



18 October 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
509 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator(s) Frist and Reid:

On behalf of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States of America (IEEE-USA), I would like to commend you for introducing the National Competitiveness Investment Act (S.3936). We are encouraged to see bipartisan Senate leadership on this vital issue. S.3936 represents a sensible merger of the key components of the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (S.2802) and the Protecting America's Competitive Edge Through Energy Act (S.2197). Both of these bills have demonstrated broad bipartisan support, having been passed in their respective committees with unanimous approval.

In the face of an increasingly globalized and competitive world, it is extremely important to maintain and improve the U.S. innovation into the 21st century by (1) increasing research investment; (2) strengthening educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics from K-12 to graduate school; and (3) developing an innovation infrastructure. The doubling of research investment in NSF, DoE, and NIST is critical to ensuring our leadership in the physical sciences and engineering. Strengthening the skills of thousands of science and math teachers and other education efforts will ensure an adequate supply of U.S. scientists and engineers. It is also important to identify and remove the barriers to innovation.

In addition, IEEE-USA is very pleased to see that this bill contains provisions promoting basic research and development at NASA. The U.S. aviation and aerospace industry, in particular, have historically been essential factors in America's continued engineering and scientific leadership in science and technology; however other countries are gaining rapidly. This bill is a significant first step towards revitalizing the country's strong tradition of support for aviation and aerospace research and development.

As leaders in the Senate, you are in a position to capitalize on the momentum and exceptional bipartisan consensus on this important issue, and to pass S.3936 this year. Congress must act now to preserve America's competitive edge in the global arena. For more information, please contact Bill Williams at (202) 530-8331, or at bill.williams@ieee.org.

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Sincerely,

Ralph W. Wyndrum, Jr., Eng.Sc.D.
President, IEEE-USA