



United States Patent and Trademark Office

*Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office*

August 17, 2026

Congresswoman Deborah Ross
United States House of Representatives
1221 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Ross:

I am writing to inform you that North Carolina's Research Triangle Park has been selected as the site of a new Community Engagement Office. As you may recall, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) published a Federal Register notice seeking comments on opening a Community Engagement Office (CEO) in the Southeast Region of the United States. On August 18, the USPTO will announce that North Carolina State University (NC State) in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park will house one of the new Community Engagement Offices in the Southeast Region.

The USPTO has reimagined its outreach model, moving beyond regional offices to smaller, more agile and more cost-effective offices that meet innovators where they are via partnerships and education to "promote the career benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship," as well as to inform potential patent applicants and trademark registrants about available resources. This model allows the USPTO to connect with innovators where they are, in their context and in their experience. This new model has resonated with America's inventors, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and others who rely on our nation's robust innovation economy and intellectual property protection.

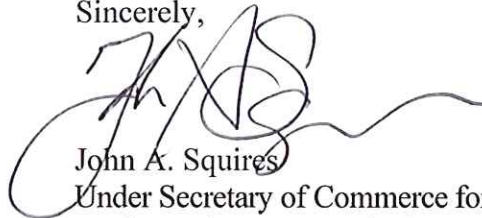
The USPTO's Community Engagement Office at NC State, located on the university's Centennial Campus, will serve as an intellectual property hub for the broader innovation ecosystem in Research Triangle Park, including the area's 12 colleges and universities. According to the National Science Foundation, Duke University, the University of North Carolina, and NC State together accounted for \$3.9 billion in annual research and development expenditures in 2024. These expenditures contributed significantly to North Carolina's patent filings, which experienced a marked 35% increase in the five-year period between 2019 and 2024.

In addition to patent filing assistance, the NC State Community Engagement Office will assist entrepreneurs and small businesses with information about federal trademark registration. Assistance also extends to name, image, and likeness protections for those seeking to monetize their personal branding, particularly student-athletes at the area's three NCAA Division I

universities, as well as professional athletes from Research Triangle Park's nearby national sports teams and influencers.

Our continued commitment to America's inventors and entrepreneurs is unwavering and we look forward to continuing our work with NC State to serve the intellectual property protection needs of the area's local inventors, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JAS', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John A. Squires
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Intellectual Property and Director of the
United States Patent and Trademark Office