Public Law 119-74: <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-appropriations.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/FY26-CJS-JES.pdf>