

Opening Statement
The Honorable Adrian Smith (R-NE), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation
Science and Technology Committee
Committee Print – National Institute of Standards and Technology programs
April 21, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Wu, for calling today's markup of legislation to reauthorize the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which will be included in the America COMPETES reauthorization we are scheduled to mark up in the full committee next week.

I believe there is consensus on the major issues addressed in this bill, but some questions remain which I hope we can work through, if not completely at this mark-up, then at the full committee mark-up.

NIST is an important and trusted arbiter of standards, weights, and measurers. While the question of reauthorization level will be debated, there is no question reauthorization of NIST is vital to every sector of our economy.

Given NIST's stature, it is appropriate we elevate the Director of NIST to be an Under Secretary of Commerce. In our recent hearing on NIST our panelists from private industry agreed on this point, provided the NIST director is not saddled with new duties and continues to concentrate his efforts on running the agency.

Likewise, in listening to the Director's testimony, and given the constantly changing state of technology, I understand his desire to restructure the labs. He does not need Congressional authority to do such, but I appreciate the Chairman's desire to codify the reorganization. I hope that we will hold appropriate oversight hearings when the time is right to ensure this reorganization is adequately achieving NIST's mission.

And I believe we share similar goals for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership and for NIST's role in bioscience research, if not agreement on the structure of both programs as outlined in the bill.

With that, I look forward to a constructive markup today and to working with you further as move toward full committee markup and floor consideration.

I yield back the balance of my time.