

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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July 22, 2015

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

Recent news reports detail an explosion that took place at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) facility in Gaithersburg, Maryland on July 19, 2015.¹ Initial reports suggest the explosion may have been the result of the manufacturing of the illegal drug methamphetamine.² Additionally, according to the *Associated Press*, the explosion may have been connected to a NIST security officer who was injured in the explosion.³ If these initial reports are verified, the fact that this explosion took place at a taxpayer funded NIST facility potentially endangering NIST employees is of great concern.

I request that you provide the Committee with a briefing as soon as possible, but no later than Wednesday, July 29, with all obtainable facts surrounding the explosion. In addition, I request that you provide continual updates to the Committee on the situation on a weekly basis.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology is the principal oversight committee of NIST as set forth in House Rule X.

¹ Mathew Barakat, *Possible drug-related explosion investigated at federal lab*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Jul. 21, 2015, Available at: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/2aa5679466644babb94e865f48a713de/possible-drug-related-explosion-investigated-federal-lab>.

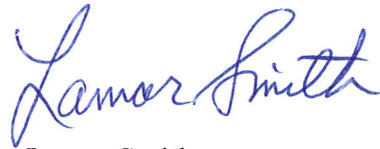
² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

Hon. Pritzker
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If you have any questions about this request, please contact Drew Colliatie of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee staff at 202-225-6371. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Science, Space and Technology