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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 12, 2021

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Secretary Raimondo:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Commerce. We look forward to a productive relationship working together to advance America's interests around the globe. In that regard, we ask that you address the urgent need for increased U.S. leadership in the innovation and deployment of emerging technologies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen just how helpful and impactful these emerging technologies can be. Artificial intelligence (AI) is helping to stem the tide of scams and misinformation being shared across the internet. AI also is helping to develop automated driving systems that are delivering essential goods to families in need with contactless delivery. Blockchain technologies offer innovative solutions to secure consumer privacy, and three-dimensional (3-D) printing is being used to address shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE).

That is why, last year, we passed H.R. 8132, the "American Competitiveness Of a More Productive Emerging Tech Economy (COMPETE) Act." With unanimous approval in the Committee on Energy and Commerce and then on the House floor, the "American COMPETE Act" was included in the "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021," enacted at the end of the Congress. The legislation provides a unique role for the Secretary of Commerce to plot a path for U.S. competitiveness for emerging technologies. The Secretary is asked to look at the state of AI, quantum computing, blockchain, new and advanced materials, Internet of Things (IoT), IoT manufacturing, 3-D printing, as well as unmanned delivery systems, and then report recommendations to Congress.

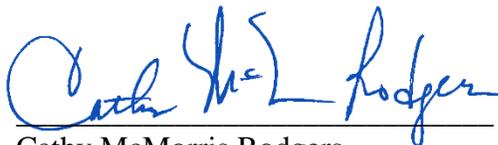
We are looking forward to hearing from you on how we can grow the U.S. economy through the advancement of these technologies, develop national strategies to advance the U.S. global position on these technologies, develop strategies to mitigate current and emerging risks to the marketplace and supply chains of these technologies, and how to incentivize expeditious adoption of such technologies.

As you know, the U.S. is at risk of losing our competitive advantage in these sectors to China. The Chinese government launched “Made in China 2025,” a strategy to surpass our advanced technology industries.¹ Through “Made in China 2025,” China is looking to continue to further bridge together manufacturing and smart technologies through IoT and become the global leader in the space.² China also is predicted to outmatch the U.S. in blockchain innovation and deployment and become the global leader of the technology.³ Last year, the Chinese government launched the Blockchain-based Service Network, a platform led by China’s State Information Center aimed at providing small and medium sized enterprises the ability to use the technology and build decentralized apps – not only in China, but all over the globe.⁴ Maintaining U.S. leadership in these technologies is essential for our American economic security.

These are just a few of the important initiatives that were included in the “American COMPETE Act,” and all will contribute to industries of the future. We urge you to embrace and act upon the “American COMPETE Act” and not let it get bogged down in bureaucratic stovepipes. Now is the time for action on this important legislation.

We look forward to working with you on these issues and thank you in advance for your attention to our request. If you or your team have any questions about this legislation or our request, please contact Tim Kurth at the Committee on Energy and Commerce at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Republican Leader



Bobby Rush
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy

¹ <https://www.cfr.org/background/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade>

² <https://melchers-china.com/the-trends-of-iot-manufacturing-in-china/>

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/12/16/china-looks-to-become-blockchain-world-leader-with-xi-jinping-backing.html>

⁴ <https://forkast.news/china-top-blockchain-developments-2020/>