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**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-4702

ARMED SERVICES

BUDGET

**TO THE PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANIZERS OF THE NORTHWEST AERIAL  
ROBOTICS CLUSTER PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP:**

I offer my best wishes that today's event is a success. This workshop will help bring attention to the great potential that exists in the Northwest to provide innovative aerial robotics technologies that will benefit the Department of Defense and other government agencies and create good jobs in our region.

During his presidential campaign, then-Senator Barack Obama recognized the importance of Regional Innovation Clusters to promote economic growth. He pledged federal support for initiatives to bring together the best minds, support small businesses, and leverage a region's existing assets to promote long-term job growth. As part of this effort, the Department of Defense has partnered with the Small Business Administration to promote four Advanced Technology Clusters (ATCs). You are here today as part of the Northwest Aerial Robotics Cluster; other clusters are based in Hawaii, Michigan, and Virginia.

I cannot think of a better place than the Pacific Northwest to locate an ATC. The Pacific Northwest has outstanding research facilities, a technologically-savvy workforce, adaptive small businesses and a long history of support for national security due to our region's many military installations and the presence of one of the nation's largest defense contractors. Establishing and providing resources to the Northwest Aerial Robotics Cluster will produce innovation for our military and other government agencies and create good jobs for our workers.

I am encouraged by the Department of Defense's ATC initiative, as I believe this has great potential to spur innovation and economic growth. Next week, I will join with my colleague from Virginia Glenn Nye to offer an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that will direct the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on his plans to enhance regional ATCs, provide them with resources, collaborate with and share resources from other federal agencies, and assist the expansion of regional clusters in encouraging the development of innovative advanced technologies, including robotics and autonomous systems, to address national security, homeland security, and first responder challenges.

I look forward to receiving this report from the Secretary and continuing to work with the Northwest Aerial Robotics Cluster to develop new technologies and create good paying jobs and strong small businesses.