



we wear® innovation

Pam Strader
2130 8th Street, Building 45,
Wright-Paterson AFB,
OH 45433-7541

On behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I am writing in support of the creation of a fiber and textile specific Institute for Manufacturing Innovation (IMI).

Representing more than 340 companies responsible for 1,000 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its suppliers, its management and shareholders, its four million U.S. workers, and its contribution of \$350 billion in annual U.S. retail sales.

The IMI is an opportunity to expand current work on near-shoring and re-shoring the fiber and textile industry. Innovation will help create the new materials that are vital in sustaining textiles and will help broaden material development. Specifically, the IMI would serve as an independent source for training and industry research, while helping to bridge the technical gap between industry and government.

Training opportunities via IMI would include supply chain management training, industry workshops on manufacturing methods using new technologies, and executive level workshops to acquaint new managers with the fiber and textile industry. The institute would provide a facility for both graduate level research and undergraduate internships.

Manufacturing research is crucial for the textile industry to remain competitive in today's market as the technology is constantly evolving. Creating an institute to assist with industry research could benefit all levels of the supply chain. The Fiber and Textile IMI would allow for manufacturing research in the following areas:

- **Fiber Production:** through fiber production from basic research laboratory, shared fiber forming pilot plants, or obtaining fiber from fiber manufacturer
- **Yarn and Fabric Production:** through shared industry or academic yarn manufacturing pilot plants
- **Garment & Product Production:** through rapid turn garment manufacturing demo facilities located in the member plants
- **Laboratory Testing:** through an on-site laboratory or shared academic and industry laboratory

In order to efficiently conduct research, the institute would have a go-to point for information and personal assistance to industry in how to accomplish the desired research. Part of the objective of the institute is to have knowledgeable and experienced personnel that will be available to assist along with an active database of the assets.

Another beneficial component of the proposed institute is the potential to bridge the technical gap between industry and government by creating an office to serve as a source of information and assistance to the industry in working with government agencies. This would help facilitate presentation of new materials to the correct government agencies. Furthermore, the IMI would maintain databases of the following items:

- Entry Path for New and Improved Government Items: A point of contact (POC) to help facilitate procurement
- Technology improvements that are of interest to each agency and the POC for that improvement.
- Government Specification: Fabric/component and Berry compliant sources
- Fabric/Component Test Methods: Available laboratory for each test method

The IMI would benefit the overall industry as a whole, as well as facilitating relationships and improved products for government agencies.

AAFA and its members support the creation of a Fiber and Textile Institute for Manufacturing Innovation because of the myriad of benefits that it would provide to the United States textile industry. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Michael McDonald on my staff at (703)797-9052 or mmcdonald@wewear.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juanita D. Duggan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Juanita D. Duggan
President & CEO