

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Energy to establish Centers for Biotechnology, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Centers for Biotechnology Act”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL LABORATORY CENTERS FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY.

(a) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) CENTER.—The term “Center” means a Center for Biotechnology established under subsection (b).

(2) COMMITTEE.—The term “Committee” means the committee established under subsection (c).

(3) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department” means the Department of Energy, including the National Nuclear Security Administration.

(4) NATIONAL LABORATORY.—The term “National Laboratory” has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801).

(5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Energy.

(b) Centers for Biotechnology.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the strategic plan under subsection (d) is developed, the Secretary in coordination with the Committee established under

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(c), shall select, on a competitive, merit-reviewed basis, National Laboratories to establish and operate not fewer than six Centers for Biotechnology, the mission of each of which shall be—

(A) to serve as a research facility for interdisciplinary biotechnology research, discovery, and development;

(B) to enable and encourage large-scale research projects that have some risk of failure but may create huge leaps for the study, development, or adoption of biotechnology;

(C) to offer biotechnology practitioners including, but not limited to, researchers, technicians, and engineers access to resources and instrumentation, such as supercomputers or advanced measurement capabilities, that are critical to advancing biotechnology research; and

(D) to provide to expertise and guidance to research organization and facilities that specifically connect fundamental and applied research for biotechnology to develop products and processes for commercial adoption.

(2) SELECTION.—

(A) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for selection to establish and operate a Center, a National Laboratory shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting National Laboratories under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall ensure that the proposed Center—

(i) has capabilities and expertise to advance current and future biotechnology developments;

(ii) is colocated with important enabling capabilities,

such as supercomputers or advanced measurement instrumentation;

(iii) proposes ways of providing research instrumentation and infrastructure to the scientific community in addition to pursuing specific scientific questions;

(iv) has a proposed plan that aligns with the applicable focus area for the proposed Center;

(v) has a plan to collaborate with other National Laboratories to share vital resources and core capabilities;

(vi) has a core principle of interdisciplinary research and development; and

(vii) has any other component determined necessary by the Secretary.

(C) REQUIREMENT.—Each Center shall be established and operated by a different National Laboratory.

(3) FOCUS AREAS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each Center shall have a designated biotechnology focus area to guide research efforts, experimental infrastructure, and collaborative engagement.

(B) SPECIFIC FOCUSES.—Of the Centers—

(i) not fewer than 4 shall focus on basic and fundamental research and innovation related to biotechnology; and

(ii) not fewer than 2 shall focus on research and development for biotechnology scale-up spanning across basic and applied research areas.

(4) ADMINISTRATION OF CENTERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each Center shall be headed by a Director, who shall be—

- (i) the Chief Executive Officer of the Center; and
- (ii) an employee of the National Laboratory operating the Center.

(B) DUTIES.—The Director of a Center shall be responsible for—

- (i) successful execution of the goals of the Center;
- (ii) interfacing with the Committee as established in (c); and
- (iii) coordinating with other Centers.

(5) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made available under subsection (f), each Center shall receive not less than \$30,000,000 per year for a duration of not less than 5 but not more than 7 years, which yearly amount may be renewed for an additional 5-year period, to carry out this section, including to establish and operate the Centers of Biotechnology and associated facilities, procure advanced instrumentation, hire technical expertise, and hire operational support needed to conduct biotechnology research, development, and scale-up.

(c) Committee.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the passage of this legislation, the Secretary shall establish within the Department an intra-agency committee of biotechnology stakeholders.

(2) CHAIR.—The Secretary shall choose a Chair of the Committee from the designated members as established in

subsection (3).

(3) MEMBERS.—The Committee shall include the following members:

(A) The Director of an Office within the Department responsible for emerging technology coordination within the Department.

(B) The Director of the Office of Science.

(C) The Assistant Secretary of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

(D) The Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency—Energy.

(E) The Under Secretary for Nuclear Security.

(F) Any other person determined appropriate by the Secretary and the Chair of the Committee.

(4) DUTIES.—The Committee shall—

(A) oversee the establishment and operation of Centers, including by—

(i) reviewing applications from National Laboratories and making selections;

(ii) working with National Laboratory applicants to negotiate or adjust focus areas to ensure proper coverage of different biotechnology research areas by different Centers;

(iii) coordinating with the National Laboratories on designated research areas, including on large research projects and with existing research and programs;

(iv) reorganizing or combining National Laboratory activities related to biotechnology as a part of the process of creating new Centers, in collaboration with the National Laboratories;

(v) minimizing duplication and resolving conflicts between the Centers; and

(vi) if necessary, facilitating cost-sharing agreements and partnerships across government, industry, and academia to facilitate the development of the Centers;

(B) collaborate or consult with experts in other offices of the Department, other Federal departments or agencies, or any outside experts;

(C) if necessary, appoint other experts to the Committee for a length of service as determined by the Chair and the Secretary;

(D) develop a strategic plan under subsection (d); and

(E) coordinate and oversee the ongoing work of other biotechnology activities that span basic and applied research within the National Laboratories that is related to the work of the Centers.

(d) Strategic Plan.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Committee shall develop a strategic plan that—

(1) outlines specific short-term and long-term goals and resource needs to establish the Centers and advance applications of biotechnology for science, energy, and national security to support the missions of the Department;

(2) identifies the research focus areas of, and proposes research and innovation goals for, each Center, which may

include—

(A) a Center for biological data and computation that would house centralized computational capabilities and provide integrated access to federally funded biological databases;

(B) a Center for advanced biological measurement that would develop new opportunities to gather biological data and improve the reliability of measurements through research areas including nondestructive measurement techniques, automated data collection, spatiotemporal measurements, and molecular interactions mapping;

(C) a Center for development of materials and chemicals using biology that would leverage research, tools, and technologies to use biotechnology to make existing or novel chemicals and materials;

(D) a Center for risk assessment testbeds that would enable collection of scientific information to inform biotechnology risk assessment and risk mitigation, including a contained testing facility to evaluate dispersal and persistence of modified organisms in simulated natural environments and computational modeling testbeds related to risk mitigation; and

(E) a Center for biomanufacturing scale-up innovation that would—

(i) focus on key research questions, areas, and infrastructure that enable effective and cost competitive scale-up of bioprocesses; and

(ii) collaborate with existing and new technology maturation facilities; and

(3) establishes a technical roadmap to meet the research and innovation goals described in paragraph (2) in not more than 7 years.

(e) Report.—The Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual report describing—

(1) the progress, findings, and expenditures made in carrying out this section;

(2) the strategic plan developed under subsection (d), including the technical roadmap described in paragraph (3) of that subsection; and

(3) proposed future improvements in carrying out this section.

(f) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$1,200,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.