August 13, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of the scientific and engineering societies and industry associations listed below, we write to express our strong support of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency vital to solving the technical challenges faced by U.S. businesses. We urge you to provide strong funding support for NIST's Scientific and Technical Research and Services (STRS) programs. We recommend that Congress appropriate STRS funding at a level of 4% higher than FY18 to further advance key agency research projects in areas including communication, disaster recovery, health, quantum, and national security.

NIST intricately works with our nation's businesses and universities and is a driver of American economic growth and job creation. Companies, academia and other federal agencies rely on STRS programs to provide foundational research and material development for their products and programs. NIST supports U.S. industry by aiding businesses to overcome technical obstacles thus improving U.S. innovation and global competitiveness – fulfilling a vital function that companies cannot do themselves.

Because of their importance to American innovation and economic growth, we strongly encourage the House and Senate to support budget increases for NIST's STRS activities. NIST's core measurement science programs provide calibrations and standards for industry broadly – from oil and gas to aerospace and medicine. We also encourage the Committees to consider additional funding in emerging areas that require foundational measurements to enable U.S. dominance of new industries, including quantum technology, engineering biology, precision medicine, artificial intelligence, advanced communications and internet-of-things.

Additionally, modern, functional facilities are required for NIST to remain the world-leader in measurement science. Currently, NIST's aging infrastructure cannot support the temperature, humidity, and power requirements for world-class measurements. Recurring failures of these utility systems in recent years has resulted in lost work and costly damage to laboratory facilities. In FY18, Congress provided strong support for NIST infrastructure projects, and we encourage you to continue to do so going forward.

We urge increased investment in NIST's core laboratory research programs 4% above FY18 appropriations levels for FY19 appropriations.

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

Sincerely,

The American Chemical Society (ACS)
American Institute of Physics (AIP)
American Physical Society (APS)
Acoustical Society of America (ASA)
The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)

IEEE-USA
IRI, Innovation Research Interchange
The Optical Society (OSA)
Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA)
SME
The international society for optics and photonics (SPIE)
Stony Brook University

cc:

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice and Science

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice and Science

The Honorable John Culberson, Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice and Science

The Honorable Jose Serrano, Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice and Science