

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4670

To provide for the establishment of a Center for Scientific and Technical  
Assessment.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 23, 2004

Mr. HOLT (for himself, Mr. HOUGHTON, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. HONDA, Mr. GORDON, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. OLVER, Mr. GREENWOOD, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. FROST, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. EHLERS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science

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## A BILL

To provide for the establishment of a Center for Scientific  
and Technical Assessment.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. CENTER FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL AS-**  
4       **SESSMENT.**

5       (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be established a  
6       Center for Scientific and Technical Assessment (in this  
7       section referred to as the “Center”) to provide timely ad-  
8       vice to the Congress on scientific and technical aspects of

1 public policy issues. The Center shall be administered by  
2 a Director.

3 (b) TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT BOARD.—

4 (1) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.—There  
5 shall be established a Technical Assessment Board  
6 whose purpose shall be to provide guidance to the  
7 Director of the Center to ensure that the Center  
8 provides timely and useful responses to congressional  
9 requests.

10 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Technical Assessment  
11 Board established under paragraph (1) shall consist  
12 of—

13 (A) 6 members of the Senate appointed by  
14 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, in-  
15 cluding 3 from the majority party and 3 from  
16 the minority party;

17 (B) 6 members of the House of Represent-  
18 atives appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
19 Representatives, including 3 from the majority  
20 party and 3 from the minority party;

21 (C) the Comptroller General; and

22 (D) the Director of the Congressional Re-  
23 search Service and the Director of the Center,  
24 who shall be nonvoting members.

1 Service as a member on the Technical Assessment  
2 Board shall not be construed under the rules of the  
3 House of Representatives or the Senate as service as  
4 a member of a House of Representatives or Senate  
5 Committee.

6 (3) VACANCIES.—Vacancies in the membership  
7 of the Technical Assessment Board shall not affect  
8 the authority of the remaining members to act, and  
9 such vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as  
10 in the case of the original appointment.

11 (4) CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN.—There  
12 shall be selected at the beginning of each Congress  
13 a chairman and a vice chairman, one of whom shall  
14 be a member of the Senate selected by the members  
15 of the Technical Assessment Board who are mem-  
16 bers of the Senate from among their number, and  
17 one of whom shall be a member of the House of  
18 Representatives selected by the members of the  
19 Technical Assessment Board who are members of  
20 the House of Representatives from among their  
21 number. The chairmanship and vice chairmanship  
22 shall alternate between the Senate and the House of  
23 Representatives with each year. The chairman dur-  
24 ing each odd-numbered year shall be a member of  
25 the House of Representatives. The vice chairman

1 shall act in the place of the chairman in the absence  
2 of the chairman.

3 (5) AUTHORITY TO ACT.—The Technical As-  
4 sessment Board established under this subsection  
5 may sit and act at such places and times as it choos-  
6 es, including during the sessions, recesses, and ad-  
7 journed periods of Congress.

8 (c) DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

9 (1) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Center  
10 shall be appointed by the Comptroller General with  
11 the approval of the Technical Assessment Board and  
12 shall serve for a term of 6 years unless sooner re-  
13 moved by the Technical Assessment Board. The Di-  
14 rector shall receive basic pay at the rate provided for  
15 level III of the Executive Schedule under section  
16 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

17 (2) POWERS AND DUTIES.—In addition to the  
18 powers and duties vested by this section, the Direc-  
19 tor shall exercise such powers and duties as may be  
20 delegated by the Technical Assessment Board. The  
21 Director, with the permission of the Comptroller  
22 General, shall have the authority to hire, remove, or  
23 promote permanent staff and enter into contracts  
24 for consultants, expert analysis, and peer reviewers  
25 described in subsection (f). In consultation with the

1 Technical Assessment Board and with the approval  
2 of the Comptroller General, the Director shall pre-  
3 pare the annual budget for the Center for submis-  
4 sion to Congress.

5 (3) DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—The Director may ap-  
6 point, with the approval of the Comptroller General,  
7 a Deputy Director who shall perform such functions  
8 as the Director may prescribe and who shall be Act-  
9 ing Director during the absence or incapacity of the  
10 Director or in the event of a vacancy in the office  
11 of Director. The Deputy Director shall receive basic  
12 pay at the rate provided for level IV of the Executive  
13 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United  
14 States Code.

15 (4) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—Neither the Di-  
16 rector nor the Deputy Director shall engage in any  
17 other business, vocation, or employment than that of  
18 serving as such Director or Deputy Director, as the  
19 case may be; nor shall the Director or Deputy Direc-  
20 tor, except with the approval of the Comptroller  
21 General, hold any office in, or act in any capacity  
22 for, any organization, agency, or institution with  
23 which the Center makes any contract or other ar-  
24 rangement under this section.

25 (d) CONGRESSIONAL REQUESTS.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Any member of Congress  
2           may make requests to the Technical Assessment  
3           Board that the Center conduct an investigation and  
4           report to the requester, within a specified time pe-  
5           riod, on any matter relating to scientific and tech-  
6           nical assessment.

7           (2) FORMAL CALLS FOR REQUESTS.—The  
8           chairman of the Technical Assessment Board estab-  
9           lished under subsection (b) shall submit to all mem-  
10          bers of Congress formal calls for requests under this  
11          subsection.

12          (3) PRIORITIZATION.—Requests under para-  
13          graph (1) shall be addressed by the Center in ac-  
14          cordance with the following priority order:

15                (A) Requests with bipartisan and bi-  
16                cameral support.

17                (B) Requests with bipartisan support.

18                (C) Requests from other members.

19          The Director, with the approval of the Technical As-  
20          sessment Board, may determine the final priority for  
21          consideration of and fulfilling requests among and  
22          within each category described in subparagraphs (A)  
23          through (C).

24          (e) ADVISORY PANELS.—The Director may establish  
25          an advisory panel as necessary to support each technical

1 assessment report provided by the Center. Such panels  
2 shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee  
3 Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

4 (f) PEER REVIEW.—Each report requested under  
5 this subsection shall be subject to peer review before deliv-  
6 ery to the committee or member of Congress requesting  
7 the report. Such peer review shall consist of rigorous vet-  
8 ting, checking, criticism, and recommendations for im-  
9 provement by independent, qualified experts in the various  
10 aspects of the subject of the request under study. Inde-  
11 pendent experts shall assess each Center report by consid-  
12 ering the scientific method, factual accuracy, results, and  
13 conclusions put forward by the authors. The peer review-  
14 ers' comments shall be given to the report authors to allow  
15 for change, improvement, and modification of the report  
16 before delivery to the Director. After final review by the  
17 Director, and the approval of the Technical Assessment  
18 Board, the report shall be delivered to the committee or  
19 member of Congress requesting the report.

20 (g) PUBLIC RELEASE.—Except for classified reports,  
21 the Center, with the permission of the Technical Assess-  
22 ment Board, shall promptly release a report requested  
23 under subsection (d) to the public, except that such release  
24 shall be delayed by not more than 2 weeks at the request

1 of the Technical Assessment Board or a member of Con-  
2 gress.

3 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
4 are authorized to be appropriated to the Comptroller Gen-  
5 eral for carrying out this section \$30,000,000 for each of  
6 the fiscal years 2005 through 2007, to remain available  
7 until expended.

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