

City of Marshall Councilmembers,

My name is Kara Beer, and I'm President & CEO of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce in Battle Creek. Today, the Chamber has experienced a continued strong financial position, growing membership numbers of over 600 and an increase in revenue. The Chamber and our collective membership strive to build upon this success and improve its value proposition by serving the highest needs of the communities that it serves, now and far into the future.

I am here today to strongly encourage the board to approve our members Ford BlueOval Battery Park's re-zoning requirements for the site, one of the final steps toward the development of the Ford BlueOval Battery Park in Marshall, Michigan.

This dramatic investment in the future of automotive manufacturing in our region brings with it the potential for massive economic growth across the region, providing high-quality, good-paying jobs for thousands as well as encouraging investment and supporting small businesses. We are a region that is eager to support a rapidly developing industry for a Michigan company that Henry Ford transformed not only the automobile but working life and the role of transportation. Having played a part in everything from the birth of the middle class to the recent global pandemic, Ford serves the world with integrity and competence. The Blue Oval is one of the most recognized corporate symbols in history, continually striving to earn the trust of all stakeholders.

With a top-notch workforce and technical education training facilities located here in the county at Kellogg Community College – Regional Manufacturing Training Center and the commitment from Michigan Works Southwest, we are ready and willing to do all things necessary to train the potential workers and into the future.

This is an opportunity to show the world and the rest of Michigan that Ford and Marshall and Calhoun County build the most innovative modern products in the most technologically advanced facility. Attracting a new advanced workforce and advancing the lives of our communities for the next generation of workers.

Excitement in our region around the potential of growth and this project is welcomed by what will create a bright and rewarding future for young people, allowing them to start their professional careers near their families and close to home. Our region will benefit from a new talent pipeline that gives young people the skills and training needed for a high-paying job right here. It's something that will continue to flourish well into the future.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote to support the rezoning requirements for the site, a critical step forward in the ongoing development of the Marshall Megasite.

All my best!

Kara E. Beer, IOM MPA

Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce