

**National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee (NCSTAC)**

**Meeting Summary**

**National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)**

**Gaithersburg, Maryland**

**(Public Meeting conducted via web conference)**

**September 23, 2026, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET**

**September 24, 2026, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm ET**

**Advisory Committee Members:**

|                                   |                                              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| José Izquierdo-Encarnación, Chair | PORTICUS CSP                                 |
| Donald Dusenberry, Vice Chair     | Consulting Engineer                          |
| Kurtis Gurley                     | University of Florida                        |
| George Guszcza                    | National Institute of Building Sciences      |
| John Osteraas                     | Exponent Engineering & Scientific Consulting |
| Randall Poston                    | Pivot Engineers                              |
| Aspasia Zerva                     | Drexel University                            |

**NIST Leadership:**

|                       |                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arvind Raman          | Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and<br>NIST Director                                        |
| Joannie Chin          | Director, Engineering Laboratory                                                                                     |
| Jason Averill         | Deputy Director, Engineering Laboratory                                                                              |
| Tanya Brown-Giammanco | Acting Chief, Disaster Impact Reduction Office and Director,<br>Disaster and Failure Studies, Engineering Laboratory |

**NIST Staff and Associates (listed in alphabetical order):**

|                       |                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Glenn Bell            | Champlain Towers South NCST Co-Lead Investigator                                  |
| Judy Bowie            | Designated Federal Officer                                                        |
| Maria Dillard         | Hurricane Maria NCST Associate Lead Investigator                                  |
| Katherine Hall        | Support Services Specialist, Disaster Impact Reduction Office                     |
| Marc Levitan          | Research Engineer, Structures Group, Materials and Structural<br>Systems Division |
| Joseph Main           | Hurricane Maria NCST Lead Investigator                                            |
| Judith Mitrani-Reiser | Champlain Towers South NCST Co-Lead Investigator                                  |

**Public Speakers (provided written remarks):**

Karen Moore  
Von Delvalle

## **I. Day 1 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Ms. Judy Bowie, serving as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), called the Day 1 meeting to order. She informed everyone that the meeting would be recorded. Ms. Bowie then introduced the NIST Acting Chief of the Disaster Impact Reduction Office and Director of Disaster and Failure Studies, Dr. Tanya Brown-Giammanco, who called the roll and established quorum. Dr. Brown-Giammanco then provided a brief overview of the agenda.

## **II. Review of Meeting Goals and Agenda**

Dr. Brown-Giammanco described the meeting goals.

- Conduct the annual ethics briefing for the committee members,
- Review NIST's Response to NCST Advisory Committee's 2025 Report to Congress,
- Review Disaster and Failures Studies Program scoring of events and readiness of teams,
- Review the status of the NCST investigation of the partial collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida,
- Review the status of implementation of recommendations from the Joplin, Missouri, tornado NCST investigation,
- Review the status of the NCST investigation of Hurricane Maria's effects on Puerto Rico, and
- Develop the Committee's annual report to Congress.

Dr. Brown-Giammanco then invited NIST Director Dr. Arvind Raman to deliver welcome remarks. Dr. Raman welcomed committee members, NIST staff, and guests, and expressed appreciation for the committee's service. He emphasized the importance of the NCST Act, noting its role in improving public safety through investigations and implementation of recommendations. He highlighted NIST's collaborative approach and the progress of ongoing investigations, including Hurricane Maria and Champlain Towers South, and progress in implementing recommendations from the prior Joplin tornado investigation.

## **III. Annual Ethics Briefing**

Mr. Eric Wieghaus from the Department of Commerce Ethics Law and Program Office provided a presentation of the Annual Ethics Briefing for Special Government Employees (SGE). The presentation link:

[FACA Training 2026](#)

## **IV. NIST Response to the NCSTAC's 2025 Report to Congress**

Dr. Brown-Giammanco provided a brief overview of the NCST Act, the scope of NIST's authorities and limitations under the Act, and the Committee's responsibilities under the NCSTAC Charter of 2024. She then provided a summary of each of the nine recommendations

the Committee provided in their 2025 annual report, along with a NIST response to each. The presentation can be found here:

[NIST Response to the NCSTAC's 2025 Report to Congress](#)

**Discussion:**

The Committee congratulated the team on their thorough investigations and expressed their gratitude for the hard work and dedication that went into the responses to their report.

**V. Disaster and Failure Studies (DFS) Program Updates**

Dr. Brown-Giammanco provided a brief update on the Disaster and Failure Studies (DSF) Program. She highlighted the scoring of disaster events considered for potential study or deployment. She provided an overview of the membership status of the Committee. She also outlined efforts to improve operational readiness through modular field data collection tools, FirstNet communications for deployment team members, and interagency agreements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Science Foundation, and Bureau of Reclamation. The presentation can be found here:

[Disaster and Failure Studies Program Update](#)

**Discussion:**

The Committee and NIST staff discussed NIST's process for selecting events for scoring, including established thresholds for some events, while others are assessed based on severity, consequences, and relevance to NIST's mission and statutory authority. They also discussed NIST's capacity to respond to a major new event while current investigations remain active. NIST stated that response capability depends on available funding, staff resources, competing priorities, nature of the event, and the ability to engage outside expertise, and noted that preliminary reconnaissance may still occur even though a full investigation may not result.

They also discussed the field data collection framework that Dr. Brown-Giammanco presented, including the establishment of data streams and information sources in advance so that hazard information is available automatically when an event occurs. NIST noted that it is exploring the use of machine learning, automated image analysis, sources of imagery and remote sensing data, and plans to include training and field testing as part of implementation of new modular field tools.

The Committee supported continued improvements to NIST's investigative tools, processes, and interagency partnerships.

**VI. Champlain Towers South NCST Updates**

The Champlain Towers South (CTS) investigation reached a significant milestone in June 2026, when the team released a public update video summarizing the technical findings of the

investigation. Dr. Judith Mitrani-Reiser and Mr. Glenn Bell, co-lead investigators, provided a summary of the investigation's progress, described the team's shift in focus to dissemination and development of the investigation's final recommendations, and emphasized that the work has been supported by extensive coordination with local, state, and federal partners. They also summarized the technical findings, highlighting that the collapse began with failures in the pool deck, which resulted in collapse progression into the tower. Final investigation recommendations are expected to focus on design and construction quality, code enforcement, record retention and inspections, codes and standards for new buildings, existing building assessment and maintenance, and education and training. The presentation can be found here:

[Champlain Towers South NCST Updates](#)

### **Discussion:**

The Committee commended the presentation and discussed the Champlain Towers South findings with particular focus on collapse mechanism, structural detailing, and implications for future practice. They discussed particular details in the damaged areas and the collapse sequence and potential recommendations to limit horizontal progression of collapse. They also discussed a suggestion to include information in the final report on the many alternative failure hypotheses that were examined and ruled out before conclusions were reached. Structural features that could have prevented a collapse from spreading within a building were also discussed. The Committee and NIST also discussed the need to balance the concerns that led to the Champlain Towers South collapse but without implying that all older buildings with similar details are at imminent risk. NIST stressed that the principal causes of the Champlain Towers South collapse were original design and construction deficiencies, while other issues represent opportunities to improve codes and standards rather than evidence that comparable buildings are broadly unsafe. The Committee and NIST staff discussed whether NIST would approach any part of the investigation differently if starting again today and NIST noted it is compiling lessons learned, and that while some delays were influenced by procedural requirements and early litigation that limited witness availability, the additional time allowed the team to reach more participants. The final discussion covered the value of developing practical guidance or checklists to help facility managers and other non-specialists recognize concerning conditions and knowing when to seek expert evaluation.

*Following a discussion of logistics for the September 24 portion of the meeting, Ms. Bowie adjourned the Day 1 meeting at approximately 5:03 pm ET.*

## **VII. Day 2 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Ms. Judy Bowie, serving as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), called the Day 2 meeting to order. Dr. Brown-Giammanco conducted a roll call to establish a quorum and reviewed the meeting agenda.

## **VIII. Implementation Recommendations from the Joplin, MO, tornado NCST Investigation**

Dr. Marc Levitan reported on progress for implementing recommendations from the Joplin tornado NCST investigation. He highlighted efforts to address recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8. These highlights included new technology for measuring tornado wind fields; progress on new ASCE/SEI/AMS wind speed estimation standard; Revisions to tornado hazard map and tornado load methodology; possible expansion on the ASCE 7-22 scope to include Risk Category 2 buildings in ASCE 7-28; and recent efforts by FEMA regarding sheltering. The presentation can be found here:

[Joplin Tornado NCST Implementation](#)

### **Discussion:**

The Committee noted the impressive completion of nearly all recommendations. They discussed with NIST how the tornado provisions for ASCE 7 were derived, and challenges for residential buildings that would benefit from simplified design approaches. They also suggested opportunities to use the Unified Facilities Criteria from the Department of Defense to accelerate adoption for Federal agency buildings. They also discussed updated approaches to the tornado maps being proposed in ASCE 7-28.

## **IX. Hurricane Maria NCST and NWIRP Updates**

Dr. Joseph Main, Lead Investigator, and Dr. Maria Dillard, Associate Lead Investigator, provided a summary of the Hurricane Maria Program, including specific projects, collaborations, and contracts. They summarized data collection efforts and provided a first preview of the principal findings regarding preparedness, hazard exposure, infrastructure, mortality, building performance, and recovery, and likely themes for recommendations. They also described the ongoing process for report reviews, and communications and outreach efforts. The presentation can be found here:

[Hurricane Maria NCST Updates](#)

### **Discussion:**

The Committee praised the integration of social science, epidemiology, and financial perspectives into the investigation. The discussion focused on how a different hurricane track might affect the findings, and how design must account for all potential tracks, which was done by simulating thousands of tracks based on historical climatology. They also discussed how ASCE 7 hurricane-prone region design wind speed maps address wind speed-up. They also discussed the timeline for completion of the investigation and remaining obstacles. The discussion also covered the challenges associated with analyzing flooding, due to hard-to-obtain high-water marks amid infrastructure disruption and limited rain gauge data and noted that the breadth of the program is an advantage because multiple projects and converging data streams on this topic strengthen the conclusions. They also discussed how results obtained for Puerto Rico

could be applied to the mainland U.S. and beyond, tree regrowth, Hurricane Irma's strike on Puerto Rico as a Category 5 fourteen days before Maria, and how the COVID-19 pandemic halted island interviews for roughly two years.

## **X. Public Comment Period**

Ms. Bowie opened the public comment period. Mr. Von Delvalle, of Adventure Air Holdings LLC, registered to speak but was unable to connect, so his written statement was read for the record. His remarks emphasized that building codes and construction practices should consider the changing environmental conditions, population density, technology, and community risks over a structure's lifetime. He encouraged an all-hazard, risk-informed, location-specific approach to standards that consider earthquakes, flooding, extreme heat, severe storms, fire, infrastructure failure, intentional attacks, and appropriate continuity planning for critical facilities. He encouraged NIST and the committee to consider changing conditions as they relate to building codes and construction practices.

Ms. Karen Moore, of Logic Science also registered to speak, but was unable to connect. She did not provide written remarks in advance, but her remarks were forwarded to the Committee members upon receipt.

## **XI. Summary Remarks**

Dr. Joannie Chin, Director of the Engineering Laboratory at NIST, delivered closing remarks, thanking committee members for their feedback, service, and technical insights, and giving special thanks to Committee Chair Jose "Pepe" Izquierdo-Encarnacion for his dedication to the Committee. She also thanked Mr. Don Dusenberry for agreeing to serve as Vice Chair. She thanked the presenters for their updates, highlighting that both investigations are now moving into their final stages. She referenced the recent progress made on implementing recommendations from the Joplin tornado investigation. Dr. Chin also reemphasized NIST's role in conducting technical investigations and noted that the NCST Act does not allow NIST to find fault or blame. She acknowledged the difficulties faced by families who lost loved ones in the events NIST is studying, and the rigor NIST applies to prevent future tragedies. She expressed gratitude to public commenters, and to family members and others who have provided valuable insights to the investigations through surveys, interviews, and submissions to the Disaster Data Portal. She encouraged continued submissions through the Disaster Data Portal, which can be accessed here:

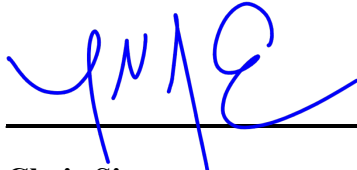
[DFS Data Submission Portal](#)

## **XII. NCSTAC Preparation of Annual Report to Congress**

Committee Chair, Mr. Izquierdo-Encarnacion, welcomed the two new committee members and invited the committee members to continue any discussion. The committee used the remainder of their time to discuss the preparation of their report to Congress. They discussed the overall

structure of the report, the timeline, and reached consensus on key content areas. Mr. Izquierdo-Encarnacion closed the session by thanking NIST, the Department, and NCST for the opportunity to serve on the Committee.

*Ms. Bowie adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:36 pm ET.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'YME', written over a horizontal line.

**Chair Signature**

2026-10-09

**Date**