



133 W Michigan Ave
Jackson, MI 49201
March 4th, 2026

Dear Chair Jenkins-Arno and Members of the Subcommittee,

Manufacturing is the backbone of south central Michigan, but our small and medium manufacturers (SMMs) are under intense pressure. Caught between global supply chain pressures and a persistent skilled labor shortage, they must innovate to keep throughput and quality up. These 1,000+ regional SMMs do not have internal R&D departments. To them, innovation feels like a risk because it requires learning new tools and processes while still executing on existing customer demands.

Lean Rocket Lab has been scouting and vetting advanced manufacturing startups from around the globe for 5 years. We have vetted over 500 solutions, worked closely with over 100, and attracted 15 to set up operations in Michigan. We are now partnering into the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (AMTC) in Jackson to focus on the manufacturing side of this problem. The AMTC is a 26,000 square foot facility featuring a shop floor with welding, machining, and warehouse capabilities. This center provides a collaborative environment to facilitate manufacturing focused education, training, workshops, and demo style events. We will be able to facilitate opportunities for manufacturers to interact with advanced technology in a tangible way.

The biggest barrier to technology adoption is a lack of understanding. Through the AMTC we will provide hands-on, future focused education to manufacturers on data capture, system integration, machine vision, AI, robotics and more. When a manufacturer is educated on how a tool works, sees it first hand, and is shown the ROI in a workshop, the risk of investment drops significantly.

We are seeking a \$150,000 appropriation to bridge the Implementation Gap through Programming, Experts, and Direct Milestone Grants. Through these we will be able to provide workshops, demo events, and technical experts to facilitate integration while also solving funding gaps for training, hardware, and development costs to overcome initial implementation hurdles for both startups and manufacturers.

This investment protects high-wage jobs ensuring Southcentral Michigan remains a global leader in manufacturing.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon Marken

CEO, Lean Rocket Lab