

## **IEEE Photonics Society & National Photonics Initiative Volunteers Urge Congressional Support for Photonics**



***National Photonics Initiative volunteers stress vital role of photonics in US economy and national security.***

District of Columbia and New Jersey -- Volunteers from industry and research labs across the USA visited Congressional offices on March 26, 2014 to urge support for key issues related to photonics technologies and R&D, on behalf of the National Photonics Initiative (NPI). Supported by NPI founders and sponsors, the 36 volunteers from photonics were among a total of nearly 200 volunteers participating in this year's Science-Engineering-Technology Working Group (SETWG) Congressional Visits Day.

"We want to raise awareness among government leaders about the importance of photonics and to encourage them to direct funding into those areas that can best foster job growth and prosperity," says Richard Linke, executive director of the IEEE Photonics Society. NPI volunteers urged support for:

The bipartisan "Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2013" (RAMI), to establish manufacturing institutes known as the Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI). The institutes would function through a public-private partnership between the federal government, local governments, universities, research institutes and industry to accelerate manufacturing innovation in technologies with commercial applications.

Reauthorization of the bi-partisan America COMPETES Act (originally passed in 2007 and expired in December 2013) to ensure American competitiveness in the global marketplace, and adding language specifying photonics to reflect the industry's critical role in the ongoing innovation of many other sectors.

Establishment of a National Photonics Prototyping and Advance Manufacturing Facility within the Department of Defense's manufacturing mandate, possibly through inclusion of language in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Establishment of such a facility could produce critical defense applications for warfighters, as well as drive new generations of high-tech commercial applications such as a more secure Internet, enhanced medical diagnostics, and portable sources of renewable energy.

"This NPI-dedicated day at the capitol was a great opportunity to meet with Congressional staff and educate them about the National Photonics Initiative and the importance of photonics for our nation's economic and national security. There was great appreciation of our outreach and advocacy efforts on the Hill and genuine support of the NPI's mission," explains Dalma Novak, IEEE Photonics Society President.

For more information, visit [www.lightourfuture.org](http://www.lightourfuture.org) [1].

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[1] <http://www.lightourfuture.org>