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January 30, 2012

The Honorable David Kappos
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office
US Department of Commerce
Madison Buildings (East & West)
600 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Response to Request for Comments: Nationwide Workforce Program
Docket No. PTO-C-2011-0066

Dear Under Secretary Kappos:

I write to express GE's support for the State of Connecticut's proposal to host a satellite office of the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

Connecticut has a proud history of innovation and patent activity that continues to this day. Connecticut's economy is diverse and includes not just a mature insurance and financial services sector, but also a robust and entrepreneurial cluster of software and information technology companies, biopharmaceutical labs, medical device makers, aerospace and advanced manufacturers.

Situated at the crossroads of a dynamic and productive region of the country, Hartford, Connecticut is a compelling choice for a USPTO satellite office. In 2010, Connecticut ranked 8th among all states in the number of patents per 100,000 workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). As importantly, Hartford is at the center of patent activity in the Northeast and New England, and can access New York and Boston more conveniently than either can access each other. And while Connecticut offers competitive salaries with surrounding areas, Hartford's cost of living is less, as are the expenses associated with establishing a regional USPTO facility, than either New York City or Boston.

Our colleges and universities are world class, which are responsible for cutting-edge research and development and are an engine of entrepreneurial activity in the state. Twenty four of our colleges, universities, and research institutions offer engineering degrees. Among states, Connecticut ranks third in the percent of our population with advanced degrees, according to the US Census Bureau. Overall, Connecticut has one of the highest rates of educational attainment in the US.

We have no doubt that Hartford can meet the needs of the USPTO and the regions inventors and entrepreneurs, and so we commend the proposal by Connecticut to host such an office and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas J. Balz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.