

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 20-23, 2026**

**FUNDING FOR INLAND EMPIRE TECH BRIDGE
TO EXPAND NATIONAL SECURITY INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP**

ISSUE: The FY2027 President’s Budget Request provides no funding for the Inland Empire Tech Bridge, creating a critical gap that threatens the continuity of a rapidly scaling national security innovation program. The Tech Bridge connects Navy operational needs with regional entrepreneurs, startups, and non-traditional partners to develop dual-use technologies that accelerate capability delivery. Without sustained support, the innovation pipeline will stall—slowing technology transition, weakening regional workforce development, and reducing industrial capacity in Inland Southern California.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group urges Congress to appropriate \$15 million in FY2027 Defense Appropriations for the Inland Empire Tech Bridge under Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E), Navy, Line 24 (Navy Warfighting Experiments and Demonstrations), PE 0603758N.

Specifically, funding should:

- Sustain Operations: Maintain uninterrupted innovation and reduce transition risk for dual-use technologies.
- Advance Accelerator Programs: Support initiatives such as the Crucible Innovation Accelerator to connect startups and small businesses with Navy problem sets.
- Build Workforce & Industrial Capacity: Strengthen the regional talent pipeline and manufacturing readiness needed to scale emerging technologies.

BACKGROUND: Tech Bridges were authorized in the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act to expand access to commercial and academic innovation. The Inland Empire Tech Bridge—operated by Riverside Community College District (Norco College) in partnership with Naval Surface Warfare Center Corona—serves as the region’s hub for this mission. Congressional funding launched the Crucible Innovation Accelerator in February 2024, generating strong early returns: the inaugural cohort includes 41 dual-use technology teams, and participants such as Super Foam have secured \$150,000 in combined state and university innovation funding following program engagement. Continued federal support ensures Inland Southern California remains a key contributor to Navy modernization, regional economic resilience, and national security innovation.