

Committee **Full Government Affairs Committee (GAC)**

Date/Time **Tuesday, 22 June 2021 / 3:00 pm eastern**

Loucas Tsakalacos, Damon Dozier, Jeff Aguiar, Daniel Becerra, Josh Caldwell, Alex Chortos, Boris Dyatkin, Sean Hearne, Sean Langan, Jen Nekuda Malik, Juan Claudio Nino, Suyog Padgaonkar, Diogenes Placencia, Chris Schuck, Colleen Scott, Steve Smith, Kris Uher (recording secretary)

Participants

Next call	July 27, 2021 @ 3 pm ET	
Responsibility	Action Items	Due
HQ	Issue survey of GAC members to see who plans on attending the Fall Meeting in person	End of Summer

Loucas Tsakalacos, GAC Chair, opened the meeting.

Washington DC Update

Damon Dozier sent the committee a number of pre-reading materials and provided a Washington DC update to summarize.

US Innovation and Competition Act (USICA)

The US Innovation & Competition Act (USICA) has passed in the Senate but is unlikely to pass in its current form in the House. Conservatives have concerns about safeguards with China and the high cost of the Bill. Democrats are concerned that climate change and climate science are not addressed by the Bill.

The USICA authorizes \$125B over five years to advance priorities in basic research. Under the USICA a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation (NSF) will be established. The bill also allocates \$52B to NSF over five years to support programs in non-applied technology programs such as STEM workforce, DOE critical minerals mining research, Advanced Technological Manufacturing Act and NIST Quantum Networking. There is also money for initiatives to combat sexual harassment, cyber security assistance, regional technology hub program, and infrastructure activities. USICA also includes federal investments for the domestic semiconductor research, design, and manufacturing provisions in the CHIPS for America Act.

Infrastructure

There is a group of 20 Senators (10 Republicans and 10 Democrats) who are supporting a bipartisan infrastructure plan which if signed into law, would be the largest infrastructure investment in US history. The plan includes \$579B in new spending to rebuild roads and bridges, improve public transit systems, invest in broadband infrastructure, and upgrade airports. It does not include big amounts for research. The issue around this plan has to do mainly with how it is financed. The plan would be paid for in part by unspent COVID relief funds. There is less of a guarantee that it will pass in its present form as the 20 Senators do not speak for the others.

Biden Budget

The Biden Budget doesn't treat DOD Science and Technology programs very well. It calls for cuts of 1% for defense R&D, 11% for basic research, and 16% in applied research. University research initiatives also have significant cuts. The

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) does receive a modest increase (\$3.528B from \$3.5B). Previous administrations also made cuts in these areas so this isn't a new concern. The Office of Science has a 6% increase (\$7.44B from \$7.026B).

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSR) produced fact sheets and is asking for support of an appropriation of at least \$10B for NSF and funding for NSF in upcoming infrastructure legislation.

As CVD (Congressional Visit Day) is approaching, a top priority should be issuing letters to express concerns with reductions in DOD basic research and the significant impact it can have on the materials community and the diversity of research that is done.

Grass Roots Advocacy Working Group – Boris Dyatkin

Work continues on projects to produce white papers on two topics. Both papers are estimated to be complete in a two-month period:

- Global materials R&D – will report on the current state of materials R&D investment globally and how the U.S. compares.
- Semiconductors – will report on research and using materials science to advance this important area

The next working group call will begin discussions about a mini-CVD and associated writing materials.

Policy Outreach Working Group – Josh Caldwell

The overwhelming response from the recent federal agency summit survey was to hold the summit. It can be done pre- or post-meeting, or as early as the Sept/Oct timeframe.

There was discussion on how to make CVD more impactful and more reflective of MRS priorities. Bill Hammetter sent an article that talked about the importance of basic research to the materials community. Op Ed articles similar to this should be used to MRS's advantage. GAC should reach out to MRS members and colleagues to start collecting articles/materials now so they can be used for greater effect.

State of the MRS Fall Meeting

The MRS 2021 Fall Meeting will be a hybrid event with virtual as well as in-person events. MRS HQ is mapping this out now. There are GAC events like Materials Voice that work better as in-person activities. Other events like the GAC meeting/luncheon and Research Funding Opportunity sessions should be evaluated to determine the best way to hold them.