The Under Secretary for Science
Washington, DC 20585

November 12, 2026

Dr. Persis Drell
Chair
Office of Science Advisory Committee

Dear Dr. Drell:

The delivery of the Office of Science (SC) mission includes operation of world-leading research facilities. With its historic mission as a steward of scientific user facilities that serve over 43,000 users annually, SC is unique in both the federal science and technology ecosystems and the global scientific community. SC user facilities host a broad array of major scientific tools and unique technical capabilities. These range from the most powerful instruments for studying atomic level structures of materials and molecules to the world's most capable supercomputers, networks and software for combining precision simulation, super intelligence models, experiments and autonomous laboratories.

This advisory committee charge is to evaluate SC user facility operation practices and policies. The charge is motivated by the evolution in how science is executed, resulting from the growing adoption of super intelligence for wide-ranging research and the latest generation of experimental and computational facilities. The committee should assess whether the policies and practices are well aligned with the new research paradigms. The recommendations from the assessment will guide the facilities processes and ensure world-leading scientific and technology impacts for SC and the user communities.

I am asking the SC Advisory Committee (SCAC) to form a subcommittee to address this charge. Possible questions for consideration by the subcommittee include:

- Evaluate the progress and planned timeframes for revising data policies (e.g., user and facility use of the data generated)? Do the plans for revision of the user agreements provide clear guidance on data rights? What additional SC policy considerations might be needed to ensure world-class operations and impact?

- How should user access policies evolve to ensure the most effective and efficient use of available cycles or operation hours, including accelerated access pathways for timely exploitation of promising new opportunities? Are current peer-review approaches providing appropriate level of access? What innovations could improve the impact of the user programs to benefit SC and DOE missions (e.g., campaigns for specific technical challenges)?

- How are the facilities addressing challenges for international partnering, user access, and technology advances? What are the best practices to balance research security requirements with positive partnerships in fields driven by international partnerships?

- How are the facilities addressing the needs of the broader user community, including efficient access by users who require coordinated access to multiple user facilities and innovative modalities to increase access by the private sector (e.g., public-private partnering, expedited proprietary access) and potential interagency partners.

I look forward to hearing your findings and thank you for your help with this important task. I will appreciate receiving an interim report by July 2027 and a final report by September 2027.

Thank you again for advising the Office of Science in this important activity.

Sincerely,

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Darío Gil
Under Secretary for Science