

# Gov. Pritzker Celebrates Substantial Investments in Illinois Biomanufacturing and Precision Fermentation

March 4 2024 10:22 AM



**CHICAGO** — Today, Governor JB Pritzker and Innovate Illinois announced \$680 million in combined cash match and strategic investments from public and private partners for the Illinois Fermentation and Agriculture Biomanufacturing (iFAB) Tech Hub. iFAB was designated as one of 31 Economic Development Administration (EDA) Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs nationally and recently applied for Phase 2 Implementation Grants that would propel regional growth in technology and solidify Illinois' position as a leader in biomanufacturing and precision fermentation. The significant cash match indicates a strong backing by stakeholders reflecting the incredible potential for expanding this industry in the region.

“Home to world-class institutions, modernized infrastructure, and first-rate research centers, Illinois is transforming technology, biomanufacturing, and innovation at every turn,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “This designation positions Central Illinois to become a global leader in biomanufacturing and precision fermentation over the next decade — bringing economic development and good-paying jobs along with it. I want to congratulate everyone who took the iFab vision and turned it into a world-class, federally designated Tech Hub—you are helping create a better Illinois for all.”

iFAB exemplifies Illinois' biomanufacturing prowess, with a strategic focus on fermentation as a biomanufacturing tool. iFAB, led by the Integrated Bioprocessing Research Laboratory (IBRL) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and 30 other key partners. The project's ambition is to drive economic growth and innovation for a sustainable future by capitalizing on Illinois' strength in agricultural production.

"Our program is strategically positioned to lead the charge in transforming the bioeconomy," **said Beth Conerty, Associate Director of IBRL and Regional Innovation Officer for iFAB**. “Through iFAB, Illinois is not just participating in biomanufacturing—we are helping shape the future of the industry.”

“As one of Illinois’s two Tech Hub designees, I’m pleased to see such strong support for iFAB,” **said U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)**. “I was proud to work closely with Governor Pritzker and Senator Durbin to advocate for our state to win Tech Hub designations, and I’ll keep doing everything I can to support these projects and bring in investments from the federal level. Illinois is making it clear that we are ready to compete and have the projects and innovation to bring our state, nation and world into the future.”

"With the recent designation of iFAB as one of our state's two Tech Hub designees, alongside the remarkable strides made in quantum and advanced biomanufacturing, it's evident that Illinois is positioned at the forefront of driving economic growth and job creation through cutting-edge research and development,” **said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)**. “By leveraging federal investments and strategic partnerships, we are not only propelling Illinois into the future but also solidifying our nation's leadership in transformative technologies.”

The project supports a wide range of applications in biomanufacturing, from novel ingredients to sustainable materials, addressing emerging market demand for sustainable products. iFAB’s integrated “lab-to-line” approach will catalyze economic development by positioning Central Illinois as a premier destination for biomanufacturing companies—moving bio-innovation from R&D to full-scale manufacturing.

"When universities and industry come together as partners, you see a massive increase in the speed of development and implementation," **said Robert J. Jones, chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and co-vice chair of Innovate Illinois.** "This ecosystem for discovery and innovation is what makes Illinois a leader in the field."

Following the announcement, Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski and Kristin Richards, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), hosted an exclusive roundtable event with iFAB consortia members to discuss the future of the project.

"iFAB is a strategic initiative driving not only Illinois' economy but also bolstering our national competitiveness in the biomanufacturing sector," **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards.** "Our economic potential is inextricably linked to our ability to innovate and lead in this vital industry, and with the support of the State of Illinois, iFAB is well on its way to becoming a global industry leader."

With the EDA Phase 2 awardees set to be announced summer 2024, Illinois is well positioned to stand at the forefront of the biomanufacturing innovation, signaling a vibrant economic horizon.

"iFAB's Tech Hub designation is a true testament to world-class entities utilizing technology and research to make Illinois a sought-after destination for both expansion and innovation," **said Representative Carol Ammons (D-Urbana).** "The State of Illinois will continue supporting iFAB through every step of the grant application process."

"This investment is a major win for Illinois," **said Senator Paul Faraci (D-Champaign).** "As game-changing technology continues to emerge, it is critical that our businesses in Illinois are prepared. iFab's Tech Hub designation will not only bolster our state's local economies but it will put Illinois on the map, signifying our title as a major tech hub."

## **About Innovate Illinois**

Innovate Illinois, a public-private initiative, orchestrates a coordinated effort to harness federal funding opportunities provided by landmark legislation such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. By capitalizing on these resources, Innovate Illinois is set to fast-track the state into an era of unprecedented technological and economic advancement.