GROWING THE ECONOMY
Helping Job Creators Survive & Grow
Technology Based Economic Development (TBED) Program

- **WHAT:** This proposal would create a Technology-Based Economic Development (TBED) program to strengthen Vermont's economic base by creating a climate where technology-based businesses can thrive. This program would:
    1. Help provide Vermont small businesses doing R&D research an advantage in applying for federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants;
    2. Help accelerate a business's time to market by providing matching grants to companies awarded federal SBIR grants;
    3. Create greater collaboration between industry and higher education in order to keep our existing tech and advanced manufacturing companies relevant in an ever-changing global market; and
    4. Ensure a healthy pipeline of new technologies coming out of our research institutions and further our goal of seeding more high-tech companies in Vermont by providing grant support to early stage technologies with commercial potential.

- **WHY:** The opportunity exists for Vermont to take a long-term view towards strengthening its economic base by creating an environment where technology-based businesses can thrive. Vermont has an opportunity to tip the scale towards technology and advanced manufacturing sector jobs with higher than average wages.

- **WHO:** The TBED Program will help Vermont small businesses looking to commercialize new technologies developed through research and development activity. It will help existing tech and advanced manufacturing companies in Vermont remain relevant in the market by strengthening collaboration between industry and higher-ed. And in the long-term it will help Vermonters who want the opportunity to work at companies on the cutting edge of innovation. This will help raise the median wage, lower the overall tax burden, and keep Vermont competitive in the national and global economies. For example:

Whiteout Solutions, Lyndonville: Christine Heinrich and Matt Clark, co-founders of a Lyndonville based technology startup were interested in applying for an SBIR grant through the USDA to further development of their custom software and machine learning technologies. Their software combined with remote sensing technologies deployed on UAV's has multiple applications that would be useful to the forestry and wood products industry. Unfortunately, they lacked the experience required to navigate the federal SBIR grant process. They would have greatly benefited from the technical assistance that would be available through our TBED proposal and the matching grants to accelerate their time to market.

Benchmark Space Systems, South Burlington: Ryan McDevitt co-founded Benchmark Space Systems to provide the most cost-effective propulsion solution for small scale satellites. The technology is based on research the co-founders were working on as researchers at the University of Vermont. Since leaving UVM to found their company, they have been able to successfully apply for a phase I and phase II SBIR grants through the United States Air Force to further development of their satellite propulsion technology. These SBIR awards have brought over 700 thousand dollars to the company, helped them raise over $2mm in private investment and they have grown the business to 11 employees, several of whom are recent UVM grads and others they've attracted from out of state with significant experience working large aerospace contractors. Vermont is now home to a company on the cutting edge of what's been estimated to be a 20-billion-dollar industry. We hope to help cultivate more companies like benchmark through our TBED proposal.

- **HOW:** The Administration has shared enabling legislation with the House Commerce and Senate Economic Development Committees.

- **FUNDING:** The Governor's proposed budget directs $1,000,000 to the ThinkVT Innovation Fund to support this work.

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