

**Statement of Walter G. Copan**

**Nominee for Under Secretary of Commerce for  
Standards and Technology**

**Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology**

**Nomination Hearing before the Senate Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation Committee**

**September 27, 2017**

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is my great honor to appear before you today as nominee for Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

I am first and foremost a scientist. I believe in the power of basic research, its development and commercialization - and of standards to drive economic growth and improve our standards of living. I am also a businessman, an entrepreneur, investor, and an intellectual property and technology transfer professional. I am committed to NIST, and to America's treasure – our federal research enterprise. If confirmed as Director, I look forward to leveraging my experiences with a passion to serve our nation, and to lead NIST into its next era of impact for America.

I was born in New York and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. I went to college at Case Western Reserve University and completed a dual degree in Chemistry and Music. After beginning my professional career in physics and chemistry at the Lubrizol Corporation, I went back to graduate school at Case to complete my doctorate in physical chemistry, and carried out research that would establish the fundamental biochemical understanding of human vision. I returned to Lubrizol on a career journey that totaled 28 years with the company. My science career progressed to research and development leadership in the U.S. and in the UK, senior business management, venture capital, M&A, strategy, innovation, intellectual property and technology transfer. As national advisory council representative to the Federal Laboratory Consortium, I saw first-hand the value of Federal research, and within it, even greater potential for economic impact. I was also one of the very few representatives from Corporate America with the FLC then.

Since the beginning of my professional journey in 1975, I encountered NIST. I came to respect and deeply appreciate NIST's role, and its impact on every sector of U.S. commerce.

After years of serving as advisor to the Department of Energy, Admiral Richard Truly asked me whether I had ever considered working to advance the Federal labs from within. That conversation was a turning point for me. I joined Truly's team at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, with responsibilities for technology transfer.

Several years later, I joined a tech company as Chief Technology Officer and head of North American operations. I led the change and growth of CDTI and to listing on NASDAQ, as well as preparing its merger. That brought me back to the

Department of Energy at Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York, to lead technology commercialization and partnerships, and to provide leadership in the DOE to advance technology transfer mechanisms and policy. Having returned to Colorado and family, I founded several companies and a non-profit, and I continue in close engagement with federal labs to bring inventions to market.

As established in Article 1 of the Constitution, our nation's founders saw the importance of standards to U.S. commerce, enabling America to take a leading role on the world stage. This was the birth of NIST.

Whether it's for mature or emerging technologies, NIST brings scientific rigor and practicality in serving the economy of our nation. From the cybersecurity framework, quantum computing and communications, to the Internet of Things to biomedical metrology, to advanced manufacturing excellence and operational quality, NIST is a cornerstone for American innovation, also providing stewardship for U.S. technology transfer policy and reporting.

It is a privilege and honor to have the President nominate me to serve as Director of NIST. I thank Secretary Ross for his strong support of NIST, and for his trust and confidence in me for this role. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the members of this Committee and with Congress to ensure that NIST continues to perform its essential mission, that it is true to the principle of unbiased integrity in serving our nation, and that NIST will continually adapt as an essential part of the leading edge of American progress.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

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