



16 December 2016

DuPont Pioneer innovationLEADER of the Year letter of support
RE: Kathryn Kunert

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is to memorialize my unequivocal support for the nomination of Kathryn Kunert as the 2017 DuPont Pioneer innovationLEADER of the Year award. I have had the distinct privilege of working with Kathryn in a number of economic development roles across Iowa and can state without question that she is the most influential, effective and respected economic and community development professional in our state today.

Kathryn's tireless work to advance economic development and growth in Iowa is interwoven with a constant demand on her part for the groups and practitioners she touches to exercise innovation in their efforts to create quality jobs in Iowa. Her entrepreneurial spirit and openness to new and innovative approaches to economic development in Iowa is exemplified well by her early and extraordinarily strong support for Iowa's Cultivation Corridor. As Iowa's first cluster-based economic development organization and one completely out of the organizational and mission mold of any other economic development group anywhere in Iowa, the Corridor could never have gotten off the ground were it not for the efforts of Kathryn in contributing her talents and exacting standards of excellence as a member of our Executive Committee.

Kathryn is the first name that comes to the mind of anyone with any level of experience in community and economic development in Iowa when considering who in our state is the preeminent thought leader in the dialogue now underway related to the future direction of job creation and retention efforts in Iowa.

In an industry with a yawning innovation gap, Kathryn stands alone as Iowa's premier thinker and leader in the field of economic and community development. I could not support her nomination with more vigor and enthusiasm.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Willett", with a stylized, wavy line extending from the end.

Brent M. Willett, CEcD
Executive Director

