



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

July 12, 2017

The Honorable Joe Courtney
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Courtney:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) assist in addressing a significant problem with crumbling foundations in residential and commercial properties in Connecticut. We recognize the need for additional research to understand and characterize the nature of the problem, and to inform possible solutions.

NIST has much experience in concrete research and a strong collaborative relationship with concrete producers and industry standards organizations. NIST is not currently conducting work directly on pyrrhotite concrete. Our scientists and engineers have capabilities and expertise that may be relevant to the problem at hand. NIST has been monitoring the scientific literature and publicly available reports of issues related to pyrrhotite in Connecticut and Canada. As you noted, NIST scientists have also engaged in preliminary discussions with representatives from the University of Connecticut and the Federal Emergency Management Agency about the specific problems described in your letter.

I have directed Dr. Kent Rochford, the Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Acting NIST Director, to continue to engage with the State of Connecticut through consultation and exchanges of technical expertise and knowledge as Connecticut works to implement its proposed plan of action.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact my Acting Assistant Secretary of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, Brian J. Lenihan, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

Wilbur Ross