



GAST Manufacturing, Inc.
2300 M-139 Highway
Benton Harbor, MI 49022



The Honorable Fred Upton
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 23, 2018

Dear Member of Congress,

Thank you for your continued focus on economic development in Southwest Michigan. It is one of many challenges for our state.

As an employer, one of our top issues is finding and retaining skilled talent, and increasingly the people who live in my community, and want to work, do not have the necessary education and training to fulfill the minimum requirements for open positions at my firm. Our local workforce board, Kinexus, has played a significant role in the economic and workforce development of Southwest Michigan and has helped us face this challenge by bringing solutions to us, the employer.

Since 2017, we have had the privilege of utilizing their programs and services to make our company and region successful. Gast Manufacturing is a top producer of pneumatic motors, compressors, and pumps. Our products are found in a wide array of applications from environmental, food and beverage, medical, and transportation.

Employees are an organization's greatest resource and their ongoing acquisition of knowledge is a differentiator from our competitors. The STTF grant and Kinexus have allowed us to gain an advantage while not negatively impacting our bottom line. The participants have developed a greater understanding of their job and the tools needed to perform at a higher level.

As a local employer, we utilize the federally funded services provided by Kinexus and we recognize the importance of the workforce system. My company is able to focus on innovation and expansion, while my state and local workforce partners outreach into the community to recruit and prepare the local talent needed to sustain that growth.

Kinexus is an essential resource for employers and job seekers in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. I appreciate all of the help that Kinexus provides for us and I look forward to continuing the relationship.

Sincerely,

Matt Whan
Vice President of Operations