

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2026

Brian Stone
Acting Director
U.S. National Science Foundation
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Acting Director Stone,

We write to express the Alabama congressional delegation's strong support for the Biobased Rural Innovation for Domestic Growth and Economic Security (BRIDGES) Engine proposed by the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology.

This proposal, one of fifteen finalists in the current round of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Regional Innovation Engines Program, has the potential to be transformative for rural communities across Alabama. In partnership with Auburn University, the University of Tennessee, Volkswagen Group of America, AGgrow Tech LLC, and more than 80 additional academic, industry, and stakeholder partners, BRIDGES brings together the capabilities needed to accelerate rural innovation and broad economic growth.

Alabama has a proud legacy of agriculture, innovation, and manufacturing, and our state's continued progress in agricultural production and advanced manufacturing is widely recognized. BRIDGES will build on these strengths by accelerating and amplifying their impact in rural communities, expanding access to higher-paying skilled jobs, strengthening manufacturing capacity, and diversifying farm and product markets in support of our nation's long-term economic and security needs.

The projected economic impact of BRIDGES is substantial. The Engine is expected to deliver more than \$30 million in direct farm revenue annually, while key partnerships support the creation of 4,000 rural manufacturing jobs, generating an estimated \$280 million per year in income for Alabama's rural workforce. Over a 20-year horizon, BRIDGES is projected to generate at least a \$7.3 billion regional impact—representing a 45-to-1 return on the proposed \$160 million NSF investment.

We are pleased to support the BRIDGES Engine and are confident it will deliver meaningful, lasting benefits for Alabama. BRIDGES will create enduring economic value in rural Southeastern communities, strengthen workforce skills, and expand domestic manufacturing capacity. This opportunity will help Alabama build on its leadership in rural economic development—advancing innovation, strengthening agricultural competitiveness, onshoring manufacturing, and positioning our region as a global leader in this space.

We respectfully urge the National Science Foundation to fund the BRIDGES Innovation Engine and join the States of Alabama and Tennessee in investing in this extraordinary opportunity.

Sincerely,



Tommy Tuberville
U.S. Senator



Katie Boyd Britt
U.S. Senator



Robert Aderholt
U.S. Representative



Mike Rogers
U.S. Representative



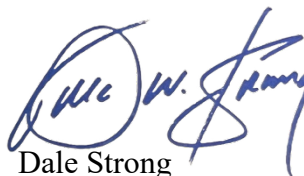
Terri Sewell
U.S. Representative



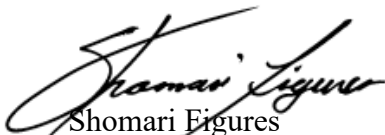
Gary Palmer
U.S. Representative



Barry. Moore
U.S. Representative



Dale Strong
U.S. Representative



Shomari Figures
U.S. Representative