



February 10, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

Following House passage of H.R. 4521, the America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology, and Economic Strength Act of 2022 (America COMPETES Act), earlier this month and Senate approval of S. 1260, the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), last year, Congress is in a position to pass a significant and bipartisan measure focused on our global competitiveness. The National Photonics Initiative (NPI), a broad-based collaborative alliance among industry, academia, and government to raise awareness of optics and photonics science and technology, would like to express our strong support for congressional passage of a compromise measure that builds on key investments and objectives in each bill. Below are several objectives the NPI believes are essential for any final agreement.

Both the America COMPETES Act and USICA prioritize support for the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) for America Act (H.R. 7178 in the 116th Congress), which is critical to establishing investments and incentives to support U.S. semiconductor manufacturing, research and development, and supply chain security. We strongly encourage inclusion of supplemental funding for the CHIPS Act be maintained in any final package.

The America COMPETES Act also included the Department of Energy (DOE) for the Future (H.R. 3593) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for the Future (H.R. 4609) Acts. These measures increase funding authorizations for these critical agencies and establish support for U.S.-based manufacturing in the advanced technology sectors. The NPI strongly encourages you to keep these measures in any final package. Additionally, the America COMPETES Act includes two new STEM immigration proposals that will expand our nation's high-tech workforce. The NPI urges their inclusion in any final agreement.

USICA included increased funding for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a critical research agency that awards funding for exciting new technologies. It also included support for a new Directorate within the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NPI urges lawmakers to maintain these increased investments and authorizations for these key agencies.



Another important initiative in USICA is the establishment of regional grant hubs by the Department of Commerce in each of the Economic Development Administration's six regions. If the U.S. is going to establish a competitive domestic manufacturing base and supply chain, we must expand programs like the regional grant hubs.

Both USICA and America COMPETES address an issue of great importance to the research community and American innovation – capacity building. USICA proposed a massive expansion of the NSF and DOE's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) which set aside funds for states and territories that have historically received a low share of total agency research and development funds with the aim of building up their research capacity. Alternatively, the America COMPETES Act proposes creating programs to build capacity at "developing universities," regardless of where they are located. While there are differences between the two measures on how to achieve this important goal, it is a shared objective that should be pursued.

Finally, the NPI supports the inclusion of \$45 billion for grants, loans, and guarantees for supply chain resilience and manufacturing.

As work continues on these important bills, the NPI stands ready to provide perspective and insight for policymakers on research and development, domestic manufacturing, and supply chain conditions for the optics and photonics industry.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed White", written in a cursive style.

Ed White
Chair of the NPI Steering Committee

The National Photonics Initiative (NPI) is a collaborative alliance among industry, academia, and government to raise awareness of photonics and the impact of photonics on our everyday lives.