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July 26, 2013

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the U.S. Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Re: SBIR Outreach and Commercialization and the Navy's Opportunity Forum

Dear Secretary Mabus:

As you and your team review conferences for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, I urge you to approve the annual Navy Opportunity Forum.

For 13 years, the Navy Opportunity Forum has served as one of the most popular and effective ways that small businesses have found government or private-sector partners to advance and commercialize their innovations developed through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. Commercialization is one of the primary Congressional objectives of the SBIR and STTR programs, and the six-year, comprehensive SBIR and STTR reauthorization bill that we enacted in December 2011, as part of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012* (P.L. 112-81), reinforced that objective with more than ten sections intended to increase commercialization of SBIR and STTR processes and products. Given these new parts of the law, the Navy Opportunity Forum is more important than ever and should be continued.

I regret that I was not able to participate in the Navy Opportunity Forum this year, but I did have the privilege to speak at the 2012 Forum. I was so impressed with the firms, the presentation booths, and the large and diverse number of attendees, I was convinced that the forum should be replicated by the other SBIR and STTR agencies and departments if they didn't already have something as effective in place. I felt so strongly about it that I sent a letter in July 2012 with Senator Snowe to all the SBIR and STTR agencies, and part of that letter encouraged them to hold events like the Navy Opportunity Forum and the National SBIR Conference in New Orleans to increase outreach and commercialization.

In closing, I thank you for your consideration of my request and send my thanks and compliments to John Williams and his colleague, Steve Sullivan, for their management of the Navy's Opportunity Forum.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
Chair