



February 8, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7010

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

As our economy begins to recover, an important way to ensure that the recovery is broad, deep, and sustained without adding to the deficit is to improve our nation's patent system. Patents stimulate job creation by providing incentives for investments in R&D - investments that deliver innovative new products and services to consumers in the United States and abroad.

America's ability to innovate has been an engine of job growth. Every new patent awarded is a new opportunity to create jobs - jobs making the product, jobs transporting it, and jobs selling it. But innovation and invention is weakened if our patent system cannot efficiently protect its investments. Key to this ability is a strengthened and adequately funded United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), a goal outlined recently by Director David Kappos in his recent testimony before the House Judiciary Committee.

With a backlog of more than 700,000 patent applications, it takes three years to issue patents, and subjective elements of current patent law increase the cost and decrease the predictability of patent infringement litigation. The recently introduced S. 23, the Patent Reform Act, by Senators Leahy and Grassley would speed the examination and approval process while also reducing the wait that inventors must endure before obtaining their patents and securing the funding needed to place new products on the market. When the inventions produced by R&D investments are routinely caught in bureaucratic or legal red-tape, it inevitably leads to less innovation. As leading manufacturers, scientists, researchers, academic institutions, and entrepreneurs, we stand ready to assist you in your efforts to improve the patent system and unleash the creative and technical talents of American innovation.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. It is our hope that this important legislation be passed this year. We support S. 23 and look forward to working with you and your staffs as this legislation is considered by the Congress.

Sincerely,

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Air Liquide

AFL-CIO

American Intellectual Property Law Association

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities

Association of University Technology Managers

Bose Corporation

BP

Bristol-Myers Squibb

Cargill, Inc.

CheckFree

Council on Government Relations

Cummins

DuPont

Ecolab

ExxonMobil

General Mills

Genzyme

HealthCare Institute of New Jersey

Hoffman-LaRoche

AdvaMed

Air Products

American Council on Education

Arizona State University

AstraZeneca

Bayer

Beckman Coulter

Biotechnology Industry Association

Boston Scientific

Bridgestone Americas Holding, Inc.

California Healthcare Institute

Caterpillar

Coalition for 21st Century Patent

Reform

The Dow Chemical Company

Eastman Chemical Company

Eli Lilly and Company

General Electric

Genentech

GlaxoSmithKline

Henkel Corporation

Honeywell

IBM

International Game Technology

Kodak

Merck & Co., Inc.

Milliken and Company

Motorla

Novartis

Pfizer

Procter & Gamble

Sangamo BioSciences, Inc.

USG Corporation

Illinois Tool Works

Johnson and Johnson

Medtronic

Millennium Pharmaceuticals

Monsanto

Northrop Grumman

PepsiCo, Inc.

PhRMA

SanDisk Corporation

United Technologies

Weyerhaeuser

CC: Senator Patrick Leahy
Senator Charles Grassley