

October 22, 2013

The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner
United States House of Representatives
2449 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4905

Dear Congressman Sensenbrenner:

I've been watching with great interest and concern as some in Washington are pushing for legislation to address so-called "patent trolls." While I understand the desire to curb those who truly do abuse the patent process, I urge you to proceed with extreme caution on any proposal that would reduce the value of patents.

BioForward represents 250 Wisconsin companies in the biotechnology and medical device fields. Lifescience businesses now have a presence in 53 of Wisconsin's 72 counties and produce an annual economic impact of over \$7 Billion dollars. Combined with job growth of 5% during the period from 2007 - 2010, Wisconsin bioscience impacts close to 100,000 jobs, causing Wisconsin to be ranked in the top 15 Bio-clusters in the United States, the top 10 for the Medical Device sector, and in the top 5 for Medical Imaging.

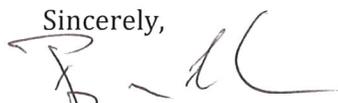
Most of our member companies started with an idea hatched by researchers who spent countless hours in the lab perfecting their product with the clear understanding that their work, if deserving, would be protected by a patent. In addition, Wisconsin's research institutions strive to foster the transfer of technology from academia into the private sector where it can be applied to support the development of lifesaving cures. This knowledge driven economic development is also threatened by legislation that would weaken patent rights.

One of the most concerning consequences of any legislation that would marginalize patent rights is the potential chilling effect it could have on funding for research and development efforts at both startups and mature companies. Developing lifesaving medical breakthroughs often requires patience and the willingness to invest millions and even billions of dollars. Patents provide those investors with the assurances they need to commit those significant resources.

Put simply, if we weaken patent rights, we take away the incentive to innovate and to invest in innovation. To the extent that patent trolls are abusing the system, modest legislative changes should be carefully tailored to address a proven problem. That is especially true considering that Congress passed the most comprehensive update to our patent laws in a generation just last session and we have yet to see its full impact on research and development efforts.

Patents serve as both an incentive to innovate and a promise that investment and hard work up front will pay off down the line. Please act cautiously to preserve the integrity of our patents for the good of our economy and the future of innovation.

Sincerely,



Bryan Renk
Executive Director
BioForward