



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

June 10, 2021

Governor Tony Evers
115 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers:

As you continue your allocation of Wisconsin's share of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, we ask that you commit \$9,750,000 of those funds to economic recovery in southeastern Wisconsin – specifically to the Kenosha STEM Innovation Center. These funds would match city of Kenosha and Kenosha Unified School District financial commitments.

The Kenosha STEM Innovation Center (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is a planned 60,000 gross square feet facility for a small and minority-owned business revitalization and workforce training center, and entrepreneurial economic development project. Modeled after the successful Cortex Innovation Center in St. Louis, the Center will be located on a 107-acre former brownfield barren, in what will be the heart of an innovation neighborhood for fostering relevant, community-wide educational opportunities and entrepreneurial support for small and start-up businesses. The Kenosha STEM Innovation Center programming will be focused on reducing outward migration of workers from southeastern Wisconsin by training digitally skilled talent, supporting and recruiting entrepreneurial talent, and providing a supportive role in the commercialization of intellectual property from Wisconsin's research institutions.

The public health emergency that arose from the 2019 novel coronavirus has been economically devastating. The riots in Kenosha last summer exacerbated that economic and psychological devastation. Kenosha needs assistance to not only bounce back, but in doing so, to help lay transformational groundwork for bridging gaps in training and opportunity, as well as building a truly diverse regional economy. Given its central location in the Milwaukee-Chicago corridor, the Kenosha STEM Innovation Center has the unique ability to jumpstart the economy in southeastern Wisconsin.

In proposing ARPA funding for this specific recovery and reinvestment, we recognize and acknowledge the enormous support and input that is necessary from community, state and regional partners including the Kenosha Unified School District, Kenosha YMCA, Mary Lou & Arthur F. Mahone Fund, generator, Jockey International, UW-Parkside, Carthage College, Gateway Technical College, Herzing University, University of Wisconsin System President Tommy Thompson, UW-Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Department of Revenue Secretary Peter Barca, Congressman Bryan Steil, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, and U.S. Senator Ron Johnson.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and willingness to invest in the people of the Kenosha area, and your commitment to the architecture for a diverse regional economy.

Sincerely,



Samantha Kerkman
State Representative
61st Assembly District



Van Wanggaard
State Senator
21st Senate District