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SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

September 12, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Bill Nelson
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Chairman Thune, and Ranking Member Nelson,

Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation I authored – H.R. 5312, the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Modernization Act of 2016 – with a strong bipartisan vote of 385 - 7.

Originally authorized by the High Performance Computing Act of 1991, the NITRD Program is the primary Federal R&D portfolio in unclassified networking, computing, software, cybersecurity, and related information technologies.

If enacted, my legislation will establish a strategic planning, coordination, and review process for the NITRD investment portfolio with clear metrics and objectives. This will improve the communication between Federal government agencies and laboratories with industry and academia. For example, when more than one Federal agency is working on large-scale R&D, they would be directed to share costs and issue joint solicitations to industry. In addition, the legislation will focus the NITRD portfolio more on large-scale, long-term interdisciplinary research with the potential to make breakthroughs to better society and U.S. competitiveness.

In June, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation marked up The American Innovation and Competitiveness Act. Included in this legislation was language on the NITRD program.

As such, I urge the Senate to take up and pass my legislation as a standalone bill, or pass The American Innovation and Competitiveness Act so that the House and Senate can go to Conference and produce a final agreement that includes a modernized NITRD program. Given

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the cyber security threats we face, timing is of the essence and I hope to see action before the end of the year.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darin LaHood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

CC:

Senator Mark Kirk
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dick Durbin
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510