

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Lucas at R&T Subcommittee Hearing on NIST Budget

Apr 9, 2019

Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens and Ranking Member Baird for holding today's hearing. And thank you to Dr. Walter Copan for being here to testify on the National Institute of Standards and Technology's priorities for Fiscal Year 2020.

Many Americans may not know just how important and far-reaching NIST's work is and how much it impacts our lives and businesses.

For example, NIST keeps the official time for the United States with cutting edge atomic clocks. This may seem trivial, but this precise and accurate time keeps our GPS working.

NIST conducts research and develops standards for building codes and new materials. In my home state of Oklahoma, NIST has provided critical research and guidance on constructing tornado-resistant buildings and infrastructure.

NIST also plays a very important role in cybersecurity. NIST sets mandatory guidelines and standards for federal agencies and provides voluntary standards to private industry. The NIST Cybersecurity Framework is considered the gold standard for cyber protection.

Private industry trusts NIST because it has a track record of providing high-quality, reliable, measurement and standards service and information.

The world-class scientists and facilities at NIST help give United States industry a competitive edge that we must maintain.

The President's budget request prioritizes funding at NIST in three new areas that are critical to national security and the economy, including the National Quantum Initiative, microelectronics, and artificial intelligence. I look forward to hearing more about these new efforts.

This Committee has a long, bipartisan record of support for NIST and its contributions to research and development. Our challenge is to set funding priorities that ensure America remains a leader in science and technology, while also being able to balance the government's budget.

I will remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that the President's budget proposal is just the start of the budget process. Under the Constitution, the President proposes but Congress decides how the government will be funded. It is our job to ensure taxpayer dollars are properly spent, and this hearing is the next step in the process.

Thank you, and I yield back.