

01 August 2007

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Chairman, House Committee on Science & Technology;
2310 Rayburn House Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gordon:

On behalf of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States of America (IEEE-USA), I strongly urge you and other conferees on the House and Senate innovation bills (S. 761/H.R. 2272) to act now, in this session of Congress, to reconcile the differences between these two bills and deliver a final version to the President for signature before year end.

Rarely have we seen an issue with such broad and overwhelming support as the need to enhance U.S. competitiveness and innovation capabilities for the future. Each chamber has made commendable progress by passing their respective legislation. S.761, the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act of 2007, passed the Senate by a remarkable 88-8 margin, and the House Bill, the 21st Century Competitiveness Act of 2007 (H.R.2272) was so non-controversial it passed by a voice vote. Although differing in some particulars, each of these bills contain many important points of agreement that conferees should seize upon to craft compromise legislation. Issues such as increased funding for the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology and NASA, as well as improvements to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education are all areas that can have a tremendous impact on America's competitiveness in a global economy and where common ground can and should be reached by conferees. Each of these bills represents a significant amount of time and effort spent by their respective chambers to draft, build consensus and ultimately pass innovation and competitiveness legislation.

We urge conferees to capitalize on the unprecedented momentum this vital issue has gained and report a compromise bill as soon as possible, and we thank you for your consideration. IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 215,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. IEEE-USA is part of the IEEE, the world's largest technical professional society with 370,000 members in 160 countries. See <http://www.ieeeusa.org>. If you have any questions or we can be of further assistance, please contact Bill Williams, legislative representative for our Research and Development Policy Committee, at (202) 530-8331.

Sincerely,



John W. Meredith, P.E.
President, IEEE-USA

(Similar letter sent to all House and Senate conferees)