

## **Committee Budget Testimony for the Committee on House Administration**

### **Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren**

#### **Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**

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 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. I would like to say at the outset that Chairman Babin and his staff collaborated with me and my staff in formulating this request, and I fully support it. Because we are in agreement, I will keep my remarks brief.

The Science Committee bore the brunt of some very steep committee budget cuts from 2010 to 2013. The Committee's budget was cut by over 26%, not accounting for inflation. Although in recent years, the Committee on House Administration has tried to consistently increase the Science Committee's budget, which is much appreciated, the Science Committee's budget in real dollars has only just begun to recover from those cuts. Last year was the first where our budget was as high as the budget in 2010 - in real dollars, not inflation adjusted.

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. We simply have to be able to offer candidates competitive salaries if we want to continue to retain our current staff and attract qualified professionals to the Science Committee. As just one example, we are heavily focused on the issue of artificial intelligence. This is a very serious competitive priority for our country with regards to Communist China. Bringing on qualified staff who understand this issue isn't cheap, but it's vital for us to ensure our public policy keeps us competitive in this emerging field.

The budget that Chairman Babin 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. This budget request would also allow for increased site visits to our nation's various laboratories and field centers which is also critically important for effective oversight. The Minority side alone has nine new Members this Congress. It is important for Members and staff to undertake oversight visits to government research facilities and laboratories under the jurisdiction of the Committee in the 119th Congress. It has been years since Members or staff have visited some of those facilities, and it is important that our policy initiatives be informed by an understanding of the actual work being undertaken at our federal laboratories and our research universities.

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