"Taken from HRpt 106-283
FY 2000 CJS appropriations bill House report…"

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee recommends a total of $436,686,000 for the appropriations accounts under the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for fiscal year 2000. The recommendation is $300,270,000 below the budget request, and a decrease of $210,464,000 below the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1999. A description of each account and the Committee recommendation follows:

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES

The Committee has provided $280,136,000 for the Scientific and Technical Research and Services (core programs) appropriation of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. This amount is the same as in fiscal year 1999 and $9,486,000 below the budget request.

The Committee notes that, in an era of declining budgets, the core programs of NIST have enjoyed significant support, receiving continued program increases. Overall funding for these programs has grown from $240 million in fiscal year 1995 to $280 million in fiscal year 1999. The Committee understands the importance of the research done by this agency, and is recommending the same level of funding in fiscal year 2000 as in fiscal year 1999 because of the overall funding constraints with which it is faced.

The following is a breakdown of the amounts provided under this account by activity.

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[Amounts in thousands]

	FY99 Enacted	FY00 Request	FY00 Recommended
Electronics and Electrical Engineering	**$38,427**	**$39,115**	**$38,427**
Manufacturing Engineering	**19,368**	**19,751**	**19,368**
Chemical Science and Technology	**32,493**	**33,898**	**32,493**
Physics	**28,434**	**28,961**	**28,434**
Material Sciences and Engineering	**51,335**	**52,685**	**51,335**
Building and Fire Research	**14,898**	**13,764**	**14,898**
Computer Science and Applied Math	**43,943**	**47,762**	**43,943**
Technology Assistance	**17,131**	**18,314**	**17,131**
Baldrige Quality Awards	**4,870**	**5,046**	**4,870**
Research Support	**29,237**	**30,326**	**29,237**
Total, STRS	**280,136**	**289,622**	**280,136**

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The recommendation provides funding for all activities at the fiscal year 1999 level. This includes the current year level of funding to continue the disaster research program on effects of windstorms. No program increases have been funded. Further, the Committee continues the directive included in previous years regarding the placement of additional NIST personnel or support for foreign service nationals overseas.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

The Committee recommends $99,836,000 for the Industrial Technology Services appropriation of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. This amount is $210,464,000 below the current year appropriation, and $238,700,000 below the budget request.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program: The Committee has included $99,836,000 for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program, the full amount requested. This is the full amount necessary for continuation of all existing centers, which will all have reached at least their fifth year of operation in fiscal year 2000 and are operating at a one-third federal match, and for program administration.

In addition, the Committee recommends bill language, similar to previous years, regarding funding after the sixth year of a Center's operation.

Advanced Technology Program: The Committee recommends no funding for the Advanced Technology Program (ATP) in fiscal year 2000. In fiscal year 1999, $203,500,000 was provided, offset by a $6,000,000 rescission of prior year balances. The budget included a request of $238,700,000 for fiscal year 2000.

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The advocates for the ATP program have always had to answer a number of fundamental questions, such as whether the program achieved results that could not be achieved through the private marketplace; whether it funded technology development and commercialization that would not be undertaken but for the existence of the program; and whether the federal government should play a role in picking technologies to be developed and then funding that development at substantial government expense, for example.

After many years in existence, the program has not produced a body of evidence to overcome those fundamental questions about whether the program should exist in the first place. Given the tremendous financial constraints under which the Committee is operating, the question becomes whether it is worthwhile to continue to fund a program of questionable value, particularly one that costs over $200,000,000 a year.

With many other priorities facing the Committee, and funding extremely limited, the Committee concludes that funding would be better spent on other higher priority programs and recommends that the ATP program be terminated.

CONSTRUCTION OF RESEARCH FACILITIES

The Committee recommendation includes $56,714,000 for construction, renovation, and maintenance of NIST facilities, the same as provided in fiscal year 1999, and $50,084,000 under the budget request.

The budget request included $95,000,000 to allow construction of the Advanced Measurement Laboratory to start in fiscal year 2000. The Committee recommendation assumes that construction will start in fiscal year 2001, and provides $44,916,000 toward the construction of the AML.

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The budget request assumed that $10,000,000 already appropriated for the AML would be reprogrammed for rehabilitation projects at other NIST facilities. If that amount is retained for the construction of the AML, approximately $40,000,000 will be required to move to construction in fiscal year 2001.

Both the budget request and the recommendation include $11,798,000 for safety, capacity, maintenance, and major repair projects at other NIST facilities in fiscal year 2000.

Bill language requiring submission of a financial plan is retained.

This account supports all NIST activities by providing the facilities necessary to carry out the NIST mission. The Institute has proposed a multiyear effort to construct advanced technology laboratories and to renovate NIST's current buildings and laboratory facilities in compliance with more stringent science and engineering program requirements.