



January 17, 2012

Azam Khan, Deputy Chief of Staff
United States Patent and Trademark Office
MS: Office of Under Secretary and Director
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450

Dear Mr. Khan:

On behalf of Altera Corporation, I would like to express my support for the creation of a satellite patent office in Silicon Valley. Altera is the pioneer of programmable logic semiconductor devices and solutions, and relies heavily on intellectual property to protect its innovations. Establishing a regional office in Silicon Valley would greatly benefit both the United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) and the patent applicant community, including companies like Altera.

A Silicon Valley office would enable the USPTO to recruit a highly educated, specialized workforce due to the high concentration of top tier educational institutions, high technology companies and skilled individuals. The San Francisco Bay Area is home to some of the best universities in the world. Schools including Stanford University, Berkeley and Santa Clara University, to name a few, generate a large number of technically skilled graduates. Moreover, Silicon Valley is home to over 200 high technology companies, including Altera, Apple, Google, eBay, Facebook, Cisco and many others that keep pushing the boundaries of technological innovation. Silicon Valley is also home to many of the venture capital firms that fuel innovation here on a daily basis. As a result of this innovation-encouraging ecosystem, Silicon Valley has a

high concentration of inventors, scientists and engineers who are potential recruits for the USPTO.

A number of factors unique to Silicon Valley would help the USPTO in training and retaining talented local examiners. For example, the high concentration of skilled workers in Silicon Valley provides an ideal community for many companies to unveil their latest scientific and technological innovations and products. Trade shows, the proximity to a large number of applicants who could demonstrate products and technology, as well as Silicon Valley's general atmosphere of intellectual rigor would contribute to the education of examiners. Three major airports in Silicon Valley within a thirty mile radius provide easy access to and from the Bay Area. Public transportation such as BART, CALTRAIN, light rail and bus transportation also facilitates easy transportation throughout the area. In addition, the high level of diversity in the San Francisco Bay Area would undoubtedly contribute to the overall diversity of the Patent Office examiner corps.

Approximately 25% of patents granted to U.S. companies originate in the state of California and of these approximately half come from Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley and the broader San Francisco Bay Area constitute a crucial part of the U.S. economy and intellectual property is central to the functioning of many companies here. The value of having a local patent office that understands both the motivations and technology of Silicon Valley inventors cannot be underestimated.

A lengthy patent application pendency period is especially problematic for many Silicon Valley companies because patent pendency often exceeds the duration of product life cycles. This is true of Altera and many other companies in our fast-moving space. Establishing a regional office in Silicon Valley would benefit both the USPTO

and the patent applicant community by reducing this patent application pendency and improving examination quality. Among other benefits, it would enable the applicant community to perform more in-person examiner Interviews in order to expedite prosecution of patent applications. For example, it would allow inventors, experts, in-house counsel and patent attorneys who were previously unable to attend in-person examiner interviews to attend at a fraction of the cost of traveling to the East Coast and to lend their expertise to expedite examination of patent applications. This would also likely result in higher quality examination. In-person interviews are a far more effective and efficient way of communicating with examiners and discussing inventions and prior art references than the slow dialog of Office Actions and responses to Office Actions. Therefore, establishing a Silicon Valley office will likely reduce the pendency of patent applications significantly and improve examination quality.

If a satellite office were to be created in Silicon Valley, Altera would be willing and able to partner with local universities and the USPTO to help educate patent examiners on cutting edge technologies. For example, Altera would be in a position to provide education and training, including product demonstrations for patent examiners. We believe that collaboration between the patent applicant community in Silicon Valley and the USPTO is vital to refining the patent application process overall and maximizing innovation nationwide.

Sincerely,



Brian Way
Director of Intellectual Property Law
Altera Corporation