



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0906

July 27th, 2023

Director Eric Smith  
Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
U.S. Economic Development Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Director Smith,

We request full and fair consideration of Washington Maritime Blue's (Maritime Blue) submission to the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) Build to Scale 2023 Program entitled Scaling the Maritime Blue Economy Innovation Cluster.

With early support from EDA's Regional Innovation Strategies i6 Challenge grant in 2017, Maritime Blue was launched in 2018 as a cluster organization to implement Washington state's strategy for a Blue Economy. With additional EDA support through the 2020 B2S Industry Challenge, Maritime Blue has grown to 12 full-time employees with an ecosystem of more than 100 members and is the region's marquee cluster organization for sector-focused economic development. By leveraging this previous work, Maritime Blue is positioned to scale existing programming supporting new technology development, collaboration, and entrepreneurship to strengthen the market competitiveness of the maritime sector in Washington state.

With this funding, Maritime Blue will build on their existing efforts to accelerate the region's pathway towards an equitable, sustainable, and profitable maritime and ocean sector (Blue Economy), in supporting the scaling of technologies, companies, and early-stage markets through intentional programming and collaboration. This includes scaling up their existing work to:

- Elevate Washington's growing startup ecosystem of entrepreneurs, mentors, and investors and continue to lower barriers of access for early-stage startups passionate about finding innovative solutions that benefit the Blue Economy by helping them develop, grow and secure funding through place-based incubators and mentor-guided accelerators;
- Enable partnerships between entrepreneurs, research and development groups, established industry, public entities, and community and nonprofit organizations through seeding, facilitating, and convening partners in early-stage market building collaboratives and technology demonstration projects; and
- Expand ecosystem and membership engagement resources through events, improved data collection, knowledge sharing, and storytelling.



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We enthusiastically support this application to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship in the Blue Economy. Working together, we can cement this region's maritime industry as a global leader in innovation, commercialization, entrepreneurship and sustainability. For these reasons, we urge full and fair consideration of Maritime Blue's application to EDA's 2023 Build to Scale Venture Challenge grant program.

Sincerely,

DEREK KILMER  
Member of Congress

MARIA CANTWELL  
Member of Congress

MARILYN STRICKLAND  
Member of Congress

ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress

RICK LARSEN  
Member of Congress

PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress

SUZAN DELBENE  
Member of Congress