



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**Governor Shapiro Tours Gecko Robotics in Pittsburgh, Highlights  
How Economic Development Strategy and Proposed Budget  
Investments Will Strengthen Pennsylvania's Growing Innovation  
Economy**

*Governor Shapiro is working to make Pennsylvania a national leader in innovation and economic development – and the Shapiro Administration will continue to invest in Pennsylvania companies like Gecko Robotics to spur robotics and technology innovation.*

*The Governor's budget would invest \$500 million to attract more commercial and industrial sites and \$20 million to support large-scale innovation and leverage Pennsylvania's best-in-class research and development assets.*



**Pittsburgh, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** toured Gecko Robotics in Pittsburgh to highlight Pennsylvania’s growing robotics and technology innovation economy and his commitment to investing in economic development across the Commonwealth. During the visit, Governor Shapiro pointed to Gecko Robotics as an example of the kinds of companies spurring innovation across the Commonwealth that his Economic Development strategy and proposed 2024-25 budget will continue to support.

“Gecko Robotics builds robots that can climb the walls of oil service tanks and inspect the beams holding up our bridges, and their success shows us what’s possible here in Pennsylvania,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “I want to replicate that success – and under my Administration, we have a plan that leans heavily on robotics and technology as a key pillar of opportunity. My budget includes \$600 million for economic development as a whole, including \$20 million in new innovation funding to invest in companies like Gecko Robotics and give them the seed money to get off the ground and bring their inventions to market. We can support the next groundbreaking discovery in robotics and technology right here in Western Pennsylvania – we just need to invest.”

Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has announced [over \\$1.2 billion](#) in new private sector investment in Pennsylvania as a direct result of his Administration’s work – positioning the Commonwealth to be a leader in innovation and economic development. Pittsburgh’s robotics and technology innovation sector is a prime example of the type of innovation the Shapiro Administration is focused on supporting. Since taking office, the Governor has traveled to Pittsburgh to emphasize the region’s critical importance in robotics and technology leadership – including a [recent visit](#) to Mill 19 to

highlight the important role of robotics and advanced manufacturing and the Administration's ongoing support for [Astrobotic Technology](#).

Gecko Robotics is a national leader in using robotics and software to build, operate, and maintain the world's most important physical infrastructure and was recently named to Fast Company's [list of the World's Most Innovative Companies of 2024](#). Gecko's work using advanced robotics and software has helped the world's most important organizations ensure the availability, reliability, and sustainability of critical infrastructure – including helping the United States Navy increase the speed, quality, and inspection of their maintenance cycles for Navy surface ships and helping to modernize the manufacturing process for its nuclear submarine program.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has supported Gecko's growth over the last decade, [seeding it with \\$10,000 from Ben Franklin Technology Partners](#) in 2014 to help co-founder Jake Loosarian build one of the company's first robots.

"Gecko was born out of a problem that faces every industry with physical infrastructure - the lack of data on how to build, operate and maintain it," said **Jake Loosarian co-founder and CEO of Gecko Robotics**. "We're using robotics and software to help change the way critical industries like defense, manufacturing, and energy production build and operate. And none of that would have been possible without the unique ecosystem we have in western PA. We have a huge opportunity to build an unstoppable economic engine, bringing government and entrepreneurs together to solve real-world problems. And I'm excited to have Governor Shapiro as a partner in this effort."

Governor Shapiro's [Economic Development Strategy](#) is a targeted plan designed to help Pennsylvania win and become a national leader in economic development, innovation, and job creation. One of the five target sectors outlined in the Governor's strategy that will help Pennsylvania build on our competitive advantages and create opportunity is robotics and technology thanks to Pennsylvania's technology talent from elite Pennsylvania academic institutions and a growing pipeline of leaders spinning out high-growth technology startups like Gecko Robotics.

"Governor Shapiro's Economic Development plan is a critical move to position Pennsylvania as a leader in business and family-sustaining jobs," said **Senator Jay Costa**. "I am proud to lend my support to a vision where our workers have good jobs, our commonwealth is attractive to new businesses, and our brightest minds can lead the way in our nation's path forward. I am excited to work in the legislature to get this plan done and set our communities up for success."

"The Governor's long-term Economic Development Strategy provides Pennsylvania's businesses with the investment, support, and resources they need to start here, grow here, and stay here," said **Senator Wayne Fontana**. "Businesses like Gecko Robotics in my district are assets to our community it's time we have a plan to support them. Governor Shapiro's Economic Development Strategy does that and I'm proud to support it."

“The technological advancements being made at Gecko Robotics mark an exciting new phase in state commerce and exemplify the Governor’s commitment to advance the Commonwealth’s economic agenda,” said **Representative Aerion Abney**. “I’m honored to be a part of the plan that keeps PA moving forward today, tomorrow, and beyond.”

The Governor’s proposed [2024-25 budget](#) calls for significant investments directly tied back to the Economic Development Strategy to continue growing our economy, create jobs, foster innovation and economic opportunity, and build vibrant communities, including:

- **\$500 million** in PA SITES funding to bring more commercial and industrial sites online and ensure companies have options for attractive business environments where they can move quickly and thrive in Pennsylvania.
- **\$25 million** for the Main Street Matters program, to support small businesses and commercial corridors that are the backbone of communities across our Commonwealth. This new program will build upon and modernize the Keystone Communities program.
- **\$20 million** to support large-scale innovation and leverage Pennsylvania’s best-in-class research and development assets. This funding will be used to incentivize additional private venture capital, positioning Pennsylvania as a national leader in innovation while proactively investing in entrepreneurs who have historically lacked access to venture capital funding.
- **\$3.5 million** to create and launch the Pennsylvania Regional Economic Competitiveness Challenge, which will incentivize regional growth, build vibrant and resilient regions, and support communities by investing in the development of comprehensive strategies to propel entire regions forward.

In addition to the strength of the Pittsburgh’s region, robotics and technology companies can be found across Pennsylvania – and with a projected 17,000 net new jobs created across the robotics and technology sectors over the next decade, Pennsylvania is primed to become a leader in these high-growth industries.

“Pittsburgh is an established powerhouse for robotics and innovation, and we are now being offered the ability to scale this to a level that brings lasting stability and economic strength for decades to come across the Commonwealth,” said **Jennifer Apicella, Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Robotics Network**. “This region is full of creative and brilliant problem solvers – we don’t shy away from tough problems, or back down when faced with obstacles that seem too high to climb. We face it head-on, roll up our sleeves and innovate to get the job done; and this Administration has a very similar and aligned approach to economic development in Pennsylvania. They are making the needed investments to support and accelerate the impact that businesses like Gecko Robotics can have on not just our local communities, but throughout the

commonwealth and the world. I applaud the Governor and this Administration for understanding that this is what success looks like for Pennsylvania, because we have a unique opportunity upon us right now.”

“Innovation is baked into the Pittsburgh region’s DNA, positioning us to lead in the development of future-focused products and solutions. Gecko Robotics is just one example that brings the region’s story of innovation to life, and with more than 140 companies here in the region either directly advancing such solutions or contributing to autonomous solutions, we are on course to be an essential part of everything that’s next in this pivotal industry,” said **Ben Pratt, Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development**. “We commend Governor Shapiro and the administration on their commitment to keeping our companies positioned on the cutting edge of innovation, which will result in Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh region being not only the place where future-focused industries want to be but need to be.”

The Shapiro Administration will continue to spur job creation, invest in technology and robotics innovation, and provide funding to make the Commonwealth more competitive on a global scale. For more information, visit [shapirobudget.pa.gov](https://shapirobudget.pa.gov).

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