



Stephen Piper, CEO
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March 26, 2026

To: The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair, House Finance Committee

RE: Support for Innovation Program Funding, FY27 Budget Economic Development Article

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance, Committee

I am writing to urge you to maintain funding for Rhode Island's **Innovative Matching Grants/Internship** program in the FY27 Budget. In the current budget proposal, this program is being cut in order to fund the Innovation Initiatives program. Both programs are critical to driving high growth businesses, attracting federal and private investment and creating high paying jobs in the State.

Since 2013, the Innovative Matching Grants/Internship program has helped companies access and leverage **\$152 million** in federal funds through the SBIR/STTR program. This program keeps innovative companies in Rhode Island. It helps companies build breakthrough technologies that attract private investment and growth. Many spin out from our research institutions. These dollars align Rhode Island companies to federal and private innovation funds - further positioning Rhode Island as a place for innovation.

As an emerging Rhode Island technology company, this program is especially important to our ability to compete for SBIR and STTR opportunities and continue building in this state. For companies like ours developing technologies with meaningful defense and dual use applications, these federal programs are often a critical source of early support for research, development, and commercialization. The Innovative Matching Grants/Internship program helps translate those opportunities into real economic activity in Rhode Island by supporting technical hiring, student internships, product development, and long-term

company growth. Just as importantly, it strengthens the broader innovation ecosystem by helping Rhode Island attract and retain high potential companies, draw more federal dollars into the state, and build the kind of advanced industries that create lasting jobs and investment.

I strongly urge the state to keep \$1 million funds in the Innovative Matching Grants/Internship (Innovate RI) program.

Respectfully,

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Stephen Piper, CEO

Juice Robotics