

## OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)  
Subcommittee on Research & Technology  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*Overview of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Proposals for the National Science Foundation and National  
Institute of Standards and Technology*  
Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing

February 26, 2015

Thank you Madam Chairwoman and welcome to our distinguished panel. I am pleased we are having this hearing to review the Fiscal Year 2016 budget proposals for the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. There is a lot to cover when we discuss these two critical agencies and I believe that we would have been able to examine these budgets better with two separate hearings. But I am hopeful that we can give a thoughtful and thorough consideration here today.

The National Science Foundation is the only agency in our government that supports fundamental research across all fields of science and engineering. NSF has always been the primary source of federal support in a variety of fields, including the social and economic sciences. As other agencies such as DARPA and NIH have increasingly shifted toward more mission-focused and translational research, NSF has become the primary source of support for many more fields. \$7 billion sounds like a lot of money, and of course it is. However, given the breadth and depth of our nation's scientific talent, and their capacity to transform the world through scientific and technological breakthroughs, \$7 billion still leaves a lot of excellent ideas on the cutting-room floor. NSF is requesting a 5.2 percent increase in its budget for FY 2016 which I believe is fully justified and I will strongly support.

I would like to highlight a couple of the items in the NSF request. I am pleased to see the increase for the very successful Innovation Corps, aka the I-Corps program. If my newer colleagues are unfamiliar with I-Corps, I urge them to get a briefing from NSF. Being from Chicago, I'm also interested in the INFEWS initiative and the positive impacts research in that area could have on water quality in the Great Lakes.

Today we are also looking at the budget request for NIST, the most important least-known agency in our government, which has a budget of less than \$900 million. NIST has always been the world's premier measurement science and standards organization. In recent years, policymakers in Congress and the White House have called on NIST to take on leadership roles in an increasing number of critical areas, including cybersecurity, disaster resilience, forensic science, and advanced manufacturing. On the one hand, it is a great compliment to NIST that we entrust them with these responsibilities and they continue to live up to our expectations. On the other hand, many of these responsibilities have been assigned without needed increases in funding, making it difficult for the agency to carry out its mission. NIST is requesting a nearly 30 percent increase, but over a relatively small base. I fully support NIST's request in light of all the increased responsibilities.

I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in urging full funding for NIST's laboratories and construction budget. NIST's infrastructure is 40-50 years old and much of it is crumbling. As they face the same wave of retirements that many of our agencies face, NIST is struggling to attract top new technical talent. If we do not fully fund this agency, we may be compromising its ability to remain the world's leader in measurement science and standards development. This would be a heavy blow to our economic growth and security given the importance of NIST's work.

Before I close, I want to say a few words about legislation that I expect will come before this Committee soon in regard to reauthorizing both of these agencies. Last year, the agencies were not given the opportunity to testify on the reauthorizing legislation before we marked up it. I'm sure there will be some questions from both sides today that will be relevant to any new reauthorization bill, but it's important to allow these agencies to testify again once legislation has been introduced. This will allow our subcommittee and the full committee to better understand the impact of any proposals for consequential policy changes.

I look forward to this morning's testimony and discussion, and I yield back.