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Testimony of Gregory Bialecki
Secretary of Housing and Economic Development
Before the Cambridge City Council
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Mayor Davis and members of the City Council, good evening. My name is Greg Bialecki and I am the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development for Massachusetts.

On behalf of Governor Patrick, I want to express our respect and admiration for the work of the Cambridge City Council in shaping and guiding the growth of this community, making it one of the great cities of the United States, if not the world.

But I am here tonight to ask that you continue to allow the growth of this great city.

The next ten years represent both a tremendous opportunity and a tremendous challenge for Cambridge and for Massachusetts. The Massachusetts innovation economy is on a roll, and nowhere is that more evident than here in Cambridge.

There is every reason to believe this can continue. We have all the ingredients for a successful innovation economy. We have leading-edge companies in a diverse range of emerging tech sectors. The future looks very bright.

Over the next decade, however, we will also face a tremendous challenge. People may debate endlessly about how we compare to other global centers of innovation, like Silicon Valley, but until quite recently it was never really questioned that we were the dominant innovation economy community on the east coast of the United States.

That unquestioned dominance has served us very well. It made our most talented, energetic students want to stay here to start a career or to start a company. It has attracted west coast technology companies and global life sciences firms to open major facilities here.

But that unquestioned dominance is over. That is not to say that the fight is over; indeed, it has just begun. But given the powerful emergence of New York City as a center of technology and innovation, the fight to remain the dominant innovation economy community on the east coast of the United States will be our great challenge over the next ten years. It will not be easy.

There will be many opinions, and debates, about what we need to do to succeed. But I am convinced that there is one thing that we will certainly need to do, and that is to dramatically grow the density, intensity and scale of the innovation activity that is happening here. This is not to denigrate, or to take for granted, the incredible cluster of activity already occurring today in Kendall Square. It is the envy of the world and rightfully so.

But we cannot afford to stop now. In the Patrick Administration, we are actively planning for and supporting the continued growth, and even the accelerated growth, of our innovation economy. And we are asking you to do the same.

We have a unique opportunity to "catch a wave" in Cambridge and in Massachusetts over the next ten years. If we catch it, we can be enormously successful. But if we do not, we will regret it for a long time. There is simply no room for us to stand still.

Governor Patrick and I look forward to working with all of you to catch the wave of a tremendously exciting, and growing, innovation economy.

Gregory Bideckl