

Motorola calls on Congress for increased funding of nanotechnology

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Jim O'Connor, vice president of Technological Commercialization at Motorola, Inc., testified today before the U.S. House of Representatives Science Subcommittee on Research to share Motorola's thoughts on where the United States stands competitively and innovatively when it comes to nanoscience and nanotechnologies.

Representing Motorola's 24,000 research scientists and engineers, Mr. O'Connor cited the recent report by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) on "The National Nanotechnology Initiative at Five Years," which indicates the U.S. has surged to the forefront of nanotechnology research and development – ahead of Europe, Asia, and all other competing nations around the globe.

"Thanks to public-private partnerships between Federal and State governments, business and academia, our nanotechnology position has become strong," said Mr. O'Connor. "However, the relative lead the U.S. currently holds is in jeopardy because the rest of the world is catching up to the U.S. in a variety of measurements. In government funding, for example, the rate of increase in the European Union and Asia is higher than that of the U.S."

In addition to emphasizing the importance of federal support to help boost America's position in nanotechnology research and development, Mr. O'Connor reiterated the private sector's long-term investment and commitment to the future of nanoscience. For example, Motorola's current investment in the nanotech field could soon lead to the

commercialization of flat-screen TVs using Carbon Nanotube technology, the first of its kind.

Despite these advancements, Mr. O'Connor warned the Subcommittee about current problems that could endanger America's global competitiveness. For example, because of the shortage of American workers skilled in science and technology, the U.S. is slipping behind its competitors – Asia in particular – in undergraduate and graduate training. For this reason, federal programs such as the National Science Foundation's university grants program are integral to the growth of America's technology sector.

To illustrate Motorola's commitment to university partnerships, Mr. O'Connor informed the congressional panel about this summer's launch of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Nanotechnology (CIRN) with Arizona State University. Among other education and training initiatives, Motorola supports the PCAST Report's recommendation that the National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) establish relationships with the Departments of Education and Labor to develop education and training systems to improve the Nation's technical proficiency in the "STEM" fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

"Let me be clear as possible: if the Internet improved our quality of life via the Information Superhighway, then nanotechnology should be considered the Express Lane for future technological breakthroughs to make our lives simpler, safer and more enjoyable," said Mr. O'Connor before the House Science Subcommittee. "Life-changing dreams are becoming reality in our nation's nanotechnology labs and we must press forward in a coordinated, collaborative fashion between Federal and State governments, businesses in the private sector, and our academic institutions to ensure America's competitiveness, boost our economy and improve our citizens' quality of life."

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