

April 27, 2021

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510


The American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) is writing to formally express its support for the confirmation of Eric S. Lander, PhD as director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Founded in 1883, ASTA is one of the oldest trade organizations in the United States. Its membership consists of over 700 companies involved in seed production and distribution, plant breeding, and related industries in North America. ASTA members research, develop, produce and distribute all varieties of seeds – including grasses, forages, flowers, vegetables, row crops, and cereals.

Having formerly served as co-chair of the Presidential Council of Advisors on Science and Technology for nearly a decade, Dr. Lander has a strong understanding of the important issues relating to the role of science and innovation in Agriculture. As a trailblazer in the area of genomic research, and with his commitment to education and research, ASTA believes Lander will be a key leader in further advancing critical issues in agricultural research and development.

A prominent issue for ASTA continues to be the application of advanced plant breeding tools, such as genome editing in developing innovative new plant varieties. Better seeds can help our farmers produce more on less land, be more efficient with inputs, and mitigate pest pressure and extreme weather events. It is critical that we have consistent government policies across the Federal agencies that are based and informed by the latest sciences. With the advancement of the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to cabinet-level and Dr. Lander's strong background, we are confident that the role of science in public policy relating to these important issues will be well represented.

Dr. Lander is an exceptional choice to lead the office of Science and Technology Policy, and the American Seed Trade Association strongly supports his confirmation by the Senate. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee through the confirmation process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.W. LaVigne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Andrew W. LaVigne
President & CEO