U.S. Congressmen Address ILC R&D and Industrialisation

So far US industry has produced five cavities for ILC R&D. (Image courtesy of Advanced Energy Systems)

Last week on 28 February, U.S. industry members and scientists gathered at the Linear Collider Forum of America meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to start a dialogue with congressmen and senate and house staffers about the International Linear Collider. The recent publication of the Reference Design Report made the meeting a timely venue to discuss plans to increase worldwide ILC R&D, a programme that will require participation from industry members around the globe.

Such congressmen as Nick Lampson of Texas (22nd Congressional District) and Rush Holt of New Jersey (12th Congressional District) attended the meeting to hear about the latest ILC developments from EPP2010 Committee Chair and Princeton University President Emeritus Harold Shapiro, DOE Under Secretary for Science Ray Orbach, GDE Director Barry Barish and Fermilab Director Pier Oddone. “Industry is critical to the ILC,” Shapiro said. “We have work to do, and we have the talent to do it both in the public and private sector. But we are not there today.”

In 2005, Ken Olsen, retired Lockheed Martin executive, and Tony Favale, president of Advanced Energy Systems, established the LCFOA to facilitate the integration of U.S. and Canadian industries into the ILC programme. While industry models in Europe and Asia, particularly in the area of superconducting RF technology, have tended to be a step ahead of the Americas, the LCFOA has played an important role in forging a partnership between U.S. and Canadian industries and the ILC.

One recent outcome of the efforts is the production of five ILC-style superconducting cavities in the U.S. “The ILC represents an excellent opportunity for the global high technological industry,” said Favale, who spoke at the LCFOA meeting. “Support for ILC R&D programmes will help U.S. industry.”

Congressman Rush Holt (Image courtesy of Meyer Tool & Manufacturing)

Support for the ILC R&D programme was in full force at the meeting on Capitol Hill. “The DOE is committed to a vigorous R&D programme of accelerator technology,” Orbach said. “Technology developments for the ILC also advance technology for other future accelerator-based facilities, including medical applications.”

A former physicist, Congressman Holt voiced his support for the sciences and the push to double the budget for the National Science Foundation. “In almost every sector, we are under investing in R&D,” he said. “I appeal to you not to advocate just for the ILC but for research in general. Our country needs it, and the greater return will be to our national prosperity.”

Congressman Nick Lampson (Image courtesy of Meyer Tool & Manufacturing)

Both Congressman Holt and Congressman Lampson, who chairs the House Science Committee's Energy & Environment Subcommittee, agreed that is it critical for the scientific community to spend time educating congress on the importance of supporting projects like the ILC. “Science is an investment,” Lampson said. “What we put money into, we get back. But we have got to see that we will either make more money off of this or that our lives will somehow be better. Teach us about the benefits. We need to have the visionaries like you to make us believe that we need this to maintain our leadership in science, technology and education.”

All talks from the Capitol Hill LCFOA meeting are available online. The LCFOA will announce their next meeting on their web site and in ILC NewsLine.

-- Elizabeth Clements