



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON **SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology**

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing:
*A Review of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Fiscal Year 2020 Budget
Request*
April 9, 2019

Good morning and welcome to this hearing to review the National Institute of Standards and Technology Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request. Dr. Copan, welcome to the Committee and to what I hope will be meaningful dialogue about the critical national asset that is NIST.

NIST works with industry, academia, and other government agencies to advance science, support technological innovation, and increase competitiveness of U.S. companies. NIST's recognized excellence in measurement science and standards has underpinned U.S. leadership in areas as diverse as additive manufacturing, spectrum sharing, smart grid, biotechnology, cybersecurity, forensic science, and infrastructure resiliency. And that list goes on for quite a while. The agency has also played and will continue to play a key role in U.S. advancements in artificial intelligence and quantum science. I am happy to see increases for these two important areas of research in the FY 2020 budget proposal for NIST.

Most Americans – and possibly most Members of Congress - don't know about NIST or understand the nature or impact of their work, but we all benefit from it. NIST's reference materials, technical standards, measurement services, and technical guidance have been used to validate the performance of the smoke alarms in our homes, ensure our law enforcement officers have body armor they can rely on, develop the first widely useful measurement standard for breast cancer diagnosis, and protect us all from bad actors in cyber space. These are just a few tangible examples of NIST's work that benefit every day Americans. For U.S. manufacturers of all sizes and sectors, NIST's measurement services and standards are essential to their ability to compete, grow, and create jobs.

To say this is a disappointing budget request is an understatement. The Administration is once again proposing to zero out the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program even though in 2018, MEP resulted in \$16 billion in sales, \$1.7 billion in cost savings, \$4 billion in new client investments, and more than 122,000 jobs created and retained -- at a total cost to the Federal government of \$140 million. The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, a MEP center in my district, has helped its small and medium manufacturing clients create and retain nearly 11,000 jobs. It also leads the nation in getting MEP centers ready to provide cybersecurity services, which are critical to helping manufacturers protect their operations on the factory floor

and the devices they produce as the Industrial Internet of Things continues to grow exponentially.

This budget would also result in the lay-off of 400 of NIST's staff, including 17 percent of its scientists and engineers, a loss that would be hard and likely impossible to recover from. NIST scientists have won 5 Nobel prizes. They are the best and brightest. They could work anywhere, for probably double their salary, but they have chosen NIST because of its excellence and because of their commitment to the public good.

This request may not be one of the most callous examples of this Administration's slash and burn approach to the Federal budget, but it is one of the most troubling. To "save" \$300 million, the Administration is putting on the line billions of dollars in economic growth for U.S. companies, not to mention our national security, our health, and our environment. It is hard for me to overstate the return on investment to our nation from the money we put in to NIST's work. Finally, those of us who have visited the NIST campus understand why NIST has more than \$300 million in deferred maintenance and is undertaking major renovations of some of their laboratories. We cannot expect NIST's scientists, as bright as they are, to do cutting edge research with outdated equipment, leaking pipes, and crumbling buildings. I encourage all of my colleagues to visit either of the NIST campuses and see for yourself both the incredible work they do and how desperate their facilities situation has become.

I understand hard decisions have to be made in every budget, but the proposed \$300 million cut to NIST would cause irreversible damage to our nation. Dr. Copan, I look forward to your testimony and thank you for being here. It is my hope that our conversation today will bring attention to the important work at NIST and the likely impacts of the proposed budget cuts. Thank you.