



**LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER**  
**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**25TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK**

**March 20, 2014**

**President Barack Obama**  
**The White House**  
**1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW**  
**Washington, D.C. 20500**

**Dear Mr. President,**

**As you work to fulfill your pledge to establish new manufacturing innovation institutes throughout the country, I urge you to consider the important field of optics and photonics.**

**Optics and photonics technologies harness the power of light and are all around us and they include products that keep us safe. On April 12, 2009, a team of Navy SEALs floated aboard an American warship in the Indian Ocean. They were tasked with one mission – to save the captain of an American cargo ship who had been taken hostage by pirates. Just 25 months later, another team of Navy SEALs boarded a pair of stealth helicopters on a mission into Pakistan to capture or kill the world’s most wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden. As we all know, both of those missions were unqualified successes. What is not as well known is that cutting edge American-made optics in sniper scopes and night vision devices played a vital role in securing both victories, and that the technology was made in Rochester, NY, the optics capital of the world.**

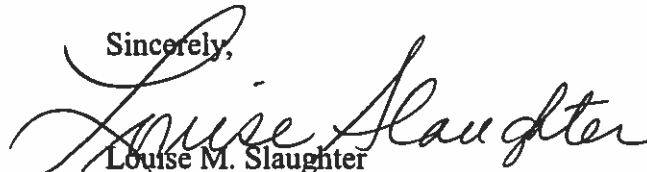
**The United States has been a leader in optics research, development and manufacturing for more than 100 years. American innovation in fiber optics led to an exponential increase in the speed of telecommunications. Our development of ever-smaller cameras revolutionized medicine by making minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery a reality. Advancements in satellite imagery provide our armed forces with real-time, life-saving data. All of these optics and photonics innovations have had a significant, positive impact on our way of life and contribute to industries that employ thousands of Americans.**

**The landscape is changing rapidly and our past strength by no means assures our future. As optics and photonics have permeated fields as diverse as advanced manufacturing, telecommunications, defense, energy, and medical technology, other countries have made significant investments in developing the next wave of innovative products by improving critical factors such as size, weight, performance, and cost. Germany’s Fraunhofer Institute of Applied Optics and Precision Engineering has been especially active. With this in mind, it is crucial that we maintain our national competitiveness in this growing, multi-purpose industry.**

Furthermore, investments in optics and photonics have been a driving force behind the revitalization of manufacturing in the United States. In 2010, a \$1.3 billion investment in lasers for airplane and automobile manufacturing translated into \$500 billion in revenues for those industries. The virtuous cycle continued as demand increased for the industrial lasers that made this revenue growth possible.

Communities with a long history in optics and photonics like Rochester, NY have the talented workforce, manufacturing infrastructure, training facilities, university research centers, and industry value chains necessary to have a truly transformative impact on our economy. By focusing the next manufacturing innovation institute on optics and photonics, I am convinced that we can attract significant public and private investments and take the next step in ensuring American economic prosperity for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,  
  
Louise M. Slaughter  
Member of Congress

LMS:md