

October 11, 2001

Mr. Daniel M. Hull
President
Principal Investigator for STEP II
CORD
601 Lake Air Drive
Waco, TX 76710

Dear Mr. Hull:

On behalf of the New Mexico Optics Industry Association I am pleased to support the goals of the STEP II program. Optics/photonics is emerging as a key discipline of strategic significance for both the national and global economies. Failure to stay at the forefront of development and manufacturing efforts in photonics would seriously compromise the economic health of the United States during the 21st century. One of the key areas of focus for the New Mexico Optics Industry Association is ensuring workforce development efforts so that an adequate supply of labor at all educational levels is available. This is important because we will see the photonics industry grow from a something resembling a cottage industry today into a mass-market manufacturing industry that will provide products and services crucial to the information-intensive 21st century.

Therefore, in line with the stated focus of the NMOIA in workforce development, I find the work envisioned in the STEP II program to be very appropriate. We have had significant success in attracting attention to the need for various levels of operator and technician training in New Mexico over the last two years. However, providing appropriate curriculum materials to these vocational and two-year programs is important to ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of the materials. I find the STEP II concept to be an efficient mechanism to allow these training programs to function efficiently without excessive duplication of effort.

We would certainly like to offer our support for this project. While at this time it is not clear whether we can provide financial support, we would certainly like to have our local training institutions participate and would be willing to recruit them. I think that it would be useful to see that our membership is more fully aware of this program; perhaps at some point it would be appropriate to have a presentation from one of the STEP II PI's on this subject. We would also be willing to entertain requests for assistance as needed; let us know—perhaps through Dr. Arthur Guenther—what is needed and we will see what we can do.

We look forward to seeing this program succeed and contribute to the growth and development of the optics industry in the United States and, of particular interest to me, New Mexico.

Sincerely,



Dr. Boyd V. Hunter
Chairman of the Board, New Mexico Optics Industry Association
Director of Product Engineering, LightPath Technologies, Inc.



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