

Ellen Winsor, Former Town Councilor, Jamestown, Rhode Island, 2009 - 2012
Proposal: NBER Innovation Policy Research Grant Academic Year 2014-2015

January 1, 2014

Ms. Kathy Cooper
Chairman, Board of Directors
The National Bureau of Economic Research
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Ms. Cooper and Board of Directors:

I offer an innovation policy approach leveraging municipal assets to more readily scale up “technology entrepreneurship” towards product and job creation. The small size of Rhode Island can serve as an advantage to be capitalized on to study the manageability, standardization and data yield of the paradigm.

MUNICIPAL ASSETS OPENED TO INNOVATORS

To strengthen entrepreneurship, foster innovations, and begin to renew the needed pipeline for advanced manufacturing, this proposal advocates a new local-level ‘economic norm’ where (RI) municipalities identify municipal assets (public lands, DPW buildings, natural resources, redundant brick factories, etc.) to be opened regularly to entrepreneurs for innovators to temporarily test product prototypes publicly. Municipalities helping to test prototypes and supporting entrepreneurs early on towards potential product development, makes it all the more likely, when it comes time to assemble products or produce parts for the innovation the skilled and semiskilled jobs may be produced on the local level in the USA. The goals include impartial data collection, standardizing innovators’ contracts and prototype insurance coverage statewide. The paradigm is also importantly proactive in scouting out technological prototypes needed by *existing* businesses to generate earnings growth and higher profits.

SMALLEST STATE IN THE UNION: GENERATING PROMISE

The endeavor may start in a single RI municipality such as the island of Jamestown, after Town Council discussion and with consensus, but scale up quickly to encompass Newport’s Aquidneck Island communities, with The Naval War College and NUWC, and progress statewide by aligning innovators with applicable municipal assets. Municipal ‘sign on’ with innovators lined up will create an exciting choreographed collaboration, while offering new promise for taxpayers and businesses, plus garner positive attention for innovation, then other municipalities in the US can leverage their assets similarly.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT WITH CLOUD FUNDING and EXPERT BOARD MEMBERS

A nonprofit is probably the entity of choice for the paradigm, backed by a board of experts to firmly establish the fundamentals of the paradigm, assure equitable implementation, create crowd-sourced internet donations for wide support, plus public-private partnership funding, and gather “measurable facts quantified...not subjective to impression...to aid public discussion and fruitful policy determination.”¹

NATIONAL EXPERTS

Experts in topics such as behavioral economics (towards novel policy), direct investment vehicles, private funding sources, nonpartisan public policy, homeland security, law, insurance and engineering, plus labor, industrial and agriculture experts, are examples of skilled advisors to weigh-in on the paradigm, with the collaboration of Chambers of Commerce and Leagues of Cities and Towns. Of course the municipalities would have freewill to receive, or not, a prototype for testing, with cloud-internet funding, and public-private partnerships, to underwrite the temporary testing period. There is every reason to invite major businesses to participate and back the endeavor.

¹ Toward a Firmer Basis of Economic Policy: The Founding of the National Bureau of Economic, Solomon Fabricant, 1984, p.3.

YOUTH: STEM AND STEAM

Teenagers and children will be invited to participate in the paradigm in various ways, which will help foster the nation's educational needs for Science, Technology and Math competency, with influence of the out-of-the-box ARTS, while inspiring the next generation to excel due to innovators as potential mentors. Educators and social advocates (ex, Providence's TEDx presenters) are welcome liaisons.

INNOVATIONS

Innovations for prototype testing can be gleaned from MIT's Emerging Technology (EmTech) conference, MIT Energy and Venture Capital conferences, the Department of Energy's ARPA-E conference, Aspen Ideas Festival (all of which I have attended multiple times), the Naval Underwater Warfare Center (open patents and forums), universities, clean energy consortiums, innovators' forums, to name a few. Formally providing municipalities an enhanced economic role nationally, in conjunction with entrepreneurial support systems parlays public and private economic focus, with all data gathered in a scrupulous manner.

MOMENTUM: RI GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIA, NEWSPAPER and THE PENTAGON

I have discussed prototype testing, the paradigm, and/or my Op-ed, with the following leaders:

- **Governor** Lincoln Chafee. George Zainyeh is his Chief of Staff and knows me. See ARPA-E below.
- **Pentagon:** Thomas Hicks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy-Energy. I visited Secretary Hicks at the Pentagon in 2012. He expressed interest in prototype testing at NUWC and Naval War College.
- **RI League of Cities and Towns** president and board: discussed paradigm socially with then President Fung and handed my Op-ed to new board members during their 2012 annual meeting.
- **Bryant University's Leadership Institute:** spoke to Gary Sasse, executive director, in 2012 and 2013, and a staff member about data analysis through the Economics Department faculty.
- **Brown University's Technology Ventures Office:** spoke to Katherine Gordon, director, in 2013.
- **Deputy Director of ARPA-E,** Cheryl Martin, Ph.D: After a networking session during ARPA-E, where I briefly brought up the paradigm with Dr. Martin, she mentioned she had heard about it from the **RI Economic Development Corporation** staff and offered, "Let's meet after ARPA-E is over." I seek leadership consensus to discuss ARPA-E's potential involvement and secure her advice. The next ARPA-E conference is February 24-26, 2014. I have attended since 2011.
- **RI Commissioner of Energy Resources,** Marion Gold, Ph.D: I met with Dr. Gold in August 2013.
- **Associate director RI Division of Planning,** Kevin Flynn. I attended two sessions of *RHODEMAP RI* and met prior, in September 2013, with Kevin to discuss the paradigm.
- **General Treasurer (and now Gubernatorial candidate) Gina Raimondo's** policy analyst is Rebecca Webber. I first contacted her after MIT's Emerging Technology Conference October 2013.
- **Kaufmann Foundation:** My first contact about innovation as Town Councilor was in January 2010.
- **Jamestown Town Council 2009 - 2012:** my ideas for innovation were discussed during my tenure.
- **NBER's** Scott Stern, Ph.D, MIT Sloan School of Management: discussion at MIT's VC conference.

ECONOMIC GROWTH MUNICIPAL LEVEL

Thank you for your NBER Innovation Policy Research Grant opportunity. I offer for your funding my economic innovation paradigm involving municipalities for testing and data gathering towards long-term policy value creation, and to aid the revival of linked pipelines of small, localized manufacturers for the betterment of the United States as noted in MIT's *Production In The Innovation Economy (PIE)* research.

Sincerely,

Ellen M. Winsor

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