**Jane Smith, PhD**
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May 30, 2026

**Re: EB-2 National Interest Waiver petition of Dr. Mei Chen**

To the Officer adjudicating this petition:

I am a tenured Professor of Computational Biology at Stanford University, where I direct the Center for Genome Informatics. I have published 240 peer-reviewed papers (h-index 78) and serve on the National Institutes of Health Genomics Advisory Panel. I evaluate research in single-cell genomics routinely as an Associate Editor at Nature Methods. I have no employment, supervisory, mentorship, or co-authorship relationship with Dr. Chen; the assessment below is that of an independent expert.

I first encountered Dr. Chen's work in 2022 when I peer-reviewed her single-cell RNA-velocity paper for Nature Methods. I have since cited that work three times in my own publications (Smith et al. 2023; Smith and Lee 2024; Smith et al. 2024), and we co-organized the 2024 ISMB workshop on dynamical modeling of single-cell data. My knowledge of her contributions is therefore first-hand and documented in the public record.

Dr. Chen's endeavor — improving single-cell trajectory inference for early disease detection — sits squarely within the NIH 2024 Strategic Plan priority area on the Cellular and Molecular Foundations of Disease, to which NIH allocated $1.4B in FY2024. Her specific approach, RNA-velocity at sub-population resolution, addresses a documented bottleneck in early-stage cancer screening that no current FDA-cleared assay solves. The endeavor is of substantial merit and of national importance to the United States.

Dr. Chen is exceptionally well-positioned to advance this endeavor. Her 2023 Nature Methods paper has accumulated 412 citations in 18 months — the top 1% of computational-biology papers from that year per Web of Science. Her open-source tool scVelocity has been downloaded 47,000 times and is in use at 11 of the top 20 NIH-funded cancer centers. This is a record of sustained, independently recognized impact, and every indication is that she will continue it in the United States.

For the reasons above, I strongly and without reservation recommend approval of Dr. Chen's EB-2 National Interest Waiver petition. Her continued work in the United States would advance a research area that USCIS, NIH, and the broader scientific community have all identified as nationally important.

Respectfully,
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