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STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

Science and technology are essential tools for achieving this Administration's goals: for strengthening the economy, creating high quality jobs, protecting the environment, improving our health care and education systems, and maintaining our national security. This country must sustain world leadership in science, mathematics, and engineering if we are to meet the challenges of today . . . and of tomorrow.

Investing in science and technology is investing in America's future. And at a time when we are imposing strict limits on government spending in order to reduce our federal budget deficit, we must ensure that taxpayers receive the maximum benefit for their investments. During the campaign and in my first days in office, I committed to reorganize and strengthen the White House science and technology function in order to implement my science and technology agenda. Today, I am announcing two actions that fulfill that commitment.

First, I am implementing a key recommendation of the National Performance Review by establishing a cabinet-level National Science and Technology Council to coordinate science, space, and technology policies throughout the Federal Government. The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), which I will chair, will include the Vice President; the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology; the Cabinet Secretaries and agency heads with responsibility for significant science and technology programs; and other key White House Officials.

The principal purposes of the NSTC will be to establish clear national goals for federal science and technology investments and to ensure that science, space, and technology policies and programs are developed and implemented to effectively contribute to those national goals. Our most important measure of success will be our ability to make a difference in the lives of the American people. We must use this new Council to harness science and technology to improve our quality of life and the Nation's long-term economic strength.

One of the most critical tasks I expect the NSTC to undertake is an across-the-board review of federal spending on research and development. The Council will prepare coordinated R&D budget recommendations for accomplishing national objectives in areas ranging from information technologies to health research, from improving transportation to strengthening fundamental research and international science and technology programs.

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These recommendations will focus on broad national goals rather than agency missions. The Council will work with the Office of Management and Budget to coordinate the efforts of all federal agencies in working to achieve these goals, and will oversee important science and technology initiatives such as the Clean Car initiative I announced in September.

We are streamlining White House operations with this move. Establishing a single, strengthened science and technology policy council within the White House will significantly improve decision making by consolidating and elevating functions previously carried out by a number of separate interagency councils, including the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology, the National Space Council, and the National Critical Materials Council.

Private sector involvement with the NSTC will be essential to developing successful science and technology policies that help American businesses achieve sustainable growth and create high quality jobs, as well as to maintaining our academic and research institutions' world leadership in science, engineering, and mathematics. To ensure that federal science and technology policies are reflective of our nation's needs, today I am also establishing a private sector President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).

I will appoint to the Committee distinguished individuals from industry, education and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and other sources, including state and local government. My Administration has premised many of its plans for national revitalization on the concept of public/private partnerships, and my goal for this Committee is to help encourage those partnerships. I will enlist the members' service in establishing the links to the private sector necessary to help guide federal investments in science and technology toward national goals.

During the campaign, the Vice President and I declared that U.S. scientific and technological leadership are national priorities. The actions taken by this Administration, for example the National Information Infrastructure initiative, the Clean Car initiative, the Technology Reinvestment Project, and the continued support of fundamental science research, bear witness to this conviction. I believe the National Science and Technology Council, working in close cooperation with the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology, will ensure that we sustain and improve our record in these areas so critical to the Nation's health, well being, and economic competitiveness.

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