



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
The Secretary of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Members of the National Council for Expanding American Innovation,

I am excited to announce that I have agreed to Chair the National Council for Expanding American Innovation (NCEAI or Council), and I am honored to join your ranks.

Together, as a Council, it is imperative that we continue working to expand American innovation by tapping into the strength of our nation's diversity and increasing opportunities for all innovators and entrepreneurs who are creating new technologies, companies, and industries.

With the [most recent data](#) from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office indicating that only 12.8% of inventors listed on patents granted in a single year are women, and little to no data on the participation of other underrepresented groups, we can all agree that there is much work to be done to build a stronger and more inclusive innovation sector.

I welcome the challenge. And for my first act as Chair, I have chosen to rename the NCEAI the Council for Inclusive Innovation, or CI<sup>2</sup>.

This new title is very much aligned with the current efforts of the Council and the Administration's priorities to build back better through the enhanced diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives throughout government and various industries. The change will also enable us to rebrand and redouble our efforts to enhance the work of the Council as it develops and implements recommendations for the National Innovation Strategy.

The announcement of my new role as Chair of CI<sup>2</sup> will be made at a special "[Elevating Conversations](#)" event hosted by the AnitaB organization, on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 1 p.m. ET. I hope you will all tune in as we discuss efforts to foster better inclusion of underrepresented groups within STEM and innovation fields.

It is my commitment to do all that I can to increase participation in the innovation ecosystem particularly among those who have felt excluded. We cannot risk losing the next Marian Croak, Lonnie Johnson, Margaret Wu, or Patricia Bath – all 2022 inductees into the National Inventors Hall of Fame – because of a lack of access to our innovation system.

Broadening participation in our fast-growing innovation economy is one of the greatest opportunities we face as a nation. Thank you for your commitment to tackling that challenge by being a member of the Council for Inclusive Innovation – CI<sup>2</sup>. I look forward to our collaboration.

With warm regards,

Gina Raimondo  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce