

BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

The Honorable David Kappos
Undersecretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the US Patent and Trademark Office
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Mr. Kappos,

Brookings Mountain West, a public policy think tank established in partnership by The Brookings institution and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), is pleased to offer its support for establishing a U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in Las Vegas, Nevada. Brookings Mountain West has compiled an extensive resume of economic development research on the City of Las Vegas, the State of Nevada, and the surrounding Intermountain West Region. This is a critical time in the growth of the western states and the expansion of the USPTO is, in fact, overdue.

Significant factors support the creation of a patent office in Las Vegas, including the presence of a global reaching airport (McCarran International Airport), with extensive air connections throughout the western United States (and beyond). Frequent and inexpensive daily flights to the established and blossoming innovation tech centers in Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, and Phoenix, for example, are in place.

In addition, Las Vegas serves as our nation's premier convention and trade show destination. In 2010, Las Vegas hosted more than 18,000 conventions and approximately 4.5 million business professionals. On its own, the "business" of Las Vegas conventions could support a local U.S. patent office.

Greater Las Vegas offers numerous quality of life benefits as well. The temperate climate and lack of natural disasters are a critical advantage for high tech innovation centers. In addition, the availability of affordable housing at all market levels, a low cost of living, and a rich and diverse cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities support employee retention. The 2010 U.S. Census recognized Las Vegas' significant increase in population diversity, ranking it in the highest levels of growth for U.S. cities.

The presence of Switch Communications, a unique global data center operation that houses a \$1 billion fiber-optic backbone and provides data management services to many of the world's most prominent companies, including just about every technology giant and big media conglomerate, position Las Vegas as a growing player in the technology innovation market.

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A recent Brookings-SRI Economic development report for the state of Nevada (http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/1114_nevada_economy.aspx) identified “Business IT Ecosystems,” “Health and Medical Services,” and “Aerospace and Defense” as three of the key emerging technology-based industries for southern Nevada.

The Las Vegas market for the recruitment of its workforce extends beyond southern Nevada to both southern California (Los Angeles) and Arizona (Phoenix). Skilled professionals, and the greater workforce, increasingly view this “Megapolitan Region” as a single, geographic entity, with shared characteristics.

The presence of UNLV, a growing metropolitan research university, with a focus on innovation technology that is reflected in its academic programs, state-of-the-art facilities, and public-private partnerships with businesses, will prove an attractive asset to patent professionals seeking to maintain or improve their academic credentials. UNLV also houses the William S. Boyd School of Law, ranked in the top 100 U.S. law schools, and a great resource for legal information and expertise on patents and trademarks.

In summary, Las Vegas and the emerging Intermountain West is an excellent location for an expanded U.S Patent and Trademark Office, and Brookings Mountain West commends those who recognize the value Las Vegas adds to support this critical infrastructure improvement to our region.

Sincerely yours,



Robert E. Lang
UNLV Director
Brookings Mountain West