

Lawmaker: Public Libraries Can Boost American Innovation

President-elect Donald Trump's technology agenda is largely opaque, but at least one member of Congress has a message for his administration: ideas for cutting-edge technology often comes from the grassroots.

“Innovation may have a national or even global impact but like politics, the process of innovation is inherently local,” Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., said during an Information Technology and Innovation Foundation event on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. The government needs to think of creative ways to “provide resources to the innovators ... across the country,” he added.

Lujan advocated for establishing maker-spaces in public libraries, potentially outfitting them with small-scale manufacturing equipment such as 3-D printers, that are accessible to businesses, researchers and the nearby community. Because public libraries already exist across America, "including the rural parts, where we still don't have bandwidth capacity," they could become hubs for technological development outside Silicon Valley, he said.

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Lujan, who co-founded the House Technology Transfer Caucus, singled out this and a few other innovation-themed recommendations for Trump's administration mentioned in a [report](#) from the ITIF and the Brookings Institution.

He also advocated for creating an Energy Department-based nonprofit that could dole out funds to transition technology out of federal research labs and

into the marketplace. Lujan said he's working on legislation that would encourage Energy to promote partnerships with local economic development groups including maker-spaces.

Other specific recommendations mentioned in the report include encouraging student entrepreneurship and increasing research and development tax credit generosity.