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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 18, 2009

National Medal of Technology and Innovation
Attention: Jennifer Lo, Program Manager
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Re: Nomination of Dr. Zalman Shapiro

Dear NMTI Committee Members:

Although I am not personally acquainted with Dr. Shapiro, his impressive history of outstanding contributions to our country recently came to my attention.

Considering the criteria used for evaluating worthiness of receiving the highest honor accorded for America's leading innovators, the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, I heartily believe Dr. Shapiro deserving of the award.

New York State, as of January 2009, ranked fourth in the country for net generation of megawatt hours provided by nuclear power plants. Dr. Shapiro's breakthrough achievement in mass-producing high quality nuclear fuel paved the way for our current multi-billion dollar nuclear power industry.

Nuclear power has allowed us significantly less dependence on foreign oil which can only but help our balance of trade. Furthermore, it reduces our emissions of greenhouse gases and other damaging environmental pollutants, thus, significantly reducing resultant costs of environmental remediation, health care and lost productivity due to sick leave. Since there is currently no substitute for fossil fuels as feedstocks in certain industries such as plastics and organic chemicals, they can be preserved for those industries that would be crippled without them.

His seminal contributions to our nuclear-powered Navy cannot be overemphasized.

Dr. Shapiro's latest innovation for synthesizing diamonds, at the noteworthy age of 89, is a leap toward mass-production of large gem-quality stones. It will curb the importation of cut and uncut diamonds currently estimated at forty billion dollars annually. Moreover, it may well be a breakout technology for the diamond industry. Cheaper supplies historically open the doors to new frontiers.

In view of Dr. Shapiro's lifetime achievements, so valuable to the welfare of our country, I reiterate my firm belief that he be awarded the Medal.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator