March 11, 2008

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Senator Shelby, Chairman Mollohan, and Congressman Frelinghuysen:

We are writing to you to express our strong support for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program, which was not adequately funded in the President’s FY 2009 budget proposal. We urge you to fund the MEP at $122 million in FY 2009, which is the fully-authorized level (PL 100-69) provided for this important program.

Manufacturing continues to be the backbone of America’s economy, yet recovery in this industry is lagging behind other sectors of the economy. At this critical time, U.S. manufacturing needs our help more than ever. The MEP provides this help to small and mid-sized American manufacturers to modernize to stay competitive in our evolving marketplace. As a successful partnership between the federal government, states and small manufacturers, all stakeholders recognize that the MEP is important to business in our states and is a necessary component to national innovation and economic growth.

The impact of the MEP on manufacturing businesses is well documented. In a survey of MEP clients served from October 2005 to September 2006, companies around the country reported that as a result of MEP services, they created or retained over 52,500 jobs; generated or retained $6.77 billion in sales; realized $1.12 billion in cost savings; and invested $1.65 billion in modernization including plants and equipment, information systems, and workforce and training. In FY 2007 alone, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership served 28,004 clients in ours and many other states.
Without the MEP’s assistance, many of our small and mid-sized manufacturers may not be competitive in this global marketplace. On behalf of these companies and manufacturing workers in our states, we urge you to fund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program at $122 million in FY 2009.

Thank you for considering this important request.

Sincerely,

Governor Jennifer Granholm
Michigan

Governor Jodi Rell
Connecticut

Governor Rod Blagojevich
Illinois

Governor John Baldacci
Maine

Governor John Lynch
New Hampshire

Governor Mike Easley
North Carolina

Governor Ted Strickland
Ohio

Governor Ed Rendell
Pennsylvania

Governor Mike Beebe
Arkansas

Governor Ruth Ann Minner
Delaware

Governor Chet Culver
Iowa

Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts

Governor Eliot Spitzer
New York

Governor John Hoeven
North Dakota

Governor Brad Henry
Oklahoma

Governor Aníbal Acevedo Vilá
Puerto Rico
Governor Mike Rounds
South Dakota

Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Washington

Governor Jim Doyle
Wisconsin

Governor Tim Kaine
Virginia

Governor Joe Manchin III
West Virginia