

Committee Budget Testimony for the Committee on House Administration

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, thank you for having me here today to testify about the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget request for the 118th Congress. I would like to say at the outset that Chairman Lucas and his staff collaborated closely with me and my staff in formulating this request, and I fully support it.

The Science Committee bore the brunt of some very steep committee budget cuts a decade ago. From 2010 to 2013, the Committee's budget was cut by over 26%. Although in recent years, the Committee on House Administration has tried to consistently increase the Science Committee's budget, the Science Committee's budget in real dollars has still not fully recovered from these steep cuts.

At the same time, the budgets of the Federal agencies that the Science Committee oversees have seen very large increases in recent years through increased regular appropriations as well as additional monies found in bills like the Chips and Science Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. While I was a strong supporter of this increased funding, I also want to be a good steward of taxpayer funding for these programs. Quite frankly, I think that will be hard to do without bringing on additional professional staff to the Committee to conduct oversight.

The last point I'd like to make is that the quality of the staff is also a factor in our ability to conduct oversight. Due to the highly technical programs the Science Committee oversees, we have the need for people with specialized expertise. The majority of my staff have advanced degrees or backgrounds in technical fields. Recruiting professionals with these qualifications is very difficult in the current labor market. We simply have to be able to offer candidates competitive salaries if we want to attract qualified professionals to the Science Committee.

The budget that Chairman Lucas and I have jointly submitted would allow the Committee to fully staff up and conduct the skilled oversight of the technical programs within our jurisdiction. The budget would also allow for increased site visits to our nation's various laboratories and field centers which is also critically important for effective oversight.

I want to thank you again for having me testify today, and I'm happy to answer any questions.