

April 22, 2008

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, I am writing to encourage you to support H.R. 5819, the “Small Business Innovation Research Program Reauthorization Act.” H.R. 5819 recognizes that the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program plays an important role in the development of new breakthrough therapies to improve human health, and must be updated to reflect the new realities facing America’s small businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our nearly 600 members, who are almost exclusively based in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, are developing or supporting development of new innovative products bringing hope as well as true benefit to consumers – including patients having acute unmet medical needs - across Massachusetts and around the world.

Many of the small bioscience companies in Massachusetts face the constant challenge of raising sufficient capital to fund biomedical research. This funding shortage is most acute for research projects at the earliest stages, exactly the point at which SBIR funds can be most productive in fostering science and innovation. By filling this market gap, SBIR funds have helped small bioscience companies continue research that might otherwise go unfunded. Simply put, H.R. 5819 will increase access to critical, early-stage sources of funding for small businesses, facilitating economic growth, job creation, new breakthrough therapies for patients in need, and American economic competitiveness in the global economy.

In particular, the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council strongly supports the provisions of H.R. 5819 that will modernize the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) rules defining what constitutes a small business for purposes of the SBIR and STTR programs. H.R. 5819 will correct a misinterpretation of SBA regulations currently excluding many venture capital-reliant small companies from these vital funding programs. This provision will ensure that many of America’s most innovative small businesses are not prevented from accessing SBIR/STTR awards simply because of their capital structure.

I strongly urge your support of H.R. 5819 during House consideration this week. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact me at 617-674-5150, or at [robert.coughlin@massbio.org](mailto:robert.coughlin@massbio.org).

Sincerely,



Robert K. Coughlin  
President, Massachusetts Biotechnology Council