



May 17, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
 Chairman
 Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
 and Science
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
 Ranking Member
 Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
 and Science
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Hutchison:

We, the undersigned, are trade associations that represent the overwhelming majority of our nation's nearly 500,000 workers in fiber, yarn, fabric, apparel, home furnishings and specialty fabrics applications. We are writing to express strong support of funding for a competitive research program specifically designed to advance the technological capabilities and overall competitiveness of the U.S. fiber, textile and apparel industries.

Noting the current budgetary environment, we realize that specified or earmarked funding for individual research consortiums is not viable. At the same time, we believe it is essential that the U.S. government continue to serve as a partner in the ongoing effort to transform the U.S. textile and apparel sector into a highly flexible supply chain, capable of responding to rapidly changing market demands. Specifically, we are writing to request that the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations subcommittee include \$5 million for a competitive textile research program for FY 2012.

We believe that this program would be best housed at the U.S. Department of Commerce. It is also our understanding that such a program would fall within the new Congressional spending guidelines in that no institution or entity would be pre-designated as a recipient of funds from this grant program. Not-for-profit organizations would compete equally and fairly for funds through the submission of competitive research proposals. Finally, we would also suggest that an industry advisory committee be empaneled to help the

Commerce Department review proposals and prioritize the industry's current research and technology needs.

We would note that numerous other governments are investing heavily in various facets of textile research. For example, the French, British and German governments are all sponsoring research through their respective university structures on advanced textile composites. The Japanese government is establishing a fiber innovation incubator. The Korean government is working with their universities on advanced textile technologies. Finally, China has invested over \$60 million recently to further research related to advanced textiles and nanotechnologies.

A U.S. research and development program would be designed to accelerate the technologies needed to enhance critical industry and national needs, such as flexible composite structures, interactive and smart fabrics used for sensing and data transfer; textile polymer structures for recreation, aerospace, and transportation markets, protective clothing, biomedical textiles, alternative energy sources, mass customization, body scanning, 3D product development, digital supply chains and environmental sustainability.

Technology development and distribution is critical in terms of helping the U.S. industry in their ongoing effort to remain globally competitive. A stable domestic textile and apparel sector is important in this period of severe unemployment, as the industry remains a primary supplier of employment to women and minority workers, with many of these jobs located in depressed rural areas, as well as major inner cities.

For all these reasons, we encourage you to establish a textile and apparel competitive research fund as part of the FY 2012 CJS appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA)
American Fiber Manufacturers Association (AFMA)
American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC)
Hosiery Technology Center (HTC)
INDA, Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry
Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI)
National Association for the Sewn Products Industry (SEAMS)
National Cotton Council of America (NCC)
National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO)
National Textile Association (NTA)
Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)
Sewn Products Equipment & Suppliers of the Americas (SPESA)
The Hosiery Association (THA)
United States Industrial Fabrics Institute (USIFI)