

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District announced today that he recently introduced legislation to help foster relationships between businesses and national laboratories that can help spur new economic growth and create new jobs. Luján’s bill directs the Department of Energy (DOE) to use existing funds to cover the government’s share of participating in Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA).

“For over a half a century, the national laboratories have served as our nation’s leading research and development facilities, tasked with performing the R&D for national projects that cannot be undertaken by the private sector or in academic labs due to their scope, multidisciplinary nature, or infrastructure requirements,” Congressman Luján said. “Many of the new scientific discoveries and technological capabilities developed in our nation’s labs have the potential to be valuable commercially and could help start new companies or help small businesses be more competitive. This legislation will assist in creating new partnerships that will lead to a more seamless transition from laboratory advances to technologies that generate new businesses and new jobs.”

CRADAs are common mechanisms to support collaboration between a business and a national lab to bring technology from the lab to the marketplace. While it is permissible for the Department of Energy to use its funds to pay for the government’s share of a CRADA, most CRADAs are funded entirely by private businesses. Given the large amount of risk in commercializing a new technology, paying for the government’s share of the CRADA as well as its own is prohibitively expensive for most small businesses. This bill directs DOE to pay the government’s share for new CRADAs.

“Our national laboratories are developing new technology that could change the way we generate energy, keep our airports safer, and make our hospitals healthier, yet every year in DOE laboratories across the country many potential cooperative work agreements go unrealized because the cost of paying the federal portion is too high for small businesses,” Luján added. “This legislation will take us a step closer to realizing the full benefit of the national laboratories by providing entrepreneurs and small businesses cooperative access to the labs’ innovative science and research and development efforts.”

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