



April 23, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Shaheen, and Ranking Member Moran:

We write to urge you to prioritize funding for the U.S. Department of Commerce initiatives to advance responsible innovation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems in the upcoming fiscal year.<sup>1</sup>

Fully funding the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) budget request for funding to safeguard, regulate, and promote AI is critically important as NIST works to establish the U.S. AI Safety Institute and operationalize its AI Risk

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Standards and Technology & National Technical Information Service, Budget Submission to Congress, Fiscal Year 2025

Management Framework.<sup>2</sup> In particular, fully funding NIST’s request of \$47.7 million in additional funding for its Scientific and Technical Research and Services account to advance AI research, standards, and testing will help build a foundation for responsible development and deployment of AI systems for years to come.

We were encouraged by the recently enacted Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2024, which included \$10 million to establish NIST’s U.S. AI Safety Institute.<sup>3</sup> However, the overall budget cut of over 10 percent presents major operational challenges to NIST’s efforts to sustainably guide responsible development of AI systems.<sup>4</sup>

For over a century, NIST has served as a trusted and impartial leader in contributing to the development of technical standards and promoting innovation across a range of American industries. Its world-renowned expertise in measurement science and cutting-edge technology make it well-suited to lead the federal government’s efforts to address the complex challenges presented by AI systems. However, due to years of funding shortfalls, many NIST facilities are in disrepair, forcing researchers to employ makeshift solutions and workarounds that undermine productivity.<sup>5</sup>

By investing in NIST’s unique scientific expertise to identify techniques to measure the capabilities, limitations, and potential risks posed by AI systems, we can build public trust in AI to foster continued innovation while safeguarding the public from harm. NIST is uniquely qualified to contribute to the development of well-defined technical standards, test methods, and objective evaluation techniques, which are prerequisites for any effective AI governance framework, especially as AI systems rapidly increase in scale and complexity.

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<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations and U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Explanatory Statement, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024

<sup>4</sup> U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Summary, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024

<sup>5</sup> Cat Zakrzewski, *This agency is tasked with keeping AI safe. Its offices are crumbling*, WASHINGTON POST (Mar. 6, 2024)

As organizations focused on a wide range of AI policy goals, we agree that fully funding NIST’s ability to advance responsible innovation of AI systems is an urgent priority that deserves our full support.

As cutting-edge AI systems rapidly evolve, ensuring NIST has the resources it needs to drive responsible AI innovation is essential to maintain America's technological leadership and safeguard our future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Americans for Responsible Innovation  
BSA | The Software Alliance  
Center for AI Safety  
Federation of American Scientists  
Public Knowledge  
Accountable Tech  
AI Forensics  
AI Policy Institute  
Alliance for Digital Innovation  
Amazon  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence  
BABL AI  
Backpack Healthcare  
Bentley Systems  
Box  
Capitol Technology University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Center for AI and Digital Policy  
Center for AI Policy  
Center for Democracy & Technology  
Cisco  
CivAI

Clarifai  
Cohere  
Common Crawl Foundation  
Credo AI  
DocuSign  
Drexel University  
Duke University  
Duquesne University, Carl G Grefenstette Center for Ethics  
EleutherAI  
Encode Justice  
FAIR Institute  
FAR AI  
Fight for the Future  
ForHumanity  
Free Software Foundation  
Future of Life Institute  
Future of Privacy Forum  
Gesund.ai  
GitHub  
Hewlett Packard Enterprise  
Hitachi  
Hugging Face  
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society  
IBM  
Imbue  
Inclusive Abundance Initiative  
Information Ethics & Equity Institute  
Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)  
Institute for AI Policy & Strategy (IAPS)  
Institute for Progress  
Intel  
ITIF Center for Data Innovation  
Johns Hopkins University  
Kyndryl  
Leela AI

LF AI & Data Foundation  
Lucid Privacy Group  
Machine Intelligence Research Institute  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Mastercard  
Microsoft  
National Retail Federation  
New America's Open Technology Institute  
OpenAI  
Palantir  
Public Citizen  
Responsible AI Institute  
Safer AI  
Salesforce  
SandboxAQ  
SAP  
SAS Institute  
Scale AI  
SecureBio  
ServiceNow  
The Future Society  
The Leadership Conference's Center for Civil Rights and Technology  
Transformative Futures Institute  
TrueLaw  
Trustible  
Twilio  
UC Berkeley, Center for Human-Compatible AI  
University at Buffalo, Center for Embodied Autonomy and Robotics  
University of South Carolina, AI Institute  
Workday