Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 30, 2012

The Honorable David Kappos
Director
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Mail Stop Office of Under Secretary and Director
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Re: Comments --- USPTO Satellite Offices [Docket Number PTO-C-2011-0066]

Dear Director Kappos:

It is our understanding that the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is seeking public comments on potential locations for future USPTO satellite offices. These comments will assist the USPTO in establishing at least two more satellite offices, as directed by the America Invents Act of 2011. Like you, we believe that these satellite offices will reduce pending patent applications, enhance USPTO outreach to the patent applicant community, and assist USPTO in recruiting a highly skilled workforce. With this in mind, we write to respectfully request that you consider opening a satellite office of the USPTO in New Orleans, Louisiana. The establishment of a USPTO satellite office would build upon excellent existing resources in New Orleans, the State of Louisiana, and the Gulf South region – providing this growing region with a much needed USPTO presence in the coming years.

As you know, New Orleans and south Louisiana have made significant progress in their recovery from the 2005/2008 hurricanes and the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster in 2010. Despite these challenges, south Louisiana's economy has largely rebounded and New Orleans is seeing growth in many key areas. In locating a satellite office in New Orleans, USPTO has the unique opportunity to serve as a key driver of this historic economic recovery. A few of the recent developments in New Orleans include:

- The creation of a 1,500 acre BioDistrict spanning the Downtown and Mid-City areas of New Orleans. This district is focused on the development of a biosciences industry in New Orleans that will provide world-class biosciences research and development, local/regional/global healthcare delivery, and high-paying jobs for numerous professionals. It is estimated that this initiative will create 22,000 new jobs for the City over the next eight to ten years, not only in the biosciences, but also in banking, law, construction, and other service industries.

- The New Orleans BioInnovation Center, located in this new BioDistrict, offering 66,000 square feet of state-of-the-art wet-lab, office and conference space. It is four stories of modern lab space designed to commercialize technologies coming

out of local universities. Currently the center houses seven start-ups and two private equity funds, in addition to analyzing over 20 new scientific discoveries. However, the center has room to grow as it can hold more than 80 companies and employ almost 200 people.

- Because of State and local efforts, New Orleans has become a nationally recognized leader in entrepreneurship and nurturing startups. *Forbes* ranked the city #1 on the list of "America's Biggest Brain Magnets" for attracting people under 25 with college degrees and also named New Orleans the #1 Metro for Information Technology Growth in the country. Under30CEO.com also ranked New Orleans the Top City for Young Entrepreneurs in 2011. New Orleans now beats the national startup average by 40 percent, after trailing this same statistic by 25 percent just five years ago.

- Tulane University and other New Orleans-area colleges and universities continue to attract the best and brightest students from around the world. Last year Tulane alone had 44,000 applications – more than any other private school in the country. The university was ranked by the *Princeton Review* as the #4 business school in the nation for entrepreneurship. Tulane is also the only highly research intensive school in the country that includes public service as a graduation requirement.

It is our understanding that one of the key criteria for the new satellite offices is assisting USPTO with the attraction/retention of patent examiners. New Orleans and the State of Louisiana offer USPTO with fertile ground to grow its workforce:

- USPTO would join 32 Federal agencies with almost 8,500 permanent employees in the New Orleans area. Statewide in Louisiana, as of November 2010, there were over 56,500 Federal employees and retirees. This shows that Louisiana is not just a great place to work but it is also an attractive area to live and retire.

- The Thomas B. Fordham Institute named New Orleans "America's Best City for School Reform" for its ground-breaking charter school reforms. Currently there are 65 public charter schools in the city – representing 77 percent of the city's 41,779 students. This is a higher proportion than any other school system in the country.

- *Forbes* also ranked New Orleans both the #2 Best Big City for a Job and 8th on the list of Top Cities for Relocation. New Orleans was also included at #16 on the 2011 Best Cities for Families list by Parenting.com.

- Next Generation Consulting placed New Orleans 10th on a list of its "Next Cities" ranking of the Best Places to Live and Work for Young Professionals.

- Louisiana was named the #2 State for Economic Growth Potential by *Business Facilities* and the state has enjoyed three years of net in-migration for the first time in decades.

In Louisiana, 10 different schools currently offer doctoral programs in science and engineering. Across the state, there is also groundbreaking research and development occurring at Louisiana's universities and their affiliated centers:

- The Louisiana Immersive Technology Enterprise (LITE) is a $27 million, 70,000 square-foot facility located at the Research Park of the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. LITE is a 3-D immersive visualization and high-performance computing resource center that hosts private sector clients, government staff, and university officials.

- The Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) located in Bossier City is the anchor of a 3,000 acre National Cyber Research Park. CIC serves as the temporary headquarters of the Eighth Air Force and is a catalyst for the development and expansion of a knowledge-based workforce throughout the region.

- The Louisiana Business and Technology Center at Louisiana State University is a nationally recognized technology incubator. Since 1989, 139 tenants have graduated and created 2,278 jobs. There are currently 28 tenant companies employing 126 people. Overall, the center has helped secure Small Business Innovation Research support for more than 2,000 companies.

- As the largest academic-based nutritional research center in the world, Pennington Research Center in Baton Rouge is a leader in the study of obesity and preventive medicine. Pennington is a 659,000 square-foot complex that contains 21 basic research laboratories, six clinical research laboratories, a metabolic kitchen, an inpatient unit, and an outpatient clinic. The State of Louisiana estimates that obesity and diabetes research/treatment alone at the center could result in the creation of 4,000 new direct jobs over the next 20 years.

- Lastly, the Association for University Technology Managers (AUTM) ranked Louisiana Tech University in Ruston #2 in the nation among academic institutions in terms of reports of invention per $10 million in research and development expenditures. The University was also ranked #2 by AUTM for the number of startup companies formed per $100 million in research and development expenditures. Louisiana Tech's College of Engineering and Sciences has graduated more than 300 students annually for the last 5 years. Lastly, over this time, the university has seen 132 reports of invention, 76 patent applications, and 25 patents issued.

In addition to the positive impact that opening a satellite office would have on Louisiana, the USPTO presence would have a significant impact on the other Gulf South

states of Alabama and Mississippi as well. Examples of the Gulf South's current economic activities include:

- A growing aerospace corridor across the region that boasts three world class manufacturing and research facilities supporting the National Aeronautic and Space Administration. First, the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans East employs 1,000 workers at one of the world's largest manufacturing plans, with 43 acres under one roof and a port with deep water access. Michoud has been the birthplace of every large rocket program from Apollo, to the Space Shuttle, to the next generation of Heavy Lift Vehicles. The aerospace sector contributes more than $656 million to the state's economy and over $120 million to the New Orleans and Baton Rouge economies alone.

- Only 35 miles next door in Mississippi, the Stennis Space Center is home to the largest rocket engine test complex in the United States and serves as a the premier rocket-propulsion testing facility in the country. It is also an economic engine for both states that generates over 5,000 jobs, provides a global economic impact of $875 million and a direct impact of $616 million within a 50-mile radius.

- Further east in Alabama, the Marshall Space Flight is the world leader in space propulsion and transportation systems. In 2009 alone, Marshall contributed a total of 8,549 jobs and $526.3 million in earnings including 2,590 civil servant jobs and 5,959 indirect jobs with total earnings of just over $260 million. The total economic impact of Marshall on the state, considering all other factors, was almost $2.88 billion. Overall, the hundreds of aerospace companies in Alabama have created more than 73,000 direct jobs with an annual payroll of more than $3 billion.

In closing, we note that currently the USPTO has locations in Alexandria, Virginia and Detroit, Michigan. A satellite office in New Orleans would be a logical and efficient hub focused on innovation and commerce in the Gulf South region. Furthermore, it would not only assist the USPTO in attracting and retaining quality employees, but would position USPTO as a key economic driver in a critical time for a region hard hit by recent natural/manmade disasters.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

Rodney Alexander
Member of Congress

Charles W. Boustany, Jr.
Member of Congress

Steve Scalise
Member of Congress

Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress

Jeff Landry
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress