

Compete Connect

September 2024 Edition

From the CEO's Desk



Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Dear Council on Competitiveness
Community,

As we charge into fall, we are excitedly prepping to host you at the Council's annual Gala Dinner and National Competitiveness Forum (NCF) on December 2-3 at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D.C. As the agenda takes shape, we are pleased that National Science Foundation Director Sethuraman "Panch" Panchanathan will provide a keynote, and Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA) Director Rick Muller will join us, along with many business, university, labor, and national laboratory leaders, for panels, tech talks, and fireside chats focused on unleashing our country's innovation capacity. If you have not registered or want to take advantage of [sponsorship opportunities](#) for this exceptional gathering, please email the [Council's EVP and COO Chad Evans](#).

Coming on the heels of our nation's major election, the NCF is a pivotal moment for the Council to help shape America's innovation priorities. During the NCF, the National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers will release its next major policy report – to inspire, challenge, and catalyze to action the incoming administration and 119th Congress.

And we are celebrating next month a major birthday at the Council on Competitiveness: Lockheed Martin will host the Council's 15th anniversary and 30th

consecutive [Technology Leadership & Strategy Initiative](#) (TLSI) Dialogue – a major milestone in the Council’s longest-running, impactful effort making the business case for America’s investments in the talent, technology, and infrastructure that underpin innovation. We are honored to share Dr. Arati Prabhakar, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director, Office of Science & Technology Policy, The White House, will join and keynote this special conversation – as TLSI members focus on a new “compact for America” that outlines the requirements and recommendations for a more agile defense industrial base, optimizing the nation’s strong public-private partnerships at the heart of innovation.

In a final note, I would like to thank Purdue University President Mung Chiang, Argonne National Laboratory Director Paul Kearns, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Chancellor Robert Jones for co-hosting the [Indiana-Illinois Competitiveness Conversation](#) on September 9. The third edition of our “Competitiveness Conversations Across America,” our day in West Lafayette, IN, focused on the cross-state collaborations in semiconductors, quantum sciences and technology, and the biosciences – and the convergences across these critical transforming the region into a distinctive, globally significant innovation hub. Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Laurie Locascio provided the day’s opening fireside chat, while both Congressman Jim Baird (R-IN-04), and U.S. Department of Energy Chief Commercialization Officer and Director of the Office of Technology Transitions Vanessa Chan also provided key remarks during the day. Stay tuned for our summary report.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the NCF in Washington – register soon, as seats are going fast. And should you be able to consider a sponsorship opportunity, I’d be most grateful.

Sincerely,

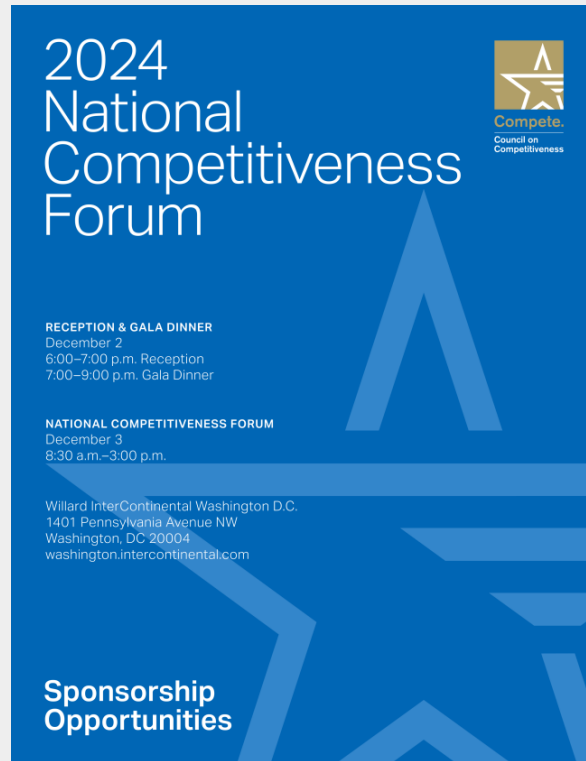
The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President & CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Council News



Join the Council on Competitiveness and its members for the Council's annual reception and dinner on December 2 and the 2024 National Competitiveness Forum (NCF) on December 3 – all events taking place at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, DC. To attend, contact Council EVP & COO Chad Evans at cevans@compete.org.

Great sponsorship opportunities are available for the Council's signature gathering. [Learn about the many benefits here.](#)



The U.S. Department of Energy Sponsor's the Council's Efforts to Develop and Deploy the Indiana-Illinois Competitiveness Conversation



The Council on Competitiveness recognizes and thanks the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Technology Transitions (OTT) for supporting our work to execute the Indiana-Illinois edition of the "Competitiveness Conversations Across America." OTT's mission space — enhancing the impact of the DOE's R&D initiatives while advancing national economic, energy, and security interests — resonates completely with key themes explored during the Conversation, where we brought together leaders to discuss the region's growth as a global leader "chips, qubits, and molecules."

Council Community News

[University Leaders Meet to Discuss the Future of U.S. Higher Education](#)



From left to right: Arizona State University President Michal Crow, Harvey Mudd College President Harriet Nembhard, University of Michigan President Santa Ono, University of Virginia President Jim Ryan

Four university leaders, including Council Members University of Virginia President Jim Ryan, Arizona State University President Michael Crow, and University of Michigan President Santa Ono, met this month to discuss the future of American higher education as a part of UVA's Future's Initiative. The Initiative, launched in January, explores evolving American higher education to meet the rapidly changing needs of the nation and its students. This first event in the series explored the need for a diversified field of educational institutions with differing focuses, all to produce graduates ready to bring marketable and critical skills into the workforce. [Read more here.](#)

Department of Energy Announces New Battery Innovation Hub in Partnership with Council Members



Headquartered at Argonne National Laboratory and co-led by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Lawrence Berkely National Laboratory, the Department of Energy announced this month the creation of the Energy Storage Research Alliance (ESRA). This new hub of national laboratories and university partners will accelerate innovation in critical energy storage technologies (i.e., batteries), including new battery chemistries and manufacturing techniques. According to Argonne National Laboratory Director and Council on Competitiveness National Commissioner Paul Kearns, "ESRA will pave the way for innovative energy storage solutions that drive both U.S. prosperity and security." The hub taps thirteen universities, including U.C. San Diego, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Michigan, Utah State University, and Columbia University. [Read more here.](#)

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory Christens Department of Energy's First Hybrid Electric Research Vessel



This month, the Department of Energy dedicated its first hybrid electric research vessel at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Sequim, WA, campus. The fifty-foot vessel, christened the RV *Resilience*, was made possible by the DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's Water Power Technologies Office. The vessel will advance the laboratory's marine energy research capability and, according to PNNL Director and Council on Competitiveness National Commissioner Steve Ashby, "...represents DOE's and PNNL's commitment to demonstrating how innovative approaches, like the design and construction of this unique hybrid vessel, can advance the nation's quest for clean energy." [Read more here.](#)

New Integrative Science Building at North Carolina State University Will Be Named After Chancellor Randy Woodson



The Integrative Science Building, a new facility at North Carolina State University designed to facilitate interdisciplinary learning and research, will be named after current Chancellor and Council Member Randy Woodson. The \$180 million building is expected to open in 2026 and contain 153,000 square feet of lab space. NC State Board of Trustees Chair Ed Weisiger Jr. said, "Our results during Randy's tenure speak for themselves; he has made NC State better and he deserves recognition for that." [Read more here.](#)

Futuro Health Receives \$10.2 Million Grant for Behavior Healthcare Worker Training

Futuro Health, a Sacramento-based nonprofit addressing the national shortage of healthcare workers led by



Council Member Van Ton-Quinlivan, has received a \$10.2 million grant for the tuition-free training of residents in behavioral health. These funds, donated by the Elisabeth C. Deluca Foundation, will enable the training of some 2,000 new residents to help address the critical shortfall of healthcare workers. On how the grant would be used to advance the nonprofit's mission, Ton-Quinlivan said, "Futuro Health's approach is collaborative. We look forward to adding our best practices and capabilities to existing partnerships to broaden interest from learners from all walks of life who want to transition successfully into healthcare careers." [Read more here.](#)

University of Wyoming President Ed Seidel to Help Lead the Wyoming Global Technology Summit



Held annually in Jackson Hole, WY, and hosted by the Jackson Hole Global Technology Partnership, the Wyoming Global Technology Summit will showcase the innovation happening in the state and broader Rocky Mountain region. Convening policymakers, innovators, and business leaders, the summit is a chance to identify new opportunities for the region. University of Wyoming President and National Commissioner Ed Seidel will help lead the conversation, highlighting the role his university plays in driving regional innovation and making Wyoming nationally — and globally — competitive. Council EVP & COO Chad Evans will also present on the "Competitiveness Conversations Across America" series, which was first piloted in Wyoming. [Read more here.](#)

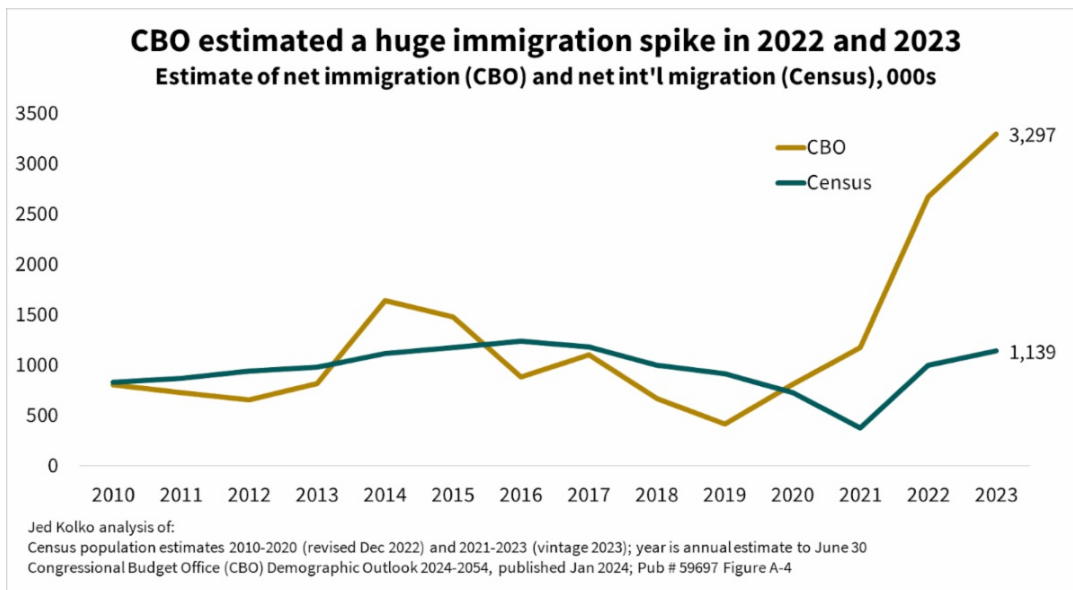
Lawrence Livermore Director Kim Budil and Fusion Team Named on Climate 100 List



Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Director Kim Budil, alongside the team of scientists who first demonstrated a net energy gain in a fusion reaction in 2022, has been named to *The Independent's* inaugural "Climate 100" list. This list recognizes the world's 100 "foremost environmentalists." According to Budil, "I'm proud to lead a talented and innovative workforce who apply cutting-edge science and technology to develop a greener and more secure world for future generations." [Read more here.](#)

Other News and Updates

Immigration Hits Multi-Year High, But Measuring it Reveals Challenges for the National Data-Collection Infrastructure



According to the most recent statistics, immigration into the United States has reached historic levels, with net immigration at its highest point since 2010. However, the exact number of new immigrants has been in contention across data collection agencies, with net immigration in 2023 pegged as 1.1 million by the Census Bureau and 3.3 million by the Congressional Budget Office. Getting these numbers right is important, as they inform resource allocation and are important to monitoring the broader health of the labor market. [Read more here.](#)

Leading Computing Agencies Call on Congress to Fully Fund CHIPS & Science Act

In a joint letter to Congressional leadership, six leading computer research and

manufacturing organizations called on Congress to fully fund the research agenda that makes up the “Science” part of the CHIPS & Science Act. The six signatories — the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the Computing Research Association (CRA), IEEE-USA, the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM), and USENIX — made the case that falling funding for federal research organizations like the NSF, NIST, and DOE Science will handicap U.S. leadership in critical areas of research, threatening our position at the top of global science. These points echo the thoughts of the Council’s own letter to Congress, signed by over forty college and university leaders, highlighting the criticality of these investments. [Read more here.](#)

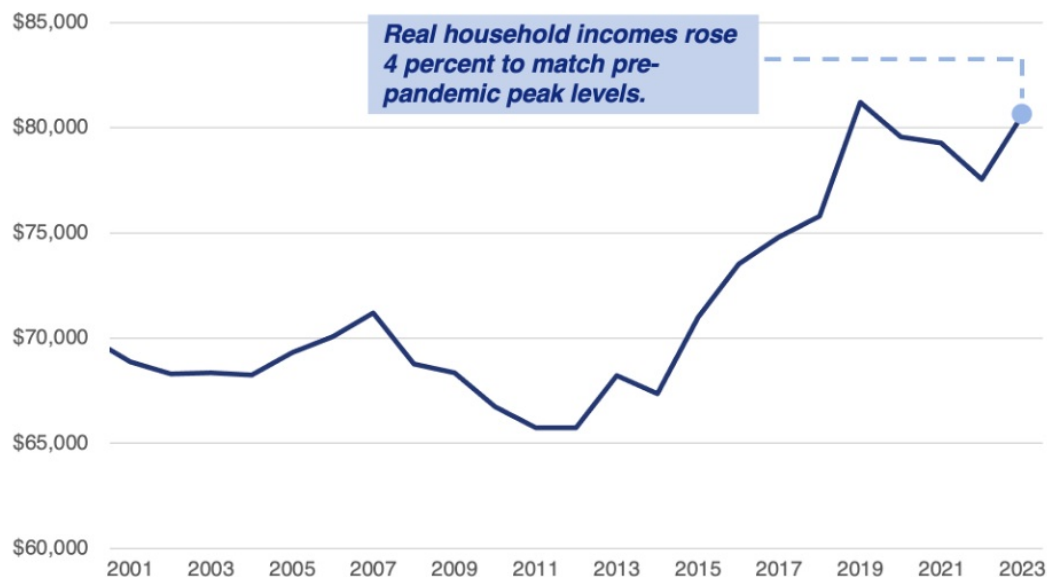
Council Insights

Real household incomes rise for first time since COVID-19 pandemic

Presented in Partnership with Keybridge Research

Real Median Household Incomes Return to Pre-Pandemic Peak

Real Median Household Income, Annual, 2001 - 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Real Median Household Income, updated September 11, 2024. Data retrieved from FRED.



Inflation-adjusted household income rose about 4 percent in 2023, driven by easing inflation and a strong labor market. This represents the first annual increase since the start of the pandemic and puts real income back at roughly 2019 levels, which represented a historical peak.

While U.S. households have experienced nominal wage gains in recent years, these gains were offset by a 40-year peak in inflation. But inflation eased significantly in 2023 while wage growth remained strong, returning households to the rising real incomes that characterized most of the past decade and boosting consumers’ purchasing power.

While this new data indicates relief for households, American consumers are still feeling the effects of pandemic-era inflation. The pinch of cumulative price increases

and high interest rates have eroded savings and driven up credit card and auto loan delinquencies. Meanwhile, the newest Census data on poverty shows mixed signals in 2023. While the official poverty measure dipped 0.4 percentage points in 2023, the supplemental poverty measure, which accounts for a broader range of government benefits and expenses, ticked up 0.5 percentage points as pandemic-era social supports continued to expire.

Looking ahead, economists expect that the Federal Reserve's September 18th rate cut, perhaps the first of many, will consolidate the "soft landing" that the Fed has been targeting—reduced inflation and a still-healthy labor market—and energize economic growth.

A Snapshot of the Indiana-Illinois Corridor

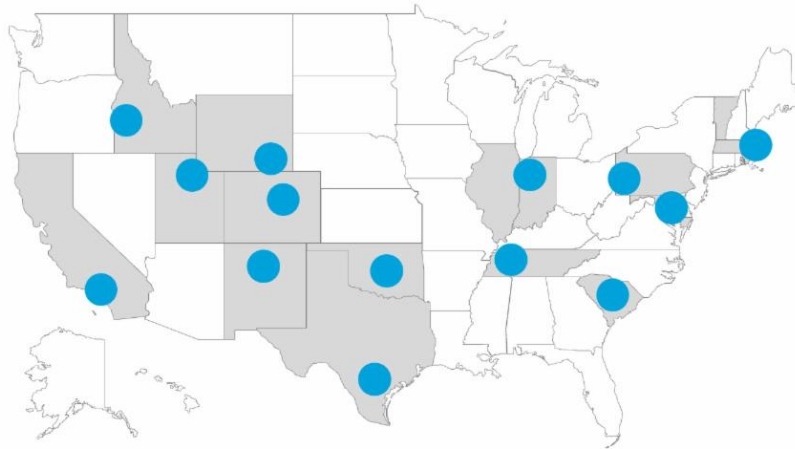


The Council wrapped its third edition of the “Competitiveness Conversations Across America” on the campus of Purdue University on September 9. Under the auspices of four National Commissioners, the Conversation was cohosted by the Honorable Deborah Wince-Smith; Dr. Mung Chiang, President, Purdue University; Dr. Paul Kearns, Director, Argonne National Laboratory; and Dr. Robert Jones, Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, representing Dr. Tim Killeen, President, University of Illinois System.

Following its two predecessors, this Competitiveness Conversation endeavored to uncover the emerging best practices and policies driving innovation forward in regions across the country — in this case, the highly innovative Indiana-Illinois corridor.

Competitiveness Conversations Across America

The Council is exploring place-based innovation in diverse regional economies and contexts.



2022 Conversation

Jun. Wyoming

2023 Conversation

Mar. Davis, CA

2024 Conversations

Apr. Nashville, TN

Aug. Boise, ID

Sep. West Lafayette, IN

2025 Conversations

Feb. Columbia, SC

Mar. San Antonio, TX

Apr. Denver/Boulder, CO

May. Santa Fe, NM

Jun. Boston, MA

Sep. Salt Lake City, UT

Oct. Pittsburgh, PA

2026 Conversations

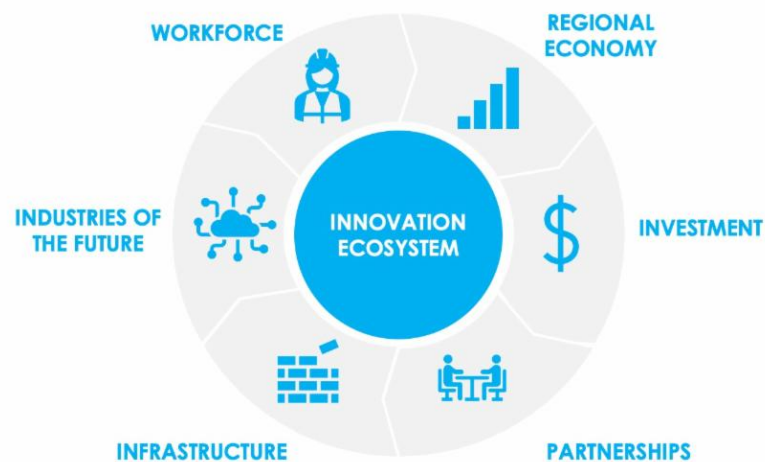
Jan. Baltimore/College Park, MD

Feb. Oklahoma City, OK

...and more to come

To set the stage for this Conversation, the Council built on its series of ecosystem snapshots to better understand the specific supporting environment that undergirds this region's successes — and also its challenges. In this newsletter, we share a preview of this competitiveness snapshot of the region. The full analysis looks at:

Place-based innovation is all about creating a supportive ecosystem.



As summarized below, we discovered from the data that the Indiana-Illinois Innovation Corridor is home to a robust innovation ecosystem with distinctive strengths. The region has continued its tradition as America's industrial heartland and is leading the development of emerging industries from semiconductors to quantum computing. However, the region must overcome workforce and infrastructure challenges to truly capitalize on its innovative momentum.

The Indiana-Illinois region's innovation ecosystem has distinctive strengths.

Strengths		Areas for Growth	
BUSINESS ACTIVITY	IN and IL are sustaining a robust rate of new business applications.	ECONOMIC GROWTH	Regional GDP growth trails the national rate.
INVESTMENT	IN and IL attract significant public and private investment.	POPULATION TRENDS	IN's workforce participation is below pre-pandemic levels.
EMERGING INDUSTRIES	The IN-IL corridor is a national leader in chips, qubits, and molecules.	BRAIN DRAIN	IL is experiencing sustained population outflow, driven by degree holders.
PARTNERSHIPS	The region is home to impactful partnerships like the Chicago Quantum Exchange.	COST OF LIVING	Falling housing stocks in IN and IL threaten the region's affordability.

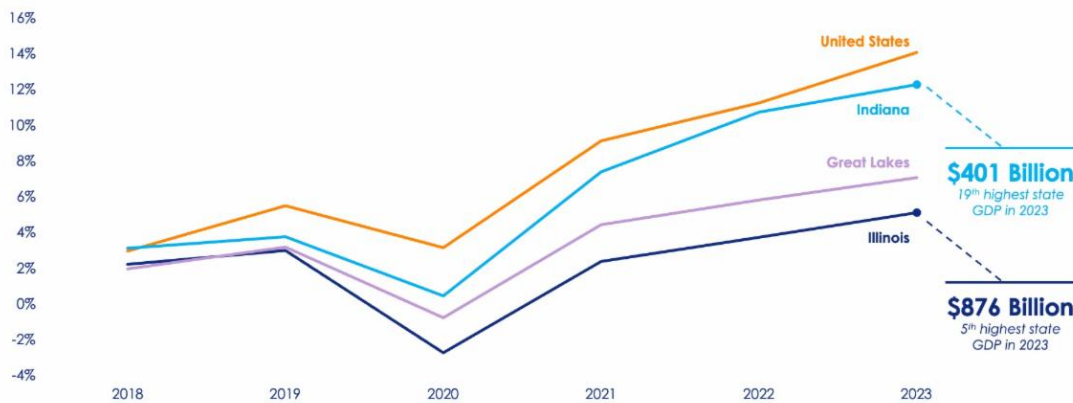
Indiana and Illinois — with neighboring Great Lakes states Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin — experienced a strong post-pandemic recovery. While growth sometimes lags behind the nation, economic signals are consistently positive.

Indiana and Illinois are experiencing positive but slow real GDP growth, coming in slightly below the nation's rate. Indiana boasts the highest growth rate within the Great Lakes region, while Illinois holds the largest economy. In fact, with \$876 billion in GDP in 2023, Illinois had the fifth-largest economy in the nation.

GDP growth in Indiana and Illinois are slower than the national rate.

While Indiana boasts the fastest growth in the region, Illinois remains the largest economy.

Rate of Change in Real GDP
Relative to 2017



Bureau of Economic Analysis
Note: Great Lakes region includes Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Be on the lookout for the Indiana-Illinois Innovation Corridor summary report, which will include the full competitiveness snapshot. The report will be available on the Conversation's [webpage](#), where you can learn more.

Joining the Council Community



Ms. Nicole Gresham-Perry
Managing Partner
Carpere Group

Ms. Gresham-Perry joins the Council as a Member.



Dr. Martin Blair
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
Idaho State University

Dr. Blair will join the Technology Leadership & Strategy Initiative (TLSI).

International

The Council's sister organization, the [Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils](#) (GFCC), continues its build-up to the 2024 Global Innovation Summit (GIS) that will take place November 11-15 on the campus of Queen's University Belfast. If

you would like to learn more and consider joining the Council on Competitiveness delegation to the GFCC, contact [Chad Evans](#).



GIS
2024

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