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TOM RIDGE
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Re: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Tech-Net Database

SSTi supports the Small Business Administration's (SBA) collection of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) award and commercialization information from companies. Company and commercialization data are critical to understanding the real impacts of our investment through the SBIR/STTR programs.

SSTi strengthens initiatives to create a better future through science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Since its inception in 1996, we have worked to share lessons learned from a nationwide network of practitioners and policymakers. SSTi conducts research on common performance standards, identifies best practices, analyzes trends in and policies affecting the innovation economy, and fosters greater connection and cooperation among and between all public, private and nonprofit organizations encouraging prosperity.

SBA's proposal to add an item to SBA's Company Registry that will allow SBIR/STTR companies to indicate their consent to have their contact information released to local and state economic development organizations is a positive change. While our understanding is that companies may provide similar consent during the program application process, we have heard from SSTi's member organizations working with SBIR/STTR companies that there is often a poor hand-off between the administering agencies and the economic development organizations. Our hope is that, in adding the consent item to the SBA's Company Registry, SBA will be able to ensure that interested companies actually are referred to regional economic development service providers. It would be particularly useful to the small businesses, and of great interest to regional economic development strategies, if SBA could make a special effort to share the information of companies that register and consent but do not successfully compete for SBIR/STTR awards, in addition to referring those that do receive the federal funding.

We encourage SBA to make greater use of the information collected in the Commercialization Database. This repository would seem to be the greatest potential source of information about the effectiveness of SBIR/STTR awards in creating economic outcomes. To take better advantage of the information, SBA should publish as much of the data as can be revealed without harming a company's potential. The data companies provide about their patent activity and initial public offerings already should be publicly available from other sources, but not in a way that makes the

connection to SBIR/STTR readily apparent and, therefore, the information often goes unused by stakeholders. Sales, research spending and any other data that is not already available publicly should also be published — at least aggregated by year, state and agency, if not at the individual company level. Making data from the Commercialization Database public would help economic development organizations and other stakeholders understand the real impacts of the SBIR/STTR program and decide if/how to allocate further resources to supporting SBIR/STTR companies.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to working with SBA and economic development organizations to support the success of SBIR/STTR and awarded companies.

Sincerely,



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