



**Electro Standards Laboratories**

ADVANCED SYSTEMS DESIGN & SERVICES

March 24, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Finance Committee

RE: Support for Innovate RI Program Funding in the FY27 Budget

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

As the Chief Operating Officer of Electro Standards Laboratories, Inc., headquartered in Cranston, Rhode Island, I am writing to share our perspective on the importance of maintaining funding for the Innovative Matching Grants/Internship (Innovate RI) program in the FY27 state budget.

Electro Standards Laboratories has been part of Rhode Island's advanced technology and manufacturing community for many years. During that time, we have made extensive use of programs that support companies pursuing federal research opportunities, particularly the SBIR/STTR programs. The Innovate RI initiative has played a meaningful role in helping companies like ours compete for these federal awards and continue developing specialized technologies here in Rhode Island rather than elsewhere.

From an operational standpoint, programs like this make a real difference. Early-stage research and technology development require significant time and resources before commercial returns are realized. The state's support helps bridge that gap and allows companies to invest in innovation, retain highly skilled engineers and technical staff, and pursue projects that ultimately strengthen Rhode Island's technology sector.

In our case, access to these programs has helped us remain competitive in federal research initiatives and continue expanding capabilities at our Cranston operations. Just as important, it reinforces Rhode Island as a place where technology-driven companies can grow, develop new solutions, and contribute to the state's economy.

I understand that budget decisions require balancing many priorities. However, based on our experience, the Innovate RI program has proven to be a practical and effective tool for supporting innovation and helping Rhode Island companies leverage significantly larger federal research investments. For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the committee to maintain the \$1 million allocation for the Innovative Matching Grants/Internship program in the FY27 budget.

Respectfully,

Michael Sepe

Chief Operating Officer

Electro Standards Laboratories, Inc.