

ATP Announces Focused Competitions in the Areas of Catalysis and Biocatalysis and Selective-Membranes Platforms

The Advanced Technology Program (ATP) within the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announces FY1998 Focused Program competitions in the areas of Catalysis and Biocatalysis Technologies and Selective-Membrane Platforms. The full proposal due date is **April 22, 1998**.

The four areas of program interest for Catalysis and Biocatalysis Technologies are

- major yield and selectivity improvements to reduce waste and energy consumption, minimize feedstock costs, or enable market entry of new feedstocks;
- clearer structure/function relationships to better predict and/or control catalyst structures linked to performance metrics, and reduce the time to market and costs for higher performance products and processes;
- new catalyst uses and fabrication methods to minimize emission abatement costs; and
- innovative reactor configurations that enable better integration of transport processes with catalytic performance for reduced capital and operating costs. For more information, contact Linda Beth Schilling 301-975-2887; e-mail linda.schilling@nist.gov or Robert Bloksberg-Fireovid 301-975-5457; e-mail robert.b-f@nist.gov.

The Selective-Membrane Platforms area is aimed at the development of enabling families of membrane materials and modules, targeted at high-selectivity/high-throughput applications in the chemical and allied process industries. For more information, contact David S. King 301-975-2369; e-mail david.king@nist.gov or John Pellegrino 303-497-3416; e-mail jjp@bldrdoc.gov.

Proposal Preparation Kits, Focused Program booklets, and other information can be obtained from the NIST ATP website <http://www.atp.nist.gov>, by calling the ATP at 1-800-287-3863, by fax 301-926-9524 or 301-590-3053, or by writing to NIST ATP, Administration Building 101, Rm. A407, Quince Orchard & Clopper Roads, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-0001. Mark envelope 98-05. □

For information on the NRC Summer Internship Program, see page 77!

Senators Gramm, Lieberman, Domenici, and Bingaman Urge President to Double R&D Funding in FY99 Budget Proposal

On December 4, 1997, Senators Phil Gramm (R-Texas), Joseph Lieberman (D-Connecticut), Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico), and Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico) sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to double non-defense research and development (R&D) funding in his budget proposal for fiscal year 1999, due February 1998. The four senators have cosponsored S.1305, The National Research Investment Act of 1998, calling for a doubling of federal support in basic science, medical, and pre-competitive engineering research in the next decade. Senators Gramm, Lieberman, and Domenici have also spoken at the multisociety press conference on October 22, 1997, at which 100 scientific society presidents, including Robert Hull from the Materials Research Society, announced a Unified Statement on Research, "A Decade of Investment" (see *MRS Bulletin*, December 1997, page 10).

Dear Mr. President:

In a 1995 letter to Senate leaders you wrote, "American history clearly demonstrates the importance of American leadership in science and technology to the future of our nation. Investments in science and technology drive economic growth, generate new knowledge, create new jobs, build new industries, ensure sustained economic and national security, and improve our quality of life. Indeed, over the past 50 years, innovation has accounted for as much as half of the nation's economic growth. Today, millions of Americans hold high-skilled, high-wage jobs in industries that have grown as a result of far-sighted public and private investment in R&D."

We believe, as you do, that investment in research is a requirement for maintaining robust economic growth and a high standard of living into the next century. We have recently introduced S.1305, The National Research Investment Act of 1998, which seeks to double the federal investment in basic scientific, medical, and pre-competitive engineering research over a ten year period beginning in FY98.

As you have pointed out, past federal investments in research and development have yielded enormous benefits to society, spawning entire new industries that now represent a substantial fraction of our gross domestic product. Several recent studies indicate that the social return on these investments is actually increasing as technological advance becomes an ever more significant driver of economic growth. It is imperative, in our opinion, that we reverse the recent trend toward decreased federal investment in basic and pre-competitive research if we are to sustain robust growth over the next several decades.

S.1305 is an important declaration of principle, but it will require ten years of patient follow-through if its goals are to be realized. Your ability to articulate effectively the link between R&D investment and growth will be an essential element of these efforts. We believe that this winter is a critical time for establishing R&D investment as a national priority. Both political parties have largely cleared the decks with respect to the agendas they have been pursuing for the last two years and both are seeking new political initiatives to advance. Moreover, recent changes in the projected five-year revenue outlook give both parties more room to maneuver within the confines of the balanced budget agreement.

Mr. President, your FY99 budget request represents the first and best opportunity to establish a bipartisan national consensus on doubling non-defense federal R&D over the next ten years. We urge that you take the lead on this important issue and include significant increases in R&D investment in your request, particularly for the twelve federal agencies specified in S.1305.

We look forward to working with you to increase federal research investments and further economic growth.

Sincerely,
Phil Gramm Joseph I. Lieberman Pete V. Domenici Jeff Bingaman