



The Honorable Sethuraman Panchanathan

National Science Foundation

2415 Eisenhower Avenue

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

June 21, 2022

Dear Director Panchanathan,

Thank you for your leadership of the National Science Foundation (NSF) at this critical time. The new Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships is poised to usher in a new era of science and technology research. The NSF has, and will remain into the future, the nation's engine of innovation.

The Regional Innovation Engines program, or "NSF Engines," is a new and exciting opportunity to smartly leverage the resources, creativity, and ingenuity that exists across all geographic regions of the country. As the NSF begins reviewing proposals for this program, the National Photonics Initiative (NPI) urges the NSF to support and prioritize proposals that focus on the fields of optics and photonics.

The NPI is a broad-based collaborative alliance among industry, academia, and government to raise awareness of optics, photonics science and technology, working to educate policy makers in Congress and the administration about the importance of optics and photonics research and investments. As on the ground and in the lab innovators, NPI members understand the impact these investments can have.

Optics and photonics research and development have enabled tremendous innovation in areas as diverse as health, energy, manufacturing, defense, signals intelligence, computing, communications and more. New opportunities in these fields—including high-efficiency lighting, genome mapping, high-tech manufacturing, quantum-based technologies, nuclear threat identification, cancer detection, artificial intelligence, and information technology—offer massive potential for research and applications alike. It is crucial to our nation's long-term economic and security interests that research and development in optics and photonics grows.

The NSF Engines program presents an incredible and needed opportunity to grow regional hubs of excellence in optics and photonics. We strongly encourage the NSF to identify and advance proposals that engage with these fields.

The NPI stands ready to support the NSF as it implements this critical program. Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed White".

Ed White

Chair of the NPI Steering Committee