



News from the NPI

JULY 29, 2021

NPI HOSTS VIRTUAL CONGRESSIONAL VISITS

The National Photonics Initiative (NPI) hosted its second virtual Congressional Visits Day of 2021 in July. More than 40 participants held nearly 70 meetings over three days with representatives from 21 state delegations to discuss the importance of optics and photonics. Participants discussed the need for increased investment in key scientific agencies,

including the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense's Science and Technology Program, and the Inertial Confinement Fusion/NNSA. During their meetings, participants provided a firsthand

perspective of optics and photonics research and the importance of federal funding to support it. Participants also discussed the importance of optics and photonics in infrastructure maintenance and encouraged Representatives and senators to join the bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Optics & Photonics Caucus, which was launched in February.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Lawmakers in Washington, DC continue to discuss a broad infrastructure package that could have a significant impact on the optics and photonics community. While the exact contents of the infrastructure package remain under negotiation, the NPI is continuing to work with lawmakers to ensure optics and photonics technologies are given necessary consideration as the bill is assembled. During the Congressional visits held earlier this month, NPI representatives advocated for infrastructure investments in national laboratories to ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and quantum information science. The NPI specifically requested \$20 billion be included in any infrastructure package for necessary upgrades to federal laboratories. Additionally, NPI advocates discussed the ability to use optics and photonics technologies to assist in the management of aging infrastructure through the use of tools such as 3D digital shearography, 3D point cloud models, and the broad use of optical sensors.

QUANTUM FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE

Lawmakers in Washington, DC are also working on federal spending legislation for the upcoming fiscal year. The House Appropriations Committee recently advanced two key measures that provide funding for continued quantum research at key scientific agencies. Specifically, the committee approved the Fiscal Year 2022 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Funding Bill and Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Funding Bill, which included \$245 million at the Department of Energy's Office of Science, \$255 million at the National Science Foundation's Research and Related Activities, and \$59 million at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Scientific and Technical Research and Services. This funding will help advance quantum information science (QIS) research and development (R&D) in the near term and help lay the groundwork for significant long-term investments and workforce development. The NPI thanked the committee for continuing to fund this important R&D to ensure we maintain our role as a global leader in the field and help bridge significant workforce gaps between leading quantum researchers and industrial product developers and pledged to continue working with lawmakers.