

May 15, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Moran, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

We write to urge you to prioritize funding for the U.S. Department of Commerce initiatives to advance responsible innovation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems in the upcoming fiscal year.

Granting the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) request for additional funding to safeguard and promote AI is critically important as NIST works to administer the U.S. AI Safety Institute.¹ In particular, fully funding NIST's request of \$47.7 million in additional funding for its Scientific and Technical Research and Services account to advance AI research, standards, and testing will help build a foundation for helping to prevent misuse of this technology by those who seek to undermine our public safety and our national security.²

Under existing law, NIST may use up to \$10 million annually to establish and operate its U.S. AI Safety Institute.³ However, the overall budget cut of over 10 percent made to NIST in Fiscal Year 2024, which was later extended through Fiscal Year 2025, presents major operational challenges to NIST's efforts to sustainably guide responsible development of AI systems.⁴

¹ NIST has not yet submitted its budget for Fiscal Year 2026. President Trump's topline discretionary Budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 provides only a single line item for NIST and makes no reference to NIST's AI work. White House Office of Management and Budget, Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request (May 2, 2025).

² In its most recent budget request, made in March 2024, NIST requested \$47.7 million in additional funding for its Scientific and Technical Research and Services account to advance AI research, standards, and testing. The National Institute of Standards and Technology & National Technical Information Service, Budget Submission to Congress, Fiscal Year 2025 (March 11, 2024).

³ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations and U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Explanatory Statement, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024. The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, which became law on March 15, 2025, extended this funding structure through September 30, 2025.

⁴ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Summary, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024

For over a century, NIST has served as a trusted and impartial leader in contributing to the development of technical standards and promoting innovation across a range of American industries. Its world-renowned expertise in measurement science and cutting-edge technology make it well-suited to lead the federal government's efforts to address the complex challenges presented by AI systems.

However, due to years of funding shortfalls, many NIST facilities remain in disrepair, forcing researchers to employ makeshift solutions and workarounds that undermine productivity.⁵

By investing in NIST's unique scientific expertise to identify techniques to measure the capabilities, limitations, and potential risks posed by AI systems, we can build public trust in AI to foster continued innovation while safeguarding the public from harm. NIST is uniquely qualified to contribute to the development of well-defined technical standards, test methods, and objective evaluation techniques, which are prerequisites for any effective AI governance framework, especially as AI systems rapidly increase in scale and complexity.

As organizations focused on a wide range of AI policy goals, we agree that fully funding NIST's ability to advance responsible innovation of AI systems is an urgent priority that deserves our full support.

As cutting-edge AI systems rapidly evolve, ensuring NIST has the resources it needs to drive responsible AI innovation is essential to maintain America's technological leadership and safeguard our future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

AAAI
Accountable Tech
AI Commons
Anthropic
Americans for Responsible Innovation
Carnegie Mellon University
Center for AI and Digital Policy
Center for AI Policy
Center for Democracy & Technology
Center for Human-Compatible Artificial Intelligence, University of California, Berkeley

⁵ Cat Zakrzewski, *This agency is tasked with keeping AI safe. Its offices are crumbling*, WASHINGTON POST (Mar. 6, 2024)

Design It For Us
Encode AI
FAR.AI
Federation of American Scientists
ForHumanity
Foundation for American Innovation
Future of Life Institute
Inclusive Abundance Action
Leela AI
Lucid Privacy Group
National Fair Housing Alliance
Public Knowledge
The Future Society
Trustible