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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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April 1, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

The mission and proper functioning of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (“OSTP”) is critical to the competitiveness of our nation. OSTP has been without a Senate confirmed leader since February 7, 2022 and we write to urge you to nominate a new Director of OSTP as soon as possible. It is imperative that OSTP have confirmed leadership in place as it guides our nation’s scientific policy and takes steps to address workplace concerns that have impacted employees across the agency.

OSTP leads our Federal government’s efforts to develop scientific and technological policies, working across private, state, and local sectors to ensure that our nation continues to be on the cutting edge of new developments that can improve the lives of all Americans. We need a confirmed leader to guide progress on this monumental task.

Given the importance of OSTP’s mission, we are also deeply concerned by reports of a toxic work environment at OSTP and allegations that employees who raised concerns with senior leadership have faced retaliation.¹ Additionally, our Committee has received additional information regarding allegations of misconduct and retaliation at OSTP, including by former Director Lander and by other members of senior leadership at OSTP.²

From the outset of your Administration, you have made it a priority to ensure a safe working environment for federal employees. It is clear that workplace and cultural issues continue to exist at OSTP, and that more needs to be done to address those concerns. Leadership of an organization starts at the top, and to address these very serious workplace issues, OSTP needs confirmed leadership.

¹ See, e.g., *Biden’s Top Science Adviser Bullied and Demeaned Subordinates, According to White House Investigation*, Politico (Feb. 7, 2022) (online at www.politico.com/news/2022/02/07/eric-lander-white-house-investigation-00006077); *Top Biden Science Adviser Apologizes for ‘Demeaning’ Colleagues*, CNN (Feb. 7, 2022) (online at www.cnn.com/2022/02/07/politics/eric-lander-white-house-investigation/index.html).

² *Letter from Government Accountability Project to Congressional Committees* (March 10, 2022) (online at <https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Government-Accountability-Project-OSTP-Disclosure-Letter-3-10-2022-1.pdf>).

We are at a critical moment, when science and innovation has never been more important to our health and our economy. We look forward to our Committee's consideration of a nominee with the proven ability to provide the strong leadership needed at OSTP to address the office's important mission and the significant workplace issues. We stand ready to work with you and ensure that the important mission of OSTP and the public servants that work there are protected.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
Chair



Roger Wicker
Ranking Member