March 16, 2026

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Van Hollen, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Meng:

As you proceed with the appropriations process on the Fiscal Year 2027 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write in support of the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) and several of its critical missions.

While fully aware of the tight constraints of the budget agreement, we urge you to provide $1.283 billion in base funding to NIST's scientific and technical research and services laboratory activities in order to uphold the agency's mission: to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance efficiency and economic security and improve our quality of life. As well as at least $200 million for NIST's Construction of Research Facilities account to urgently reduce the over $900 million infrastructure state-of-good-repair backlog, which impacts NIST's ability to provide critical services to industry.

The above requested funds are necessary to uphold the agency's core mission and to keep pace with near peer rivals, such as China. We need to be making much more significant increases at NIST to accelerate U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance efficiency and economic security and improve our quality of life.

NIST works with our nation's businesses and universities to drive American economic growth, improve efficiency and create jobs. Companies, academic institutions, and other federal agencies rely on 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 (AI) that require foundational measurements to enable U.S. dominance. The National Quantum Initiative Act, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2018, includes NIST as one of three key agencies that will help ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in quantum. The bill also authorizes the Quantum Economic Development Consortium (QED-C), a jointly funded government and

private sector collaboration designed to tackle some of the challenges of moving quantum technologies from the lab to market.

The recently announced Center for AI Standards and Innovation (CAISI) within NIST further underscores the agency's vital role in not only developing AI systems, but also advancing U.S. national security objectives as the AI race with China intensifies. There is an acute national security need for better understanding AI progress among adversaries and identifying vulnerabilities, and China's AI capabilities already present serious risks to U.S. national security, as seen in DeepSeek.

With an investment of over $100 billion for the construction of data centers, the Stargate project further underscores the importance of NIST's work on artificial intelligence. The high profile of the project calls for heightened protection against cyberattacks and misuse of AI, making it even more crucial for NIST to be adequately funded and equipped to mitigate these risks. As AI continues to expand, NIST's role in developing best practices, ensuring security, and driving innovation has never been more urgent.

Lastly, modern, functional facilities are required for NIST to remain the world-leader in measurement science. NIST currently has a backlog of over $900 million in deferred maintenance at their 50+ year-old laboratories in Maryland and Colorado. Recurring failures of these utility systems in recent years have resulted in lost work and costly damage. A study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends more than tripling the agency's current construction and maintenance budget annually for at least 12 years.

We believe the critical role NIST plays in supporting advancements in science and technology is worth prioritizing strong investments, even in these tough budgetary times. **For FY27 appropriations, we urge Congress to provide $1.283 billion for NIST's core laboratory research programs and at least $200 million for NIST's Construction and Maintenance Facilities account.**

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you as the appropriations process continues.

Sincerely,

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American Physical Society
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