

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 9, 2025, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm ET

September 16, 2025, 10:30 am – 3:00 pm ET

Advisory Committee Members:

José Izquierdo-Encarnación, Chair	PORTICUS CSP
Kimberley Shoaf, Vice Chair	Utah School of Medicine
Donald Dusenberry	Consulting Engineer
Kurtis Gurley	University of Florida
John Osteraas	Exponent Engineering & Scientific Consulting
Lori Peek	University of Colorado, Boulder
Aspasia Zerva	Drexel University

NIST Leadership:

Craig Burkhardt	Performing the Non-Exclusive Functions of Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and Acting NIST Director
Jennifer Huergo	Director of Public Affairs and Family Liaison, Champlain Towers South NCST Investigation
Joannie Chin	Director, Engineering Laboratory
Jason Averill	Deputy Director, Engineering Laboratory
Tanya Brown-Giammanco	Acting Chief, Disaster Impact Reduction Office and Director, Disaster and Failure Studies, Engineering Laboratory

NIST Staff and Associates (listed in alphabetical order):

Glenn Bell	Champlain Towers South NCST Associate Lead Investigator
Judy Bowie	Designated Federal Officer
Alicia Chambers	Supervisory Management and Program Analyst
Maria Dillard	Hurricane Maria NCST Associate Lead Investigator
Joseph Main	Hurricane Maria NCST Lead Investigator
Judith Mitrani-Reiser	Champlain Towers South NCST Lead Investigator
Anthony Putorti, Jr.	Fire Protection Engineer
Stephanie Shaw	Administrative Specialist

Public Speakers:

Martin Langesfeld
Paul Grahovac

I. Day 1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Judy Bowie, serving as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), called the meeting to order and conducted a roll call to establish quorum. She informed everyone that the meeting would be recorded. Ms. Bowie then introduced Mr. Craig Burkhardt, the Acting NIST Director, who welcomed the Committee, Investigation Team members, and members of the public. He provided an example of how previous National Construction Safety Team (NCST) investigations led to improvements in building safety, described his role in the previous NCST investigation of the World Trade Center collapse and thanked the committee for their contributions to improving codes and standards in the US.

II. Review of Meeting Goals and Agenda

The NIST Acting Chief of the Disaster Impact Reduction Office and Director of Disaster and Failure Studies, Dr. Tanya Brown-Giammanco, described the meeting goals.

- Conduct the annual ethics briefing for the committee members,
- Review NIST's Response to NCST Advisory Committee's 2024 Report to Congress,
- Review the status of the NCST investigation of the partial collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida,
- Review the status of the NCST investigation of Hurricane Maria's effects on Puerto Rico,
- Review Disaster and Failures Studies Program scoring of events and readiness of teams, and
- Develop the Committee's annual report to Congress.

III. Annual Ethics Briefing

Ms. Irene Kabunduh from the Department of Commerce Ethics Law and Program Office provided a presentation of the Annual Ethics Briefing for Special Government Employees (SGE). Presentation link:

[FACA Training 2025](#)

IV. NIST Response to the NCSTAC's 2024 Report to Congress

Dr. Brown-Giammanco provided a brief overview of the NCST 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 annual report, along with a NIST response to each. The presentation can be found here:

[NIST Response to the NCSTAC's 2024 Report to Congress](#)

Discussion: The committee thanked Dr. Brown-Giammanco for her detailed response to the committee's recommendations and noted the committee's appreciation in seeing that several of

their comments were reflected in the video updates the investigation teams released during the summer.

The committee and NIST staff discussed data release formats, protections, and timelines. NIST staff noted that data collection instruments for both the Hurricane Maria and Champlain Towers South investigations are already available on the OMB website. NIST staff noted that some Hurricane Maria data have already been released prior to report publication and noted that extensive training across investigations will be documented in the final investigation reports. Discussion also covered possible options for publication of survey datasets.

The committee and NIST staff also discussed challenges associated with understanding the extent of flooding in Hurricane Maria, and how this has been observed in other events. The committee and NIST staff also discussed the origin of reinforcing steel in the Champlain Towers South evidence, and statistical analysis of the material properties, as well as the release of materials testing data.

V. Champlain Towers South NCST Updates

Dr. Judith Mitrani-Reiser, Team Lead, and Mr. Glenn Bell, Associate Team Lead of the Champlain Towers South NCST Investigation, provided an investigation overview and update. They described the overall investigative timeline, budget, and schedule; potential areas for recommendations that may come from the investigation; and the timeline of the site and building history, and the collapse. They also discussed updates to their technical work on the failure initiation and progression and provided an overview of the next steps for the investigation. The presentation can be found here:

[Champlain Towers South NCST Updates](#)

Discussion: The committee members thanked the Champlain Towers South team for their work and emphasized the importance of recommendations that would raise public awareness regarding precursors that could alert building occupants and owners to possible changes in structural integrity. NIST reinforced the value of education and proactive reporting, referencing a “see something, say something” approach, while the committee noted that a tracking system may be helpful.

The committee and NIST staff discussed various audiences and feedback from the recent video update presentations that were posted over the summer. NIST reported strong positive responses and highlighted efforts to tailor communications to stakeholder preferences, including email, conferences, and video formats. They also discussed the collapse initiation point and progression, as well as the value of information obtained through eyewitnesses. NIST commended its social science team at Florida International University for effectively engaging participants, building trust, and helping them understand their role in the investigation, and thanked the committee for their advice in reaching these eyewitnesses.

Finally, the committee and NIST discussed future recommendations to assess building conditions, the importance of improved records retention, and possibilities to develop advanced technologies for non-destructive testing.

VI. Hurricane Maria NCST and NWIRP Updates

Dr. Joseph Main, Team Lead, and Dr. Maria Dillard, Associate Team Lead of the Hurricane Maria NCST Investigation, provided a summary of the Hurricane Maria Program. They provided a program overview; discussed the investigation timeline; the data collection and analysis efforts and key insights; preliminary findings; and anticipated impacts. The presentation can be found here:

[Hurricane Maria NCST Updates](#)

Discussion: The committee thanked the Hurricane Maria team for their presentation and recognized the amount of work and value that the investigation will provide. They discussed hospital performance and water entry issues. They also discussed other extreme wind and rainfall events compared to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. NIST noted that, based on historical data, rainfall during the event was significantly more extreme than wind speeds. Landslide impacts were also discussed, along with plans for detailed and summary reports, and wind exposure effects related to tree damage. NIST emphasized the use of wind tunnel testing and computational fluid dynamics tools to better understand wind behavior. Protective actions, facility standards, and best available refuge options were also discussed, especially in the context of long-term sheltering in public facilities.

VII. Public Comment Period

Ms. Bowie opened the public comment period. Mr. Martin Langesfeld, who lost family members in the Champlain Towers South collapse, expressed disappointment over the lack of definitive conclusions regarding the collapse. He raised concerns about ongoing construction and the development of a new building on the collapse site, emphasizing that the land itself should be part of the investigation, and noted that families are waiting for answers and actionable safety recommendations. He also raised concerns with other investigations of the collapse.

Mr. Paul Grahovac, General Counsel and Manager of Codes, Standards, and Testing at Prosoco, expressed concern following the previous speaker's remarks. He has been encouraged by the investigation's focus on reinforcement of steel corrosion caused by water. He urged NIST to conduct a thorough investigation into its role in the collapse, specifically referencing a 2010 report to the National Institute of Building Sciences regarding leaking of stucco, windows, and sliding door issues into the structure and rebar.

VIII. Closing Remarks

Dr. Joannie Chin, Director of the Engineering Laboratory at NIST, delivered closing remarks. She thanked those who provided public comments and noted the importance of hearing from external technical experts. She recognized the emotional toll for families awaiting answers and reaffirmed NIST's commitment to delivering technically-sound findings as swiftly as possible. Dr. Chin emphasized that NIST's investigations, conducted under the NCST Act, focus on the technical causes of building failures and emergency response, with the goal of improving codes and standards to prevent future disasters.

She thanked the presenters for their updates on the progress of both investigations and highlighted the release of public video updates in June (Champlain Towers South) and July (Hurricane Maria). The video updates can be found here:

[Champlain Towers South Investigation Video Update](#)

[Hurricane Maria Investigation Video Update](#)

Dr. Chin expressed gratitude to those who contributed to the investigations through surveys, interviews, and submissions to the Disaster Data Portal, noting that submissions of photos, videos, and ideas have been invaluable. She encouraged continued submissions through the Disaster Data Portal, which can be accessed here:

[DFS Data Submission Portal](#)

Finally, she thanked the committee for their service, expertise, and engagement, underscoring their role in ensuring the investigations are unbiased, complete, and impactful in advancing building and community safety.

Following a discussion of logistics for the September 16 portion of the meeting, Ms. Bowie adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:16 pm ET.

IX. Day 2 Welcome and Opening Remarks

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

X. Disaster and Failure Studies (DFS) Program Updates

Dr. Tanya Brown-Giammanco provided a brief overview of the Disaster and Failure Studies (DSF) Program updates. Highlights included a summary of disaster events scored, with particular emphasis on the Los Angeles County wildfires deployment, outlining key

interactions, preliminary observations and successes, as well as the challenges encountered. She also described the status of the committee membership, a recent reorganization in the NIST Engineering Lab, recently awarded contracts, and a framework for future disaster data collection. The presentation can be found here:

[Disaster and Failure Studies Program Update](#)

Discussion: The committee thanked Dr. Brown-Giammanco for providing the detailed DFS overview. They discussed the future disaster data collection framework. The new contract vendors were also discussed.

Additionally, the committee expressed concerns around resource limitations that affect NIST's ability to study new and important disaster events. The committee and NIST staff discussed opportunities for the committee to help support the NCST's mission, which would include providing advice around priorities and how to conduct investigations and execute authorities in a timely and efficient manner. They also discussed opportunities to educate stakeholders and options for balancing scope and resources for investigations. They also discussed outputs from the LA fires and other preliminary reconnaissance missions, as well as priorities for event scoring and future studies.

XI. NCSTAC Preparation of Annual Report to Congress

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.

Following the committee's discussion, Ms. Bowie adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:16 pm ET.



Chair Signature

November 23, 2025

Date