



QUAD CITIES CHAMBER

D.C. Fly-In

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Critical Supply Chain Site Development Program



Economic development professionals throughout the Quad Cities work hard to attract major employers to our region. The fruits of these efforts have resulted in several major companies putting down roots in the Quad Cities, bringing with them significant economic benefits shared by our entire population.

These efforts, however, are facing significant challenges. While we have seen success in recent years, our current stock of available developable sites is not suitable for the major employers who would otherwise want to relocate to our region. The single greatest barrier to site readiness is utility infrastructure capacity. Whether water, wastewater, electric transmission or other core utilities, many otherwise strong development sites in our region lack the capacity required to meet the needs of modern manufacturing and logistics investments.

The Quad Cities Chamber worked successfully with a prior Congress to authorize the Critical Supply Chain Site Development Program, housed within the Economic Development Administration (EDA) at the U.S. Department of Commerce. However, despite broad bipartisan support and clear demand from communities across the country, the program has not yet received funding. The program directly addresses site readiness challenges by providing the funding necessary to prepare sites to the point of “shovel-ready” -- funding which would be entirely unfeasible for state governments, much less local governments or individual investors.

Fully funding this program is a top federal priority for the Quad Cities Chamber. Appropriating the originally targeted \$20 million annually to the program over five years would advance the onshoring and reshoring of American manufacturing, strengthen domestic supply chains, and ensure midsized regions like the Quad Cities can remain competitive for new jobs and private investment.

Request:

- Fund the Critical Supply Chain Site Development Program

Lengthy and unpredictable federal permitting processes have become increasingly burdensome. Major infrastructure, energy, housing and other projects, even with broad public support, have taken years to move from proposal to construction. This extended timeline, along with other factors like cost uncertainty and litigation exposure, has disincentivized stakeholders from proposing or financing projects in the first place, causing communities to potentially miss out on developments with enormous economic impact.

The Quad Cities region, like many others, has seen failures and long delays for critical projects that would have addressed issues like the housing shortage, road infrastructure or energy production. Even if projects proceed eventually, such delays have allowed prices to increase drastically due to inflation of goods, tariff increases and other market dynamics. These price increases push further costs onto local and state level taxpayers, squeezing government budgets and stunting our regional economic development progress at a critical time for manufacturers and the business community at large.

Thoughtful modernization of the federal permitting process can advance economic growth, environmental protection and public trust by making the system work as intended. We request that Congress support our communities by adopting broad, bipartisan permitting reforms.

Requests:

- Pass bipartisan, comprehensive permitting reform legislation applicable to energy, infrastructure, broadband, water and manufacturing projects.
- Establish clear timelines and enforceable deadlines for federal reviews and judicial processes.
- Improve coordination and transparency across federal agencies.

The Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) and its commands serve not only as a strategic asset for national defense, but as an important cornerstone for our community. As our largest regional employer, RIA's workforce is important to the vibrancy of our community, and its workload integrates with our region's dynamic manufacturing ecosystem. Workload sustainment on the island is critical both to supporting the military and to stabilizing the future of our region's economy.

RIA commands support U.S. military global power projection and sustainment operations. The Joint Force cannot win without Army Sustainment Command (ASC), Joint Munitions Command (JMC), Army Contracting Command and First Army. Additionally, the Corps of Engineers District maintains a core leg of the upper Midwest's road-rail-air-water transportation corridor. Amid the atrophy of the defense industrial base since the end of the Cold War, the Army Organic Industrial Base (OIB)—the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC) and the Quad Cities Cartridge Case Facility—are tasked with providing strategic manufacturing resilience to produce critical military equipment, reducing the reliance on commercial industry to support surge capacity or legacy systems.

With ample unoccupied factory space on the island, JMTC and the Quad Cities Cartridge Case Facility are primed for workload growth. To support this growth however, we will need to support the workers and their families who will move to RIA by investing in a new Child Care Development Center. We respectfully request these investments in RIA in support of our national defense efforts, of the Quad Cities regional economy and of the individuals and their families who serve.

Requests:

- Support increased defense spending to bolster national defense, particularly for the logistics and munitions enterprises.
- Support the construction of the Rock Island Arsenal Child Care Development Center
- Grow sustainable workloads at the JMTC and the Quad Cities Cartridge Case Facility
- Initiate a major rebuild and build-out of DoD infrastructure focuses on the utilities and OIB arsenals and depots. Decades of underfunding and deferred maintenance have left DoD bases, arsenals/depots, housing and utilities in fair-to-poor conditions.

America's success has always relied on welcoming the most talented, hardworking people from around the world. Although we work hard to retain talent in our region and recruit from the rest of the country, the Quad Cities still faces significant and persistent headwinds in workforce availability. Immigration reform is a critical piece of the solution, but the current immigration system does not meet the needs of our economy, businesses or workers.

We support continued efforts to secure our borders, but proposed rules limiting availability of work permits and accessibility to qualified employees would lead to skills gaps, leaving hard-to-fill positions vacant for extended periods. Rules changes such as the USCIS-proposed Employment Authorization Reform for Asylum Applicants rule would institute a 365-day waiting period for initial work permit applications, give immigration officials broad authority to deny permits for any reason and increase permit processing delays despite a period of ongoing and persistent backlogs. Other rules like ending automatic annual permit renewals add administrative burdens on businesses seeking workforce solutions in a competitive global environment.

Broad denial of work permits for otherwise-qualified individuals will cause confusion and lead to a competitive disadvantage for American businesses. We fear that businesses unable to find sufficient domestic workforce to sustain operations will be forced to pivot toward downsizing their operations, leading to other harmful downstream economic impacts in our community.

Quad Cities companies already struggle to fill key positions. We respectfully request that Congress pass common-sense reforms to the legal immigration process to boost economic growth, create jobs and foster innovation for all Americans.

Requests:

- Advance bipartisan immigration legislation centered on economic needs and legal pathways.
- Modernize and expand employment-based and temporary worker visa programs.
- Reduce backlogs and administrative barriers in the legal immigration system.
- Protect employers' ability to fill jobs when U.S. workers are unavailable.

Modern infrastructure is foundational to economic growth, supply chain efficiency, and long-term competitiveness. The Quad Cities features extensive multimodal infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, waterways, freight and soon, passenger rail.

The State of Illinois recently approved funding for the Chicago-Moline rail line. Completion of this project will provide major economic benefits on its own, but the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Plan identifies the Quad Cities as a critical passenger rail hub eventually connecting Chicago to Omaha. We ask that this plan is considered for future funding, as it would solidify our region as a Midwestern multimodal transportation powerhouse.

Additionally, our communities have each utilized federal funding to invest in roads, water, wastewater, electric utilities and other infrastructure crucial to quality of life. Without federal funding, the work done, in many cases would be deferred, placing a major tax burden on residents and local businesses.

Reauthorizing federal surface transportation funding is essential to supporting the future of Quad Cities economic development, ensuring we remain competitive around the U.S. and around the world. We urge Congress to provide stable, long-term infrastructure funding to avoid disruptions, maintain momentum on needed projects and give states and localities the predictability required to plan and build.

Requests:

- Reauthorize federal surface transportation programs before expiration and maintain strong federal investment levels
- Support the continuation of passenger rail funding in alignment with the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Committee's long-range plan
- Encourage public private partnerships to leverage private capital.

The Quad Cities region is situated on the Mississippi River, making it a critical multimodal hub for global trade. Manufacturers, farmers, small businesses and others in our region depend on trade to compete globally, grow exports and make long-term investments. Unfortunately, tariff uncertainty has led to rapid increases in the expenses of certain imported goods.

We support free and fair markets. While there are some countries who have taken advantage of lopsided trade agreements, these cases should be handled by engaging in new, pro-growth trade negotiations. As an export-heavy region, we are concerned that tariff uncertainty will harm the long-term perception of American companies as reliable trade partners, and that some international customers will opt to consider other options.

We request that Congress support new market-opening trade agreements, strong digital trade rules, and rigorous enforcement of existing agreements. A pro-growth trade policy is critical to maintaining U.S. economic leadership and ensuring our businesses can compete on a level playing field worldwide.

Requests:

- Advance a pro-growth, market-opening trade agenda.
- Reduce tariffs that unnecessarily raise business and consumer costs.
- Strengthen U.S. leadership in global trade institutions and rule setting.