National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to submit the 2012 Annual Report of the National Construction Safety Team (NCST) Advisory Committee (Committee) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The Committee serves as NIST's advisor on implementation of the NCST Act (P.L. 107-231) and our opinions and recommendations expressed in this letter reflect our views as an independent, private sector body.

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The Committee's recommendations rising from the January 11th teleconference are as follows:

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2. The Committee urges NIST staff to use its communication skills as well as its technical prowess to advise less sophisticated audiences regarding the appropriate use of maximum wind speed and other parameters arising from NIST investigations such as the Joplin tornado. Modeling based on such parameters is central to the interpretation of damage from such investigations and, if used by someone other than NIST investigators, must take into account the inevitable approximations and uncertainties.

3. The Committee urges that data gathering should lead to enhanced public welfare, especially improved life safety and community resilience consistent with that described in the recently published National Research Council report on disaster resilience. Data gathering by National Construction Safety Teams should be expanded to include infrastructure as well as buildings.

4. The Committee recommends that NIST advance the social science element of the Joplin tornado investigation, and of investigations of other events affecting broad geographical areas, such as Superstorm Sandy, to understand how human behavior contributed to the casualties. To the extent that improved self-protective actions would reduce casualties, it is recommended that NIST undertake or become a prime contributor to a program of science-based public information and education.

5. The Committee recommends that more events should be investigated. The decision-making criteria, leading to scoring on a five-point scale, appear to be appropriate. Due to resource limitations, NIST can only investigate a limited number of events. However, valuable data are being lost due to these limitations. In this regard, the Committee strongly endorses NIST's decision to participate in the FEMA investigation of Superstorm Sandy.

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Sincerely,

Jeremy Isenberg, Chair
National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee

Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Minority Member

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

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Ranking Minority Member
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United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Science and Space
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Minority Member

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

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Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Science and Space
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Jeremy Isenberg, Chair
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Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Minority Member

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

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Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
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Identical letter sent to:
The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards and Technology

March 1, 2013

The Honorable Thomas Massie
Chairman
Subcommittee on Technology
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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The Honorable Frederica Wilson
Ranking Minority Member

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