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REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
NIST

SUITE 2320 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING 2001 JUL 27 P 3:22
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<http://www.house.gov/science/welcome.htm>

July 23, 2001

Karen Brown
Acting Director
National Institute of Standards
and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Director Brown,

The Environment, Technology, and Standards Subcommittee of the House Science Committee recently held a hearing on standards-setting and United States competitiveness. The hearing reviewed the impact of standards on the United States economy and the ability of our nation to compete internationally. The hearing also discussed reforms in the standards-setting process that could make American industries, such as the information technology sector, more globally competitive.

An issue that received a great deal of attention was the growing use of consortia-developed standards within the information technology (IT) industry. The hearing raised the following questions: Does the IT industry face special standards challenges that impair its ability to compete domestically or internationally? Should the IT industry shift more towards using consortia-developed standards? Does the recognition of consortia-developed standards present difficulties for businesses outside IT-related fields?

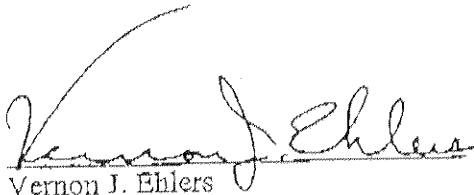
We have been in contact with Belinda Collins, the director of the Office of Standards Service at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, in an attempt to respond to these questions. Since NIST has a well-respected and established reputation among industry, in addition to great expertise in the standards field, we would request that NIST host a conference or workshop bringing together various stakeholders within the IT industry and the standards community. We believe this useful conference would begin a constructive dialogue to effectively answer these questions and resolve concerns within the IT industry.


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Letter to NIST Director Brown
July 23, 2001

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and we welcome your participation in helping us resolve this issue to enhance our nation's international competitiveness. We look forward to your response. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the subcommittee at (202) 225-8844.

With best regards,


Vernon J. Ehlers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment,
Technology and Standards


James A. Barcia
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Environment,
Technology and Standards

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment,
Technology and Standards
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515-6301

Dear Mr. Chairman:

NIST welcomes the opportunity to host a workshop such as you have suggested to address some of the concerns, raised during your recent Hearing, about Federal use of consortia standards. NIST already has begun bringing together the various stakeholders in the IT industry and the standards community in order to facilitate discussions. The emerging global markets for electronic business operations are dependent upon a myriad of interdependent technical IT standards, which are being developed in dozens of venues. Implementation and deployment agreements, plans, and policies, which are based upon these IT standards, are also underway in many industries and countries. A conference or workshop such as you have suggested will help identify potential issues and lead to timely solutions. NIST will begin working with the IT industry immediately to determine the best approach.

Sincerely,

Karen H. Brown
Acting Director

cc: 100, V. Hines, M. Rubin, TS, ITL

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