

Statement on New U.S. Patent and Trademark Satellite Office in Silicon Valley

Written by Mike Honda
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I am overjoyed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) announcement to open a satellite office in Silicon Valley, CA. This proposed Silicon Valley office will be part of a USPTO initiative to recruit and retain a broad national workforce while trying to reduce its massive backlog of approximately 650,000 pending patent applications. While the USPTO has been making valiant strides to reduce this backlog, a patent application typically takes three years to be reviewed – an eternity for fast-paced innovations in the high-tech sector.

A Silicon Valley USPTO office has enormous potential to spur our local economy and create jobs by providing local access to USPTO services, particularly for limited-resourced inventors and companies unable to travel to Washington, and thus expedite to market the innovative products and ideas from Silicon Valley.

Realizing a USPTO satellite office in Silicon Valley has been a great collaborative effort from the Bay Area, including my colleagues Representatives Zoe Lofgren and Anna Eshoo, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, City of San Jose, and local universities and business groups. As an appropriator on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, I have advocated for a Silicon Valley office directly to the USPTO Director David Kappos and the Secretary of Commerce during multiple hearings, meetings, and correspondence.

With hundreds of satellite office locations considered, the USPTO recognized Silicon Valley as the nation's leader in patent production, including five of the top ten patent-producing cities in the nation with the City of San Jose at the top of the list. Our top-tier universities in engineering, sciences, and law would provide a large and highly qualified workforce for the USPTO to employ, particularly those with expertise in the same disciplines that are producing the newest innovations. Furthermore, Silicon Valley's high-tech culture and infrastructure would lead to easy implementation and wide-scale adoption of USPTO's online training and telework programs. Without question, closer proximity to USPTO's most prolific costumers - the unique nexus of leading global companies, innovators, research labs, universities and garage workshops - would help the USPTO achieve its goals to speed patent processing and improve

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customer service.

The American Invents Act of 2011, signed into law on September 2011, requires the USPTO to establish at least three satellite offices within three years. The Silicon Valley office will be one of three new satellite offices, others to be located in Denver, CO and Dallas, TX, in addition to the first satellite office in Detroit, MI, scheduled to be open on July 13, 2012. The newly announced offices are expected to be open from late 2013 to early 2014.