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**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN  
THE UNITED STATES AND THE  
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

1524 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
PHONE (202) 225-5931  
FAX (202) 225-0182

8 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 200  
ATTLEBORO, MA 02703  
(508) 431-1110

29 CRAFTS STREET, SUITE 375  
NEWTON, MA 02458  
(617) 332-3333  
FAX (617) 332-3308

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instagram.com/RepAuchincloss/

June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dr. Arati Prabhakar  
Director of the Office of Science and Technology  
Assistant to the President for Science and Technology  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Prabhakar,

The bipartisan *CHIPS and Science Act of 2022* (P.L. 117-167) will ramp up the competitiveness of the entire U.S. science and technology (S&T) enterprise and improve the American economy. Notably, both *CHIPS and Science* and the recent Executive Order 14081 on advancing the U.S. bioeconomy focus on advancing the critical S&T areas of biotechnology and biomanufacturing.<sup>1</sup> Such areas are crucial in improving American's well-being, promoting high-value companies and well-paying jobs, and strengthening American competition against adversaries such as China. The actions recommended in this letter will help meet Congressional intent behind *CHIPS and Science* and ensure alignment with the Administration's whole-of-country bioeconomy effort.

Division B, Title IV of *CHIPS and Science* mandates the formation of a National Engineering Biology Research and Development Initiative (the Initiative). The Initiative's activities will touch all aspects of the bioeconomy from fundamental research to security to economic productivity and competitiveness. The Initiative is to be coordinated by an interagency committee (IC) that is supported by an Initiative Coordination Office (ICO) with a Director and full-time staff to drive the Initiative.

To ensure the success of the Initiative and America's overall national and economic competitiveness, we support: (i) A well-resourced ICO, (ii) strong leadership of the IC, and (iii) an IC that reflects the multi-faceted nature of the U.S. bioeconomy.

**Initiative Coordination Office**

<sup>1</sup><https://fas.org/blogs/sciencepolicy/chips-and-science-highlights-bioeconomy/>



A fully staffed and empowered ICO will be able to meet its responsibilities as stipulated in *CHIPS and Science*. The ICO will be the point of contact for a wide range of stakeholders from the public and private sectors and will oversee interagency coordination. It will further ensure that technology and innovation from the Initiative will transfer to industry, including startups, so the benefits of breakthroughs can reach businesses of all sizes, and ultimately, consumers.

To be successful, the ICO will require appropriate staff capacity and capability to regularly reevaluate the bioeconomy landscape and stay nimble. We recommend that the ICO be housed at the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and that the Director of OSTP, as authorized by *CHIPS and Science*, include appropriate funding for the ICO in the President's annual budget request to Congress.

### **Interagency committee leadership**

The IC leadership will play a crucial role in coordinating and steering the Initiative to achieve its goals by managing the interagency team and convening the IC itself. One co-chair of the IC is designated to be a representative from OSTP, and the Director of OSTP selects an additional co-chairperson from among the IC membership.<sup>2</sup> We recommend that the non-OSTP co-chairperson be a senior, career official from the Department of Commerce Office of the Secretary or the Office of Policy and Strategic Planning who can prioritize S&T, economic development, and opportunity.

### **Interagency committee membership**

The Initiative is tasked with advancing societal well-being, national security, sustainability, and economic productivity.<sup>3</sup> In order for the Initiative to meet these objectives, each agency will need a representative who is up to speed on their agency's full breadth of activities relevant to the bioeconomy. The IC's composition should represent the variety of stakeholders across the federal government while managing the overall size of the committee to ensure efficient operations. Members of the IC should include agencies that encourage economic development, sponsor fundamental research, promote the commercialization of technologies, orient around safety and security, and/or engage in workforce training.

### **Moving forward on U.S. biotechnology and biomanufacturing**

Biotechnology and biomanufacturing are primed to improve Americans' well-being and generate helpful products, high-value companies, and well-paying jobs. Standing up the Initiative Coordination Office and interagency committee effectively will bolster our shared goal to ensure U.S. leadership in science and technology.

At this pivotal moment for our nation's bioeconomy, OSTP will play a critical role to implement the Initiative as envisioned in *CHIPS and Science*. As China increases its ambitions in global biomanufacturing and new discoveries continue to be made, our nation is confronted with serious threats and exciting opportunities that require a reinvigorated focus on driving innovation in biology and the life

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-117publ167/pdf/PLAW-117publ167.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

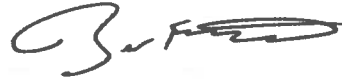
sciences. Effective and efficient federal coordination will ensure all partners in government, academia, and the private sector are working together to deliver for Americans. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



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Randy Feenstra  
Member of Congress



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator