

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Science, Space and Technology Committee
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
Science, Space and Technology Committee
Ford Office Building H2-394
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Haley Stevens
Chairwoman
Subcommittee Research and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Waltz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Research and Technology
Ford Office Building H2-394
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairwomen Johnson and Stevens and Ranking Members Lucas and Waltz:

On behalf of the NIST Coalition, we write to express our strong support for the NIST for the Future Act.

As the committee understands well, NIST is an agency vital to solving the technical challenges faced by U.S. businesses and academic researchers. Companies, academic institutions and other federal agencies rely on Scientific and Technical Research Services (STRS) programs to provide foundational research and material development for their products and programs. NIST supports America's global competitiveness by aiding businesses to overcome technical obstacles – fulfilling a vital function that companies cannot do themselves. NIST's core measurement science programs, for example, provide calibrations and standards for industry broadly – from oil and gas to aerospace and medicine. The agency also plays an essential role in emerging industries, such as quantum technology and artificial intelligence, that require foundational measurements to enable U.S. dominance.

We appreciate the added authorities provided under this authorization bill. In particular, provisions that encourage inter-governmental collaboration are important to ensure the U.S. is fully taking advantage of the resources we have available in this great agency. Additionally, we appreciate the inclusion of critical pay authority to recruit and retain the world-class scientific and technical talent needed for NIST to carry out its mission in areas of national research priorities such as cybersecurity and quantum information science and technology. Securing exceptionally well-qualified talent is instrumental to the successful accomplishment of the Institute's critical missions, as well as to its overall strategic planning.

Lastly, modern, functional facilities are required for NIST to remain the world-leader in measurement science. Currently, NIST's aging infrastructure has caused recurring failures of utility systems in recent years, resulting in lost work and costly damage to laboratory facilities. We greatly appreciate the path set forward in the substitute bill toward increased funding to help alleviate these issues.

Our coalition greatly appreciates the bipartisan work that led to committee consideration of the NIST for the Future Act. We look forward to continuing to work with the Science, Space and Technology Committee in support of NIST.

Sincerely,

-The NIST Coalition

Jennifer O'Bryan
Co-chair NIST Coalition
SPIE, the international society for
optics and photonics

Brandy Dillingham
Co-chair NIST Coalition
OSA- The Optical Society