

February 21, 2003

Assemblyman Willis Edwards III  
33 Evergreen Place, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
East Orange, NJ 07018

Dear Assemblyman Edwards:

On behalf of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey and its 80 members, I'm writing to ask for your help in saving the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology. We were disappointed to learn that the state's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2004 calls for elimination of funding for this vital agency.

The budget reductions will result in the following, all of which are detrimental to the long and short-term economy of New Jersey.

1. Elimination of funding for all academic/industry R&D Excellence programs which have commitments of support for up to five years. This also results in an additional burden of the university budgets.
2. Elimination in operating support for all eleven of New Jersey's Technology Business Incubators, including the five new incubators that opened in 2002.
3. Elimination of the self-supported Springboard Loan Program and other business assistance programs.
4. Elimination of the staff that have networks, contacts, knowledge and experience to link New Jersey's academic, industrial, military and government sectors. Once lost, it would be difficult and expensive to recreate.

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5. Loss of projected leverage of non-state dollars. Historically, Commission supported programs have obtained a minimum of \$3 in non-state funds for every \$1 invested by the Commission.

The Commission's targeted R&D investments are critical to building and maintaining New Jersey's academic research capacity. Their grants have been critical in retaining outstanding researchers at our universities. If these investments cease, our universities will lose world-class talent to other, out-of-state institutions, and our major R&D based companies will be forced to look to other, non-New Jersey universities for basic research support they need and require. This is something that goes against the Governor's vision of creating a world class pharma/biotech community as documented in the recently released Porter Study.

Even in tough economic times, other states are not abandoning their efforts to strengthen their economies, and attract New Jersey's resources—our leading companies, our outstanding academics, our new start-ups. We must do the same.

On behalf of all the R&D Council members, I urge you to support, and work for the restoration of funding for the programs and operations of the Commission of Science and Technology. The State's investment in the Commission has been modest and the benefits are substantial.

Sincerely,

Allan S. Fliss  
President