



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing

An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Institute of Standards and Technology for Fiscal Year 2024

May 10, 2023

Good morning. Today's hearing will focus on the National Institute of Standards and Technology's budget proposal for fiscal year 2024. I would like to welcome the Honorable Dr. Locascio to the Committee for her first hearing and also thank her for taking the time to participate. I look forward to hearing your testimony.

This Committee often emphasizes the "science" in "CHIPS & Science, but today we'll have the opportunity to examine both.

The CHIPS and Science Act provided \$50 billion in federal funding for the Department of Commerce to strengthen the U.S. position in semiconductor research, development, and manufacturing. NIST is home to the CHIPS Program Office and is responsible for overseeing how this funding is allocated and sent out the door. \$50 billion is quite the bump for an agency whose budget wasn't even one billion dollars five years ago.

Today's hearing will give us insights into NIST's work implementing CHIPS and Science, as well as an overview of NIST's broader contributions to America's competitiveness.

The CHIPS and Science Act also authorized critical research and investments at NIST to address key threats to U.S. competitiveness and innovation.

The NIST for the Future Act, which was included in CHIPS and Science, codified NIST's role in several areas including bioengineering, advanced communication, cybersecurity, and international standards-setting, just to name a few examples.

NIST is one of our nation's oldest physical science laboratories. In 1901, Congress established the agency to support U.S. industrial competitiveness by improving measurement infrastructure, which at the time was lagging behind the capabilities of other nations.

Fast forward 122 years and NIST is doing just that—working as "industry's laboratory" to advance U.S. leadership in measurement science, standards, and technology to ensure the U.S. remains a global leader and does not lose its competitive edge.

NIST measurements support the smallest of technologies to the largest and most complex. From computer chips to global communications networks, nanoscale devices to earthquake-resistant buildings, an endless number of products and services rely upon NIST technologies, measurements, and standards in some way, shape, or form.

As technologies rapidly develop and evolve, NIST's research and development continues to play a critical role in U.S. national security, trade, and innovation.

Prioritizing key research areas such as quantum information sciences, microelectronics, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence (AI) is growing more important every day, as these technologies become increasingly necessary for technological development.

Last year NIST released the AI Risk Management Framework—a set of guidelines required by the National AI Initiative, a bill by this Committee. I would like to commend NIST for the transparent, bottom-up approach it used to develop this framework, which ensures this voluntary guidance is useful to the broad community of AI stakeholders.

This Framework, the subsequent establishment of the “Trustworthy and Responsible A.I. Resource Center”, and the research and development NIST conducts on A.I.-enable systems are going to prove critical to our work to stay at the cutting edge of reliable and trustworthy A.I. technologies. That work is especially important now as this technology is growing by leaps and bounds.

I'm looking forward to seeing how organizations begin to adopt this voluntary guidance and hearing more about NIST's plans to support the safe development and adoption of this emerging technology.

NIST also works with small and medium-sized manufacturers to compete in the global marketplace through the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (MEP) and Manufacturing U.S.A. Network.

Through these programs, NIST helps U.S. manufacturers adopt new technologies and methods to overcome obstacles facing advanced manufacturers.

NIST also works to ensure domestic supply chains are secure, resilient, and trustworthy. Promoting supply chain innovations will enable U.S. manufacturers to improve their efficiency, identify supply-chain disruptions and quality issues, and bolster national and economic security.

I look forward to hearing more about how public-private partnerships at NIST are promoting innovation in advanced manufacturing capabilities and supply chain management.

I also hope to hear about what progress the MEP program has made in establishing the national supply chain database authorized in CHIPS and Science.

That's quite a lot of ground to cover, but we in Congress have the responsibility to ensure every taxpayer dollar spent is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. I hope we can use today's hearing to do just that.

Again, I thank our witness for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for her opening statement.