

**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

☒ **ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d)
OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017

or

☐ **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD FROM ____ TO ____

COMMISSION FILE NUMBER 000-22333

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction
of incorporation or organization)

36-3687863
(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

1319 Marquette Drive, Romeoville, Illinois 60446
(Address of principal executive offices) (zip code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **(630) 771-6708**

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act: **None**

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:
Common Stock, par value \$.01 per share

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes ☐ No ☒

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes ☐ No ☒

Indicate by check mark if the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). ☒ Yes ☐ No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K. ☒

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company, or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company," and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer ☐

Accelerated filer ☐

Non-accelerated filer ☐

Smaller reporting company ☒

Emerging growth company ☐

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act. ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes ☐ No ☒

The aggregate market value of the registrant's voting stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant based upon the last reported sale price of the registrant's common stock on June 30, 2017 was \$10,312,000 as of such date.

The number of shares outstanding of the registrant's common stock, par value \$.01, as of March 14, 2018 was 33,847,793.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

None.

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PART I

Item 1. Business

General

Nanophase Technologies Corporation (“Nanophase” or the “Company”, including “we”, “our” or “us”) is an advanced materials and applications developer and commercial manufacturer with an integrated family of materials technologies. We produce engineered nano and “non-nano” materials (often referred to as “advanced materials”) for use in a variety of diverse markets: personal care including sunscreens as active ingredients and in fully formulated cosmetics of our own design, architectural coatings, industrial coating applications, abrasion-resistant additives, plastics additives, medical diagnostics, energy (including solar control) and a variety of surface finishing technologies (polishing) applications, including optics.

While our origin is based on the creation of nanoscale metal oxide products, we have expanded our offerings to include non-nano materials, which are often classified as being in the “sub-micron” size range. We have developed techniques for managing attributes including particle size, shape, surface coatings, and other valuable aspects of the material. Our focus is on customer need where we believe we have an advantage, as opposed to finding uses for one particular technology. Additionally, as the format of delivery is important to customers, we have developed proprietary capabilities for dispersing our materials into both aqueous (water-based) and solvent-based liquid media. These capabilities allow us to better integrate with the customer’s need and application. Finally, we have expanded our offerings beyond active ingredients to include targeted full formulations of skin care products, marketed and sold by our wholly-owned subsidiary, Solésence[®], LLC.

We target markets in which we believe practical solutions may be found using our products. We work closely with current and potential customers in these target markets to identify their material and performance requirements. We market our materials to various end-use applications manufacturers and our Solésence[®] solutions to cosmetic and skin care brands. Recently developed technologies have made certain new products possible and opened potential new markets. We expect growth in end-user (manufacturing customers, including customers of our customers) adoption in 2018 and beyond. Our initiatives in targeted market areas are progressing at differing rates of speed, but we have been broadly moving through testing and development cycles, and in a number of cases believe we are approaching first revenue or next stage revenue with particular customers in the industries referenced above. During 2015 we were granted a patent on a new type of particle surface treatment (coating), which became the cornerstone of our new product development in personal care, with first revenue recognized during 2016. In addition, through the creation of our Solésence[®], LLC subsidiary, we utilize this particle surface treatment to manufacture and sell fully developed solutions to targeted customers in the skin care industry, in addition to the additives we have traditionally sold in the personal care area. During 2015 and 2016 we developed and began to sell solutions in the energy management (particularly solar control) industry. We believe that the products that we have designed for this industry remain valuable to the market, although we are currently focusing the greatest part of our business development efforts on building and expanding our Solésence[®] brand and product suite. Although our primary strategic focus has been the North American market, we currently sell material to customers overseas and have been working to expand our reach within foreign markets. The Company was incorporated in Illinois on November 25, 1989, and became a Delaware corporation during November 1997. Our common stock trades on the OTCQB marketplace under the symbol NANX.

We have created a leading commercial approach to the application of our integrated materials technologies designed to deliver an optimal engineered solution for a target market or specific customer application. With respect to our products, we have complete capability from application development and laboratory samples through pilot production and, finally, commercial production currently at rates as high as hundreds of metric tons per year for individual products. We have development and application laboratories and manufacturing capacity in two locations in the Chicago area. Our manufacturing is based on Lean Six Sigma discipline and is registered under the ISO 9001, American National Standard, Quality Management System Requirements; the ISO 14001, American National Standard, Environmental Management System Requirements; and is compliant with current Good Manufacturing Practices (“cGMP”) for products under U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) regulation.

We have undergone a strategic shift during recent years toward penetrating key markets via interactive applications development with end-use customers in these markets. We also supply both nanoscale and larger materials, based on market requirements. We believe this strategy leverages the applications development expertise, including our formulating capabilities as they apply to our Solésence[®] solutions, we have cultivated over the last several years and best positions us to build direct sales to end-use customers, in addition to translating these advantages through our market partners.

Nanomaterials

Nanomaterials are generally comprised of particles (nanoparticles) that are less than 100 nanometers in diameter and these nanoparticles have a wide range of unique properties owing to their very small size. A nanometer is one-billionth of a meter, or about 100,000 times smaller in size than the width of a human hair.

Nanotechnology involves manipulating the properties of materials, made up of basic elements or combinations thereof, at the 100-nanometer level or below. At this scale, the relatively small number of constituent atoms, the large proportion of these atoms on surfaces, and their confined dimensions lead materials to exhibit unique properties that can be used in many applications to benefit performance.

Nanomaterials are an important and enabling part of the diverse field of nanotechnology and are the building blocks of our nanotechnology products. The ultimate performance and value of Nanophase's products in a given application is a function of nanoparticle composition, size, shape, structure, surface chemistry and coating and dispersion potential. Our technologies for engineering and manufacturing nanomaterials, and our understanding of how to make nanomaterials exhibit desirable performance characteristics in various media, result in commercial nanomaterials solutions that we believe offer superior performance in many applications.

Nanomaterials have applications in diverse global markets where they are incorporated into a process, such as optics polishing, or a product, such as an industrial coating to prevent degradation or aid in application, or significantly improve wear resistance, or promote/hamper particular chemical reactions within respective systems. Multiple markets exist for our products since nanomaterials offer advantages in many applications, such as improved properties and performance, longer wear or product life, lower overall product cost, or in the development of new products or processes.

Most of the raw materials we use are commercially available. In some cases, we rely on sole-source processors of materials that utilize an array of worldwide sources for the raw materials that they process to our specifications. However, in certain cases we deal with very limited supply of certain raw materials, such as cerium oxide, classified as "Rare Earth elements," for use in surface finishing technologies (polishing) applications, as well as the very high purity zinc that we use in personal care applications.

Our Technologies

We have created an integrated platform of commercial nanomaterial technologies that are patented, patent-pending or proprietary. These technologies are designed to deliver a nanomaterial solution for a targeted market or a specific customer application. Our platform provides flexibility and capability to engineer nanomaterials that meet a customer's performance requirements and delivers our nanomaterial solutions in a readily usable format. Our technologies are scalable and robust, having produced several hundred metric tons annually.

Our nanomaterials platform includes two distinct manufacturing processes (PVS – Plasma Vapor Synthesis and NAS - NanoArc® Synthesis) to make nanomaterials or nanoparticles. These technologies allow us to control critical nanomaterial properties (composition, size, shape, structure, surface chemistry) and engineer these attributes to meet specific application performance. Compared to other well-developed known nanoparticle processes, our plasma-produced particles are produced as nonporous, dense, discrete single crystals, which we believe possess a unique set of bulk and surface properties.

Perhaps of greater importance, we have developed proprietary technology to disperse nanoparticles in both aqueous (water-based) and several organic solvent systems. These dispersions are stable at high weight loading (typically 18-55% by weight). These aspects provide distinct market advantages. Dispersed nanomaterials are desired by many customers for use in their processes or products because of the ease of incorporation. As examples, dispersed nanomaterials are used in industrial coatings, plastic additives and optical and semiconductor polishing. This integration flexibility allows us to serve more customers and serve them better, and is critical to our role as a solutions provider, not simply that of a materials provider.

We have also developed patented and proprietary technology to coat or surface treat nanoparticles to further engineer surface chemistry by two main processes, utilizing a series of different chemistries. In many applications, such as sunscreens, this technology is vital to ensure formulation compatibility and, in some cases, optimal application performance. We deliver hundreds of metric tons of surface engineered nanoparticles to our customers annually, including coated nanomaterials that are used by major global consumer products companies for sunscreens and personal care products.

As markets continue to develop and grow, we believe that customers' preferred delivery formats will often be dispersed and/or coated nanomaterials. We believe we are well-positioned with our platform of integrated commercial nanomaterial technologies to respond to this demand. We plan to maintain and advance our intellectual property and technologies to remain competitive in the fields of nanomaterials development, applications development and commercialization.

We have used our expertise in nanoscale materials to develop larger sub-micron particle-based products that are not considered "nano" in various applications. Controlling aspects including particle size and shape, as well as surface chemistries, allow us to provide superior materials to the marketplace in various formats, both at the nano level and above.

We have steadily expanded our ability to commercially utilize and deliver our technologies. Through large-scale manufacturing of nanomaterials utilized in the manufacture of consumer sunscreen and personal care products and architectural coatings, we have developed production expertise that has allowed us to improve processes relating to those nanomaterials as well as processes relating to other nanomaterials. This experience has translated into additional know-how, intellectual property and advances in the technologies and manufacturing processes that reduce variable manufacturing costs and improve gross margins.

Beginning in 2016, we have developed and expanded our in-house formulating capability, through which we have created multiple fully formulated finished cosmetics products for sale in markets focused on skin care and protection.

Marketing and Distribution Methods

We focus our marketing strategy on differentiated solutions that create superior value for our customers. This customer-focused strategy means we are not solely dependent upon the efforts of a distributor for future sales growth. We have found many cases where our ability to effectively integrate nanomaterials into a customer's specific chemistry is critical to presenting an effective solution. Given this reality, we launched a "customer direct" business model during 2009 for those markets that are not conducive to an intermediary. In these markets, we interact with customers directly rather than through intermediaries, demonstrating the benefits of our solutions in their products. Our deep market knowledge of certain markets and applications has allowed us to understand customer needs and our products' value proposition, and adapt our offerings accordingly. This knowledge, combined with our applications development expertise, supports leveraging our development efforts by marketing and selling our solutions to multiple customers within each market. We work closely with each customer to develop a material solution for that entity's specific application(s), but we find that as we develop greater applications development expertise in a given area, specific applications development often becomes a routine process within Nanophase. This is where we believe our future customers will perceive the greatest value in working with us, and where we will be able to leverage our product development efforts into multiple revenue generating customer solutions.

An outgrowth of the customer direct model that we have applied in our ingredients business has been our development of fully formulated finished products, which we market directly to various brands in the skin care markets through our Solésence® subsidiary. This represents a progression from providing ingredients to manufacturers of finished products, to offering Solésence®-enabled finished products to marketers and sellers of skin care products.

Historically, we have seen our customer-focused marketing approach increase our probability of success in many markets, allowing us to use an integrated platform of material technologies and typically reduce the total time-to-market. We expect our finished products business to enhance both our degree of control of the business development cycle, and to further reduce our total time-to-market. The more our applications development scientists and sales team work directly with customers to develop material solutions, most recently finished formulations through our Solésence[®] subsidiary, the more quickly and successfully we believe we will be able to grow sales.

In addition to serving customers in diverse markets and geographic locations, we will continue to devote significant resources to maintaining and growing our relationship with BASF Corporation (“BASF”), our largest customer in the personal care market. This has been a successful relationship that we expect will contribute to our future growth. BASF, which describes itself as the world’s leading chemical company with revenue of approximately \$80 billion, is a global leader in the personal care market with recognized brands, significant revenues and sales reach. We have a long-term exclusive relationship with BASF, primarily to provide zinc oxide-based products to be used in personal care with sunscreens and daily wear products being the dominant applications.

In addition to the personal care applications described above, our products are used in a variety of other applications, including architectural coatings, polishing applications (including optical glass and CMP), plastics additives, medical diagnostics, textiles and graphic arts, energy control applications, and others. Recent activities have expanded our presence in the personal care space, with a new particle surface treatment process (coating) providing the basis for new product offerings. We saw our first revenue from products using our proprietary particle coating in 2016, which we have expanded in 2017 to include fully formulated finished products under our Solésence[®] brand. We had our first small amounts of Solésence[®] product revenue in 2017, and expect these sales to expand in 2018.

Because our technology can be applied to a wide variety of applications, we have focused our efforts on only a handful of applications to gain a depth of knowledge and leverage our learning curve. We have further increased our focus to primarily address product and market development in the personal care market. If we find a unique application outside of our core markets that does not require significant development resources then we may pursue it as “opportunistic” business. We believe this focused approach will contribute to a higher success rate for related opportunities than we would experience by pursuing more opportunities simultaneously.

Technology and Engineering

Our efforts in research and development, cosmetic formulating, process engineering and advanced engineering groups are focused in three major areas: 1) application development for our products; 2) creating or obtaining additional core material technologies and/or materials that have the capability to serve multiple markets; and 3) continuing to improve our core technologies to improve manufacturing operations and reduce costs.

Most of our research and development is directly related to applications and finished product development. We endeavor to either meet specific customer needs or to develop applications solutions to address unmet needs in a particular market where we believe our materials will offer a distinct performance advantage. We believe that aggressively pursuing applications in targeted areas will help us compete as a technical and commercial innovator using our materials expertise, and more importantly, become perceived as a solutions provider by our customers and not simply as another materials supplier.

Our total research and development expense, which includes all expenses relating to our technology and advanced engineering groups, during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, was \$1.7 million and \$1.6 million, respectively. This represents our share of these expenses only and does not take into account amounts spent by any of our customers in support of new product development. Our future success will depend in large part upon our ability to develop products which bring a high degree of value to our customers’ products. Through the three-year period ended December 31, 2017, we had cumulative research and development expenses of approximately \$4.6 million and cumulative expenditures on equipment and leasehold improvements of approximately \$1.0 million.

Manufacturing Operations

We have manufacturing capacity based in two locations in the Chicago area. At each of these facilities, we are able to develop and supply advanced materials and bulk finished goods in quantities ranging from grams to metric tons. Our facilities are registered under ISO 9001 international standards and are cGMP compliant for applicable bulk pharmaceutical chemical ingredient and sunscreen manufacturing. We are also in the process of registering some of the chemicals we ship to customers in Europe pursuant to the European Chemical Agency's regulations issued to date pertaining to Registration Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals ("REACH"). We have registered Zinc Oxide and Aluminum Oxide under REACH and filed preliminary registrations for other materials. Our facilities are also registered under the international standard for environmental management, ISO 14001.

Our operations employ a cellular, team-based manufacturing approach, where workers operate in work "cells," under a lean manufacturing environment to continuously advance and improve production capabilities. We have also developed a highly flexible workforce that has been cross-trained to allow it to be employed broadly across our manufacturing processes. Our manufacturing approach and targeted engineering actions have resulted in continuing process innovations and improvements that have reduced the variable manufacturing cost significantly over the past several years.

We are committed to a lean manufacturing approach, to the extent possible given a certain measure of irregular demand, where we are able to reduce excess labor and manage the lowest practical inventory and supply levels in order to minimize working capital demands. This approach complements two of our major operational goals - (1) to increase output without adding unnecessarily to existing equipment and (2) to continually reduce production costs while consistently producing high quality products.

Intellectual Property and Proprietary Rights

We rely on a combination of patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret and other intellectual property laws, nondisclosure agreements and other protective measures to protect our intellectual property. In addition to obtaining patent and trademarks based on our inventions and products, we may also license certain third-party patents from time-to-time to expand our technology base.

As of the date of this filing, we own 11 U.S. patents and 4 pending U.S. patent applications. We also own 47 foreign patents and patent applications consisting of 27 issued or allowed foreign patents and 20 pending foreign patent applications. All of the pending and owned foreign patents are counterparts to domestic filings covering our platform of nanotechnologies and surface treatments. Our oldest issued patents began to expire during 2013. We have 2 U.S. patents, along with their 6 foreign counterparts, that are set to expire in 2019. We do not believe that the expiration of these patents will have a material impact on our business or financial condition.

Competition

Within each of our targeted markets and product applications, we face potential competition from advanced materials and chemical companies, and suppliers of traditional materials. In many markets, the actual or potential competitors are larger and more diversified than we are; however, we believe we focus in market segments and opportunities where our materials and related technologies are superior to those of our competitors, often due to our ability to produce highly engineered products to meet specific performance requirements and develop advanced material solutions for customers' specific applications.

With respect to traditional suppliers, we may compete against lower priced traditional materials for certain customer applications. In some product or process applications the benefits of using nanomaterials do not always justify a process change or outweigh their frequently higher costs.

With respect to larger producers of nanomaterials, while many of these producers do not currently offer directly competitive products, these companies may have greater financial and technical resources, larger research and development staffs, and greater manufacturing and marketing capabilities, and could compete directly against us. In addition, the number of development-stage companies involved in nanocrystalline materials continues to grow on a global basis, posing increasing competitive risks. Many of these companies are associated with university or national laboratories and use chemical and physical methods to produce nanocrystalline materials. We believe that most of these companies are engaged primarily in funded research and not commercial production; however, they may represent competitive risks in the future. Some development-stage companies, especially in other countries, receive significant government assistance or enjoy other benefits due to their location. We anticipate that foreign competition will play a greater role in the nanomaterials arena in the future, something we are increasingly seeing today, albeit indirectly.

We believe that our nanomaterial technologies and manufacturing platforms are strong. We believe we are well-positioned with our platform of integrated commercial nanomaterial technologies and track record of technology improvement and evolution.

In addition to competition in the advanced materials and related markets, our Solésence[®] subsidiary faces competition from a wide variety of offerings in the field of skin care. Solésence[®] competes with existing solutions as well as new solutions from various sources, including other product developers who seek to serve skin care brands and integrated brands who also manufacture their own products in-house, and must differentiate its value proposition in order to gain traction in this marketplace. We believe that our Solésence[®] technology, coupled with our expanding product formulations capability, will allow us to become a competitive player in this market.

Governmental Regulations, Including Climate Change

The manufacture and use of certain of the products that contain our metal oxides are subject to governmental regulations. As a result, we are required to adhere to the cGMP requirements of the FDA and similar regulations that include testing, control and documentation requirements enforced by periodic inspections. We are also in the process of registering some of the chemicals we ship to customers in Europe in compliance with the European Chemical Agency's regulations issued to date pertaining to REACH (to date, we have registered Zinc Oxide and Aluminum Oxide under REACH and filed preliminary registrations for other materials).

We are committed to environmental health and safety ("EH&S"). We believe we comply with all applicable exposure limit standards issued by OSHA. Because nanotechnology remains an emerging and evolving science, there are no currently accepted standards, measurements or personal protective equipment available that are specific to nanoparticle safety. Accordingly, we rely on general chemical safety and process safety practices to identify safe personal protective equipment and appropriate handling protocols. We believe that we have taken a leadership position on EH&S in our operations and have internal and external review and monitoring of our practices.

In addition, our facilities and operations are subject to the plant and laboratory safety requirements of various environmental and occupational safety and health laws. We believe we are in compliance with all such laws and regulations, and to date, those regulations have not materially restricted or impeded operations. Further, we believe our processes to be highly efficient, generating very low levels of waste and emissions. For this reason, we do not view issues surrounding climate change and any currently foreseeable related regulations as materially impacting our business and financial statements, beyond any inestimable impact on the macro-economic environment.

We have taken a responsible, proactive approach to EH&S by implementing appropriate procedures and processes to have our facilities registered under ISO 14001, American National Standard, Environmental Management System Requirements. We are also involved with leading industry groups that are defining nanomaterial standards and protocols. These currently include the ASTM International Committee on Nanotechnology, and the US TAG to ISO TC 229 Nanotechnology committee managed by the American National Standards Institute committee (ANSI). We also participate in FDA reviews relative to cosmetic and applicable drug applications. We have a full-time, advanced degreed professional who spends a significant amount of time managing governmental regulation compliance and EH&S. We believe that our Company has an exemplary safety record.

Employees

On December 31, 2017, we had a total of 48 full-time employees, 4 of whom hold advanced degrees. We have no collective bargaining agreements and believe that we have a strong relationship with our employees, whom management believes represent the strength of our Company.

Backlog

We do not believe that a backlog as of any particular date is indicative of future results. Our sales are primarily pursuant to purchase orders for delivery of our advanced materials and Solésence[®] formulated products. We have some agreements that give customers the right to purchase a specific quantity of nanomaterials during a specified time period. These agreements, however, do not obligate the customers to purchase any minimum quantity of such nanomaterials. The quantities actually purchased by the customer, as well as the shipment schedules, are frequently revised during the agreement term to reflect changes in the customer's needs. For these reasons we do not believe that such agreements are meaningful for determining backlog amounts.

Business Segment and Geographical Information

Our operations comprise a single business segment and all of our long-lived assets are located within the United States. See Note 13 to the accompanying Financial Statements for additional information.

Key Customers

A limited number of key customers account for a substantial portion of our commercial revenue. In particular, revenue from three customers - our largest customer in personal care applications (BASF), our largest coatings customer, and our medical diagnostics application customer - constituted approximately 61%, 11% and 4%, respectively, of our 2017 total revenue. Many of our customers are significantly larger than we are and, therefore, may be able to exert a high degree of influence over us. While our agreements with BASF are long-term agreements, they may be terminated by BASF under certain circumstances with reasonable notice and do not provide any guarantees that BASF will buy our products. The loss of one of our largest customers or the failure to attract new customers could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition. Due to the high concentration of sales to a limited number of customers, we have aggressively pursued new customers through our customer direct business model. To the extent we are successful in adding a large number of customers through this model and maintaining or expanding our existing partners, we believe we will be able to best manage the risks associated with customer concentration.

Forward-Looking Statements

We want to provide investors with more meaningful and useful information. As a result, this Annual Report on Form 10-K (the “Form 10-K”) contains certain “forward-looking statements”, as defined in Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”). These statements reflect our current expectations of the future results of our operations, performance and achievements. Forward-looking statements are covered under the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. We have tried, wherever possible, to identify these statements by using words such as “anticipates”, “believes”, “estimates”, “expects”, “plans”, “intends” and similar expressions. These statements reflect management’s current beliefs and are based on information now available to it. Accordingly, these statements are subject to certain risks, uncertainties and contingencies that could cause our actual results, performance or achievements in 2018 and beyond to differ materially from those expressed in, or implied by, such statements. These risks, uncertainties and factors include, without limitation: our ability to be consistently profitable despite the losses we have incurred since our incorporation; a decision by a customer to cancel a purchase order or supply agreement in light of our dependence on a limited number of key customers; the terms of our supply agreements with BASF which could trigger a requirement to transfer technology and/or sell equipment to that customer; our potential inability to obtain working capital when needed on acceptable terms or at all; our ability to obtain materials at costs we can pass through to our customers, including Rare Earth elements, specifically cerium oxide, as well as high purity zinc; uncertain demand for, and acceptance of, our nanocrystalline materials and Solésence[®] products; our manufacturing capacity and product mix flexibility in light of customer demand; our limited marketing experience, including with our suite of Solésence[®] products; changes in development and distribution relationships; the impact of competitive products and technologies; our dependence on patents and protection of proprietary information; our ability to maintain an appropriate electronic trading venue for our securities; the impact of any potential new governmental regulations that could be difficult to respond to or costly to comply with; and the resolution of litigation or other legal proceedings in which we may become involved. In addition, our forward-looking statements could be affected by general industry and market conditions and growth rates. Readers of this Form 10-K should not place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements. Except as required by federal securities laws, we undertake no obligation to update or revise these forward-looking statements to reflect new events or uncertainties.

Investor Information

We are subject to the informational requirements of the Exchange Act and, accordingly, file periodic reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”). Such reports, proxy statements and other information may be obtained by visiting the Public Reference Room of the SEC at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20549 or by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. In addition, the SEC maintains an Internet site (<http://www.sec.gov>) that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding issuers that file electronically.

Financial and other information may also be accessed at our website. The address is www.nanophase.com. We make available, free of charge, copies of our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act as soon as reasonably practicable after filing such material electronically with, or otherwise furnishing it to, the SEC, and intend to make all such reports and amendments to reports available free of charge on our website. We have included our website address throughout this Form 10-K as textual references only. The information contained on, or accessible through, our website is not incorporated into this Form 10-K.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

The following factors, among others, could cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in forward-looking statements made in this Annual Report on Form 10-K and presented elsewhere by management from time to time. Such factors may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations, and you should carefully consider them before deciding to invest in, or retain, shares of our common stock. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or which are currently not believed to be material or which we have not predicted may also harm our business operations or affect our actual results. Because of these and other factors, past performance should not be considered an indication of future performance.

We have a history of losses that may continue in the future.

We have incurred net losses in each year since our inception, with net losses of \$0.8 million in 2017 and \$1.3 million in 2016. As of December 31, 2017, we had an accumulated deficit of approximately \$96 million and may incur a loss on an annual basis during 2018. We believe that our business depends, among other things, on our ability to significantly increase revenue. If revenue fails to grow at anticipated rates or if operating expenses increase without a commensurate increase in revenue, or if we fail to adjust operating expense levels accordingly, then the imbalance between revenue and operating expenses will negatively impact our cash balances and our ability to achieve profitability in future periods.

We depend on a few major customers for a high percentage of our sales, and the loss of orders from a significant customer could cause a decline in revenue and/or increases in the level of losses incurred.

Sales to our customers are executed pursuant to purchase orders and long-term supply contracts; however, customers can cease doing business with us at any time with limited advanced notice. It is possible that a significant portion of our future sales may remain concentrated within a limited number of strategic customers. We may not be able to retain our strategic customers, such customers may cancel or reschedule orders, or in the event of canceled orders, such orders may not be replaced by other sales or by sales that are on as favorable terms. In addition, sales to any particular customer may fluctuate significantly from quarter to quarter, which could affect our ability to achieve anticipated revenues on a quarterly basis.

Sales to our three largest customers accounted for 61%, 11% and 4%, respectively, of our total revenue in 2017 and sales to these same customers accounted for 69%, 4% and 5%, respectively, of our total revenue in 2016.

We plan to expand both our marketing and business development efforts and our production efficiency in order to address the issues of our dependence upon a limited number of customers, enhancement of gross profit and operating cash flows, and the achievement of profitability. Given the nature of our products, and the fact that markets for them are not yet fully developed, it is difficult to accurately predict when additional large customers will materialize. Going forward, our margins, as a percentage of revenue, will be dependent upon revenue mix, revenue volume, raw materials pricing, and our ability to effectively manage costs. The extent of the growth in revenue volume and the related gross profit that this revenue generates will be the main drivers in generating positive operating cash flows and, ultimately, net income.

Any downturn in the product markets served by us would harm our business.

A majority of our products are incorporated into products such as personal care applications including sunscreens. Additional product areas include architectural coatings, surface finishing technologies (polishing), medical diagnostics, solar control applications/energy management, abrasion-resistant coatings and other products. These markets have from time to time experienced cyclical, depressed business conditions, often in connection with, or in anticipation of, a decline in general economic conditions. These industry downturns often result in reduced product demand and declining average selling prices. Our business would be harmed by a continuation of any downturn and/or any future downturns in the markets that we serve.

Our products often have long adoption cycles, which could make it difficult to achieve market acceptance and makes it difficult to forecast revenues.

Due to their often novel characteristics and potential unfamiliarity with them that exists in the marketplace, our nanomaterials may require longer adoption cycles than existing materials technologies, to the point that adoption cycles typically require one to five years. Our nanomaterials have to receive appropriate attention within any potential customer's organization, and then they must be tested to prove a performance advantage over existing materials, typically on a systems-cost basis. Once we have proven initial commercial viability, pilot scale production runs are typically required and completed by the customer, followed by further testing. Once production-level commercial viability is established, then our nanomaterials can be introduced, often to a downstream marketplace that needs to be familiarized with them. If we are unable to demonstrate to our potential customers the performance advantages and economic value of our nanomaterials over existing and competing materials and technologies, we will be unable to generate significant sales. Our long adoption cycle makes it difficult to predict when sales will occur.

We frequently depend on collaborative development relationships with our customers. If we are unable to initiate or sustain such collaborative relationships or if the terms of these relationships limit the distribution of our products, then we may be unable to successfully develop, manufacture or market our current and future advanced materials, applications, or products.

We have established, and will continue to pursue, strategic relationships with many of our customers and do not have a substantial direct sales force or an established distribution network (other than distribution arrangements for research samples). Through these relationships, we seek to develop new applications for our materials and share development and manufacturing resources. We also seek to coordinate the development, manufacture and marketing of our advanced materials products, particularly as a result of our selling additives that must be integrated into complete formulations by the customer. With our advanced materials products, future success will depend, in part, on our continued relationships with these customers and our ability to enter into similar strategic relationships with other customers. Our customers may not continue in these collaborative development relationships, may not devote sufficient resources to the development or sale of our materials or may enter into strategic development relationships with our competitors. These customers may also require a share of control of these collaborative programs. While less prevalent than in the past, some of our agreements with these customers limit our ability to license our technology to others and/or limit our ability to engage in certain product development or marketing activities with others. These relationships generally can be terminated unilaterally by customers. With our Solésence[®] products, we design, produce and often package finished formulations for our customers. We intend to rely on the sales and marketing channels of our customers, who are responsible for the direct consumer marketing and sales contact. Their ability to market and sell these products to their customers will directly impact our ability to achieve growth in these markets.

If we are unable to initiate or sustain such collaborative relationships or if the terms of these relationships materially limit our access to distribution channels for our products, then we may be unable to successfully develop, manufacture or market our current and future advanced materials, applications, or products.

If commodity metal prices increase at such a rate that we are unable to recover lost margins on a timely basis or that our products became uncompetitive in their current marketplaces, our financial and liquidity position and results of operations would be substantially harmed.

Many of our significant raw materials come from commodity metal markets that may be subject to rapid price increases. While we generally have been able to pass a significant portion of commodity “price-related” increases on to our customers, it is possible that, given our limited customer base and the limited control we have over it, commodity metal prices could increase at such a rate that could hinder our ability to recover lost margins from our customers. Such a potential challenge could be exacerbated as our specifications often require particular grades/types of these materials, including certain materials that are classified as “Rare Earth” elements and very high purity zinc, that are available in limited supply. It is also possible that such drastic cost increases could render some of our materials uncompetitive in their current marketplaces when considered relative to other materials on a cost benefit basis. If either of these potential results occurred, our financial and liquidity position and results of operations would be substantially harmed.

Protection of our intellectual property is limited and uncertain.

Our intellectual property is important to our business. We seek to protect our intellectual property through patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secret protection and confidentiality or license agreements with our employees, customers, suppliers and others. Our means of protecting our intellectual property rights in the United States or abroad may not be adequate and others, including our competitors, may use our proprietary technology without our consent. We may not receive the necessary patent protection for any applications pending with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) and any of the patents that we currently own or license may not be sufficient to keep competitors from using our materials or processes. In addition, patents that we currently own or license may not be held valid if subsequently challenged by others and others may claim rights in the patents and other proprietary technology that we own or license. Additionally, others may have already developed or may subsequently develop similar products or technologies without violating any of our proprietary rights. If we fail to obtain or maintain patent protection or preserve our trade secrets, we may be unable to effectively compete against others offering similar products and services. In addition, if we fail to operate without infringing the proprietary rights of others or lose any license to technology that we currently have or will acquire in the future, we may be unable to continue making the products that we currently make.

Moreover, at times, attempts may be made to challenge the prior issuance of our patents. Furthermore, litigation may be necessary to enforce our intellectual property rights, to protect our trade secrets, to determine the validity and scope of the proprietary rights of others, or to defend against claims of infringement or invalidity. Such litigation could result in substantial costs and diversion of resources and could harm our business, operating results and financial condition. Such litigation might occur with parties that have substantially greater resources, and thus more capability to engage and continue litigation. In addition, if others assert that our technology infringes their intellectual property rights, resolving the dispute could divert our management team and financial resources.

Due to the expanding length of time required in order to obtain a patent, and the inherent ongoing risks of the protections truly provided by any patent, we made a decision during 2008 that we could no longer place a value on these intangible assets. We have, and may in the future, license certain of our intellectual property, such as trademarks and know-how, to third parties. While we would attempt to ensure that any licensees maintain the quality and value of our brand, these licenses might diminish this quality and value.

If a catastrophe strikes either of our manufacturing facilities or if we were to lose our lease for either facility due to non-renewal or other unforeseen events, we may be unable to manufacture our materials to meet customers' demands.

Our manufacturing facilities are located near Chicago - in Romeoville and Burr Ridge, Illinois. These facilities and some of our manufacturing and testing equipment would be difficult to replace in a timely manner. Therefore, any material disruption at one of our facilities due to a natural or man-made disaster or a loss of lease due to non-renewal or other unforeseen events could have a material adverse effect on our ability to manufacture products to meet customers' demands. While we maintain property insurance, this insurance may not adequately compensate us for all losses that we may incur in the event of a material interruption in our business.

If we are unable to expand our production capabilities to meet unexpected demand, we may be unable to manage our growth and our business would suffer.

Our success will depend, in part, on our ability to manufacture advanced materials and Solésence[®] products in significant quantities, with consistent quality and in an efficient and timely manner. We expect to be able to expand our current facilities or obtain additional facilities in the future, and outsource production aspects as necessary, available and appropriate, in order to respond to unexpected demand for existing materials and products or for new materials and products that we do not currently make in quantity. Such unplanned demand, if it resulted in rapid expansion, could create a situation where growth could become difficult to manage, which could cause us to lose potential revenue.

Our industry is experiencing rapid changes in technology. If we are unable to keep pace with these changes, our business may not grow.

Rapid changes have occurred, and are likely to continue to occur, in the development of advanced materials and processes. Our success will depend, in large part, upon our ability to keep pace with advanced materials technologies, industry standards and market trends and to develop and introduce new and improved products on a timely basis. We expect to commit substantial resources to develop our technologies and product applications and, in the future, to expand our commercial manufacturing capacity as volume grows. Our development efforts may be rendered obsolete by the research efforts and technological advances of others and other advanced materials may prove more advantageous than those we produce.

The markets we serve are highly competitive, and if we are unable to compete effectively, then our business will not grow.

The advanced materials industry is new, rapidly evolving and intensely competitive, and we expect competition to intensify in the future. The market for materials having the characteristics and potential uses of our nanomaterials is the subject of intensive research and development efforts by both governmental entities and private enterprises around the world. We believe that the level of competition will increase further as more product applications with significant commercial potential are developed. The nanomaterials product applications that we are developing will compete directly with products incorporating both conventional and advanced materials and technologies. While commercially available competitive products may not possess the same attributes as those we offer, other companies may develop and introduce new or competitive products. Our competitors may succeed in developing or marketing materials, technologies and better or less expensive products than the ones we offer. In addition, many of our potential competitors have substantially greater financial and technical resources, and greater manufacturing and marketing capabilities than we do. If we fail to provide advanced materials at an acceptable price, or otherwise compete on a commodity basis with producers of conventional materials, we will lose market share and revenue to our competitors.

In addition to competition in the advanced materials and related markets, our Solésence[®] subsidiary faces competition from a wide variety of offerings in the field of skin care. Solésence[®] competes with existing solutions as well as new solutions from various sources, including other product developers who seek to serve skin care brands and integrated brands who also manufacture their own products in-house, and must differentiate its value proposition in order to gain traction in this marketplace.

We may need to raise additional capital in the future, which may not be available on acceptable terms or at all. If we are unable to obtain adequate funds, we may be required to delay, scale-back or eliminate some of our manufacturing and marketing operations or we may need to obtain funds through arrangements on less favorable terms or we may be required to sell key production equipment to our largest customer.

We expect to expend resources on research, development and product testing, and in expanding current capacity or capability for new business. In addition, we may incur significant costs in preparing, filing, prosecuting, maintaining and enforcing our patents and other proprietary rights. We may need additional financing if we were to lose an existing customer or suffer a significant decrease in revenue from one or more of our customers or because of currently unknown capital requirements, new regulatory requirements or the need to meet the cash requirements discussed below to avoid a triggering event under our BASF agreement. Given our expected growth in our Solésence[®] business, we may also have temporary working capital demands that we cannot fund with existing capital, while remaining in compliance with the covenants included in our BASF supply agreement described below. If necessary, we may seek funding through public or private financing and through contracts with governmental entities or other companies. Additional financing may not be available on acceptable terms or at all. If we are unable to obtain adequate funds, we may be required to delay, scale-back or eliminate some of our manufacturing and marketing operations or we may need to obtain funds through arrangements on less favorable terms. Such circumstances could raise doubt as to our ability to continue as a going concern. If we obtain funding on unfavorable terms, we may be required to relinquish rights to some of our intellectual property.

To raise additional funds in the future, we would likely sell our equity or debt securities or enter into loan agreements. To the extent that we issue debt securities or enter into loan agreements, we may become subject to financial, operational and other covenants that we must observe. In the event that we were to breach any of these covenants, then the amounts due under such loans or debt securities could become immediately payable by us, which could significantly harm us. To the extent that we sell additional shares of our equity securities, our stockholders may face economic dilution and dilution of their percentage of ownership.

We currently have a supply agreement with BASF that contains provisions which could potentially result in a mandatory license of technology and/or sale of production equipment to BASF, providing capacity sufficient to meet BASF's production needs. Under our supply agreement with BASF, a "triggering event" also would occur:

- if our earnings for a twelve-month period ending with our most recently published quarterly financial statements are less than zero and our cash, cash equivalents and certain investments are less than \$1 million, or
- upon the acceleration of any debt maturity having a principal amount of more than \$10 million, or if we become insolvent as defined in the supply agreement.

In the event of a triggering event where we are required to sell to BASF production equipment providing capacity sufficient to meet BASF's production needs, the equipment would be sold at either 115% of the equipment's net book value or at the greater of 30% of the original book value of such equipment (including any associated upgrades to it) or 115% of the equipment's net book value, depending on the particular equipment and contract.

If we were determined to have materially breached certain other provisions of our supply agreement with BASF, we similarly could be subject to a "triggering event" that potentially could result in a mandatory license of technology and/or sale of certain production equipment to the customer.

If a triggering event were to occur and BASF elected to proceed with the license and related sale mentioned above, we would lose both significant revenue and the ability to generate significant revenue to replace that which was lost in the near term. Replacement of necessary equipment that would be purchased and removed by the customer pursuant to this triggering event could take in excess of 12 months. Any additional capital outlays required to rebuild capacity would probably be greater than the proceeds from the purchase of the assets pursuant to our agreement with BASF. This potential shortfall might put us in a position where it would be difficult to secure additional funding given what would then be an already tenuous cash position. Such an event would also likely result in the loss of many of our key staff and line employees due to economic realities. We believe that our employees are a critical component of our success and would be difficult to quickly replace and train. Upon the occurrence of such an event, we might not be able to hire and retrain skilled employees given the stigma relating to such an event and its impact on us. We might elect to effectively reduce our size and staffing to a point where we could remain a going concern in the near term.

We depend on key personnel, and their unplanned departure could harm our business.

Our success will depend, in large part, upon our ability to attract and retain highly qualified research and development, management, manufacturing, marketing and sales personnel on favorable terms. Due to the specialized nature of our business, we may have difficulty locating, hiring and retaining qualified personnel on favorable terms. If we were to lose the services of any of our key executive officers or other key personnel, or if we are unable to attract and retain other skilled and experienced personnel on acceptable terms in the future, or if we are unable to implement a succession plan to prepare qualified individuals to assume key roles upon any loss of our key personnel, then our business, results of operations and financial condition could be materially harmed.

We face potential product liability risks which could result in significant costs that exceed our insurance coverage, damage our reputation and harm our business.

We may be subject to product liability claims in the event that any of our products are alleged to be defective or cause harmful effects to humans or physical environments. Because our nanomaterials are used in other companies' products, to the extent our customers become subject to suits relating to their products, these claims may also be asserted against us. As our Solésence[®], LLC subsidiary sells fully formulated skin care products, we are now supplying completed products in addition to ingredients. We may incur significant costs including payment of significant damages, in defending or settling product liability claims. Although we maintain insurance for product liability claims, our coverage may not prove sufficient. Even if a suit is without merit and regardless of the outcome, claims can divert management time and attention, injure our reputation and adversely affect demand for our materials and finished products.

We may be subject to periodic litigation and other regulatory proceedings or governmental investigations, which could result in the unexpected expenditure of time and resources.

From time to time, we may be a defendant in lawsuits and regulatory proceedings or are the subject of governmental investigations relating to our business. Due to the inherent uncertainties of litigation, regulatory proceedings and governmental investigations, we cannot accurately predict the ultimate outcome of any such proceedings or investigations. An unfavorable outcome could have a material adverse impact on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, regardless of the outcome of any litigation, regulatory proceedings or governmental investigations, such matters are expensive and will require that we devote substantial resources and executive time to defend, thereby diverting management's attention and resources that are needed to successfully run our business.

The disclosure requirements under the “conflict minerals” provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act could increase our costs and limit the supply of certain metals used in our products and affect our reputation with customers and shareholders.

Under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, as amended, or the Dodd-Frank Act, the SEC adopted disclosure requirements, which became effective in 2014, for public companies using certain minerals and metals in their products. These minerals and metals are generally referred to as “conflict minerals” regardless of their country of origin. Commercial sales of our products containing these materials began during 2015. Under these rules, we are required to perform due diligence and disclose our efforts to prevent the sourcing of such conflict minerals from the Democratic Republic of Congo or adjoining countries. As a result of these regulations, we have incurred and expect to continue to incur costs to comply with the disclosure requirements, including costs related to determining the source of any of the conflict minerals used in our products. These new requirements could also adversely affect the sourcing, availability and pricing of such minerals, and the pool of suppliers who provide “conflict free” metals may be limited. As a result, we or our suppliers may not be able to obtain materials necessary for production of our products in sufficient quantities or at competitive prices. In addition, we may not be able to sufficiently verify the origins of all metals used in our products and confirm that they are “conflict free,” which may adversely affect our reputation.

We are subject to governmental regulations. The costs of compliance and liability for noncompliance with governmental regulations could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Current and future laws and regulations may require us to make substantial expenditures for preventive or remedial action. Our operations, business or assets may be materially and adversely affected by governmental interpretation and enforcement of current or future environmental, health and safety laws and regulations. In addition, our coating and dispersion operations may pose a risk of accidental contamination or injury. The damages in the event of an accident or the costs to prevent or remediate a related event could exceed both the amount of our liability insurance and our resources or otherwise have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

In addition, both of our facilities and all of our operations are subject to the plant and laboratory safety requirements of various occupational safety and health laws. We believe we have complied in all material respects with governmental regulations applicable to us. However, we may have to incur significant costs in defending or settling future claims of alleged violations of governmental regulations and compliance with these regulations may materially restrict or impede our operations in the future. In addition, our efforts to comply with or contest any regulatory actions may distract personnel or divert resources from other important initiatives.

The manufacture and use of certain products that contain our advanced materials and our Solésence[®] products are subject to extensive governmental regulation, including regulations promulgated by the FDA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and OSHA. As a result, we are required to adhere to the requirements of the regulations of governmental authorities in the United States and other countries, including regulations issued to date pertaining to REACH. These regulations could increase our cost of doing business and may render some potential markets prohibitively expensive. In addition, new rules or regulations could impose restrictions or prohibitions on certain materials being marketed with or incorporated into certain applications, which could limit our ability to sell our advanced materials and Solésence[®] products in the marketplace.

A large investor and his affiliates have significant influence on all matters requiring stockholder approval because they beneficially own a large percentage of our common stock and they may vote their shares of common stock in ways with which other stockholders disagree.

As of March 14, 2018, Bradford T. Whitmore, together with his affiliates, Grace Brothers, Ltd. and Grace Investments, Ltd., beneficially owned approximately 47% of the outstanding shares of our common stock. The current ownership position of Mr. Whitmore and his affiliates could delay, deter or prevent a change of control or adversely affect the price that investors might be willing to pay in the future for shares of our common stock. The interests of Mr. Whitmore and his affiliates may differ from the interests of our other stockholders and they may vote the common stock they beneficially own in ways with which our other stockholders disagree. R. Janet Whitmore, one of our directors since 2003 and a stockholder, is the sister of Mr. Whitmore.

We have never paid dividends.

We currently intend to retain earnings, if any, to support our growth strategy. We do not anticipate paying dividends on our stock in the foreseeable future.

Additional sales, or the availability for sale, of substantial amounts of our common stock could adversely affect the value of our common stock.

No prediction can be made as to the effect, if any, that future sales of our common stock, or the availability of our common stock for future sales, will have on the market price of our common stock. Sales of substantial amounts of our common stock in the public market and the availability of shares for future sale could adversely affect the prevailing market price of our common stock. This in turn could impair our future ability to raise capital through an offering of our equity securities.

There may be future sales or other dilution of our equity, which may adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

To the extent of our authorized but unissued shares pursuant to our certificate of incorporation, as amended, we are not restricted from issuing additional shares of common stock, including any securities that are convertible into or exchangeable for, or that represent the right to receive, common stock. The market price of our common stock could decline as a result of future sales of our common stock or the perception that such sales could occur.

Provisions in our certificate of incorporation, our by-laws, and Delaware law could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire us, discourage a takeover, and adversely affect existing stockholders.

Our certificate of incorporation, our by-laws and the Delaware General Corporation Law (the “DGCL”) contain provisions that may have the effect of making more difficult, delaying or deterring attempts by others to obtain control of our Company, even when these attempts may be in the best interests of stockholders. These include provisions on our maintaining a classified Board of Directors and limiting the stockholders’ powers to remove directors or take action by written consent instead of at a stockholders’ meeting. Our certificate of incorporation also authorizes our Board of Directors, without stockholder approval, to issue one or more series of preferred stock, which could have voting and conversion rights that adversely affect or dilute the voting power of the holders of common stock. The DGCL also imposes conditions on certain business combination transactions with “interested stockholders.”

These provisions and others that could be adopted in the future could deter unsolicited takeovers or delay or prevent changes in our control or management, including transactions in which stockholders might otherwise receive a premium for their shares over then current market prices. These provisions may also limit the ability of stockholders to approve transactions that they may deem to be in their best interests.

Failure to protect the integrity and security of individually identifiable data of our customers, vendors and employees could expose us to litigation and damage our reputation.

We receive and maintain certain personal, sensitive and confidential information about our customers, vendors and employees. The collection and use of this information is regulated at the international, federal and state levels, and is subject to certain contractual restrictions in third party contracts. Although we have implemented processes to collect and protect the integrity and security of this personal information, there can be no assurance that this information will not be obtained by unauthorized persons, or collected or used inappropriately. If our security and information systems or the systems of our employees or external business associates are compromised or our employees or external business associates fail to comply with these laws and regulations and this information is obtained by unauthorized persons, or collected or used inappropriately, it could negatively affect our reputation, as well as our operations and financial results, and could result in litigation or regulatory action against us or the imposition of costs, fines or other penalties. While we have not experienced losses related to this area, as privacy and information security laws and regulations change, we may incur additional costs to remain in compliance.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments

There are currently no open comments from the SEC Staff.

Item 2. Properties

We operate two facilities in the Chicago suburbs - a 36,000 square-foot production, research and headquarters facility in Romeoville, Illinois and a 20,000 square-foot production facility in Burr Ridge, Illinois. We also lease a 9,000 square-foot offsite warehouse in the vicinity of the Romeoville facility.

Our manufacturing operations in Burr Ridge are registered under ISO 9001, and we believe that our manufacturing operations are within the cGMP requirements of the FDA for products that require such compliance. Our facilities are also registered under ISO 14001 which is the international standard for environmental management.

The Romeoville facility houses our headquarters, advanced engineering, manufacturing (including nanoparticle coating, nanoparticle dispersion and pilot-scale manufacturing) and research and development with three applications development and formulating laboratories. The Romeoville facility has a quality control laboratory designed for the dual purposes of validating operations to cGMP and ISO standards and production process control. This laboratory is equipped to handle many routine analytical and in-process techniques that are currently required. All Romeoville manufacturing processes are registered under ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, and we believe that the particle coating processes used for our ingredients and fully formulated sunscreens and cosmetic products for personal care are in compliance with the cGMP requirements of the FDA.

We lease our Romeoville and Burr Ridge facilities. During October 2016 we entered into an amendment to our Industrial Lease Agreement for the facility in Romeoville, Illinois, which, among other things, extended the term of such lease through December 31, 2024. On March 14, 2017, we entered into a new Building Lease for the Burr Ridge facility that began in September 2017 and will end during September 2021, with our option to further extend this lease by three additional one-year periods. During 2016 we also renewed the lease for our offsite warehouse through August 2019.

We believe that our leased facilities provide sufficient capacity to fulfill current known customer demand as well as allow for the creation of substantial additional space to enable expansion of key production processes. We believe additional facilities could be obtained in the area at competitive prices if necessary to support growth. We believe that our capital expenditures made in 2017, and projected for 2018, will support currently anticipated demand from existing customers. Our actual future capacity requirements will depend on many factors, including new and potential customer acceptance of our current and potential advanced materials, applications and products, both expected and currently unplanned growth from existing customers, continued progress in our research and development activities and product testing programs and the magnitude of these activities and programs.

Item 3. Legal Proceedings

We are not a party to any pending legal proceedings or claims that we believe will result in a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, or operating results.

Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosures

Not applicable.

PART II**Item 5. Market for Registrant's Common Equity, Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities****Market Information; Holders; Dividends**

Our common stock is traded on the OTCQB marketplace, operated by OTC Markets Group, since voluntarily delisting from the Nasdaq Capital Market on March 20, 2012. Our symbol, "NANX", did not change as a result of this venue transfer. The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, the range of high and low sale prices for our common stock on the OTCQB marketplace:

	High	Low
Fiscal year ended December 31, 2017:		
First Quarter	\$ 0.78	\$ 0.57
Second Quarter	0.74	0.61
Third Quarter	0.76	0.63
Fourth Quarter	0.74	0.36
Fiscal year ended December 31, 2016:		
First Quarter	\$ 0.48	\$ 0.37
Second Quarter	0.73	0.44
Third Quarter	0.87	0.57
Fourth Quarter	0.81	0.40

On March 14, 2018, the last reported sale price of our common stock was \$0.43 per share, and there were 139 holders of record of our common stock.

We have never declared or paid any cash dividends on our common stock and do not currently anticipate paying any cash dividends or other distributions on our common stock in the foreseeable future. We intend instead to retain any future earnings for reinvestment in our business. Any future determination to pay cash dividends will be at the discretion of our Board of Directors and will be dependent upon our financial condition, results of operations, capital requirements and such other factors deemed relevant by our Board of Directors. Our Business Loan Agreement, dated as of March 4, 2018, requires us to obtain the written consent of Libertyville Bank and Trust Company prior to paying any cash dividends on our common stock.

Securities Authorized for Issuance under Equity Compensation Plan

The following table gives information about our common stock that may be issued upon the exercise of options and rights under our 2010 Equity Compensation Plan (the “2010 Equity Plan”) on December 31, 2017. The 2010 Equity Plan replaced the 2004 Equity Compensation Plan (the “2004 Plan”), the 2005 Non-Employee Director Restricted Stock Plan (as amended, the “2005 Plan”), and the Amended and Restated 2006 Stock Appreciation Rights Plan (the “2006 Plan”).

Plan Category	(a) Number of securities to be issued upon exercise of outstanding options, warrants and rights	(b) Weighted - average exercise price of outstanding options, warrants and rights	(c) Number of securities remaining available for future issuance under equity compensation plans (excluding securities reflected in column (a))
Plans Approved by Shareholders	3,228,000	\$ 0.73	796,000
Plans Not Approved by Shareholders	None	\$ —	None

Item 6. Selected Financial Data

Not required for a smaller reporting company.

Item 7. Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations

The following discussion and analysis should be read in conjunction with risks discussed in Part I, Item 1A, Risk Factors of this Form 10-K, and the financial statements and related notes thereto appearing elsewhere in this Form 10-K. When used in the following discussions, the words “anticipates,” “believes,” “estimates,” “expects,” “plans,” “intends” and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Such statements are subject to certain risks, uncertainties and contingencies that could cause actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed in, or implied by, such statements. See the “Forward Looking Statements” section in Part I, Item 1, of this Form 10-K.

Overview

Nanophase is an advanced materials and applications developer and commercial manufacturer with an integrated family of materials technologies. We produce engineered nano and “non-nano” materials for use in a variety of diverse markets: personal care including sunscreens as active ingredients and in fully formulated cosmetics of our own design, architectural coatings, industrial coating applications, abrasion-resistant additives, plastics additives, medical diagnostics, energy (including solar control) and a variety of surface finishing technologies (polishing) applications, including optics. Finally, we have expanded our offerings beyond active ingredients to include targeted full formulations of skin care products, marketed and sold by our wholly-owned subsidiary, Solésence[®], LLC.

We target markets in which we believe practical solutions may be found using our products. We work closely with current and potential customers in these target markets to identify their material and performance requirements and market our materials to various end-use applications manufacturers, and our Solésence[®] solutions to cosmetics and skin care brands. Recently developed technologies have made certain new products possible and opened potential new markets. For example, we have applied our skills at producing precisely defined nanomaterials to now create and sell larger, “non-nano” material products. Our focus is on customer need where we believe we have an advantage, as opposed to finding uses for one particular technology. We expect growth in end-user (manufacturing customers, including customers of our customers) adoption in 2018 and beyond. Our initiatives in targeted market areas are progressing at differing rates of speed, but we have been broadly moving through testing and development cycles, and in a number of cases believe we are approaching first revenue or next stage revenue with particular customers in the industries referenced above. For example, during 2015 we were granted a patent on a new type of particle surface treatment (coating), which became the cornerstone of our new product development in personal care, with first revenue recognized during 2016. In addition, through the creation of our Solésence[®], LLC subsidiary, we use this particle surface treatment to manufacture and sell fully developed solutions to targeted customers in the skin care industry, in addition to the additives we have traditionally sold in the personal care area. During 2015 and 2016 we developed and began to sell solutions in the energy management (particularly solar control) industry. We believe that the products that we have designed for this industry remain valuable to the market, although we are currently focusing the greatest part of our business development efforts on building and expanding our Solésence[®] brand and product suite. We believe that successful introduction of our finished skin care products and materials with manufacturers may lead to follow-on orders for other finished products and materials in their applications. We expect that we will both work more deeply with current customers and attract additional customers, which should help us achieve growth in these markets in 2018 and beyond.

At the same time, we look for opportunities to partner with established entities in order to further our mutual goals. During June 2017, we entered into a series of agreements with Eminess Technologies, Inc. (“ETI”), an entity that is well established in selling materials for surface finishing (polishing) applications. We intend to continue serving this market while devoting significant assets behind our Solésence[®] products. These agreements are intended to accomplish both. ETI will sell our products, in some cases by making and selling those products themselves under an exclusive license and paying us a royalty, and in other cases through an exclusive supply arrangement with us. ETI purchased equipment from us for \$36,000 and paid us a one-time fee of \$250,000 for assisting ETI in its development of dispersion technology relevant to polishing solutions.

Critical Accounting Estimates

We review long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the asset's carrying amount may not be recoverable. We conduct long-lived asset impairment analyses in accordance with Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") Accounting Standards Codification ("ASC") Topic 360-10-15, *Impairment or Disposal of Long-Lived Assets*. ASC 360-10-15 requires us to group assets and liabilities at the lowest level for which identifiable cash flows are largely independent of the cash flows of other assets and liabilities and evaluate the asset group against the sum of the undiscounted future cash flows. If the undiscounted cash flows do not indicate the carrying amount of the asset is recoverable, an impairment charge is measured as the amount by which the carrying amount of the asset group exceeds its fair value based on discounted cash flow analysis or appraisals.

Certain assumptions are necessary to assess the impact of risks and uncertainties on the financial information, such as cash flow projections, availability of capital if needed to support the ongoing operations of the business, and our expected compliance with contractual commitments. Any changes in those plans or assumptions could have a material impact on our liquidity and financial condition.

Results of Operations

Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Total revenue increased to \$12,471,000 in 2017, compared to \$10,783,000 in 2016. A substantial majority of our revenue for each year is from our largest customers, in particular, sales to our largest customer in personal care and sunscreen applications. Product revenue, the primary component of our total revenue, increased to \$12,129,000 in 2017, compared to \$10,720,000 in 2016. This increase was due both from an increase in revenue from our second largest customer (coatings), from 4% of revenue in 2016 to 11% of revenue in 2017, and to increased revenue from our largest customer (personal care). Revenue from our top three customers was approximately 61%, 11% and 4%, respectively, in 2017, compared to 69%, 4% and 5% for the same customers in 2016.

Other revenue increased to \$342,000 in 2017, compared to \$63,000 in 2016. This increase primarily related to the technology development agreement between Nanophase and ETI, which included a one-time technology development fee of \$250,000 that management has classified as "other revenue." Other revenue also includes customer-paid shipping charges, and any other customer-paid development projects.

Cost of revenue generally include costs associated with commercial production and customer development arrangements. Cost of revenue increased to \$8,621,000 in 2017, compared to \$7,543,000 in 2016. The increase in cost of revenue was primarily driven by the increase in product revenue volume, increases in the costs of zinc metal raw material, and manufacturing inefficiencies pertaining to our new personal care materials, which kept our annual gross margin similar (approximately 30%) to that of the prior year. We expect to continue new materials development, primarily using our NanoArc® synthesis and dispersion technologies, for targeted applications, new markets, and for our formulated Solésence® products during 2018 and beyond. At current revenue levels we have generated a positive gross margin, though margins have been impeded by not having enough revenue to efficiently absorb manufacturing overhead that is required to work with current customers and expected future customers. We believe that our current fixed manufacturing cost structure is sufficient to support significantly higher levels of revenue volume. The extent to which margins grow, as a percentage of total revenue, will be dependent upon revenue mix, revenue volume, our ability to continue to cut costs and pass commodity market-driven raw materials increases on to customers, and the speed and efficiency with which we are able to scale up production for our Solésence® products. We expect that, as product revenue volume increases, our fixed manufacturing costs would be more efficiently absorbed, which should lead to increased margins as we grow. We expect to continue to focus on reducing controllable variable product manufacturing costs, with potential variability related to the commodity metals markets, but may or may not realize absolute dollar gross margin growth through 2018 and beyond, dependent upon the factors discussed above.

Research and development expense, which includes all expenses relating to the technology and advanced engineering groups, primarily consists of costs associated with the development or acquisition of new product applications, new finished product formulations, and coating formulations and the cost of enhancing our manufacturing processes. As an example, we are focusing the bulk of our resources on developing new product formulations as we expand marketing and sales efforts relating to our Solésence[®]-enabled products. This work has led to several new products and additional potential new products.

Having demonstrated the capability to produce pilot quantities of mixed-metal oxides in a single crystal phase, we do not expect development of further variations on these materials to present material technological challenges. Many of these materials exhibit performance characteristics that can enable them to serve in various catalytic applications. We are now working on several related commercial opportunities using the same materials. We expect that this technique should enable us to scale to large quantity commercial volumes. We also have an ongoing advanced engineering effort that is focused on the development of new advanced materials as well as the refinement of existing nanomaterials, as dictated by our customer-driven marketing strategy. We are not certain when or if any significant revenue will be generated from the production of the materials described above.

Research and development expense increased to \$1,736,000 in 2017, compared to \$1,554,000 in 2016. The primary reasons for this increase were salary, outside testing, and materials charges associated with the development and launch of our Solésence[®] line of personal care products and related capabilities. We also had an increase in patent legal spending, in part related to additional surface treatment applications and in part related to solar control applications. We expect similar spending in this area during 2018 as we continue with these efforts.

Selling, general and administrative expense decreased to \$2,886,000 in 2017, compared to \$2,954,000 in 2016. The net decrease was primarily attributed to lower professional fees, some timing related, offset by higher testing fees associated with the launch of our Solésence[®] personal care solutions. We expect 2018 expenses in this area to be approximately 5% higher and driven largely by the selling function, as we plan to launch products in personal care, and other areas, depending on the status of certain initiatives.

We had no interest income in either 2017 or 2016. Interest expense was \$34,000 in 2017, compared to \$15,000 in 2016, due to the impact of capital leases on some of our equipment.

Inflation

We believe inflation has not had a material effect on our operations or financial position. However, supplier price increases and wage and benefit inflation, both of which represent a significant component of our costs of operations, may have a material effect on our operations and financial position in 2018 and beyond if we are unable to pass through any increases under present contracts or through to our markets in general.

Liquidity and Capital Resources

Our cash amounted to \$1,955,000 as of December 31, 2017, compared to \$1,779,000 on December 31, 2016. The net cash used in our operating activities for the year ended December 31, 2017 was \$960,000 compared to \$241,000 for the year ended December 31, 2016. This was largely due to an increase in accounts receivable and inventory as of December 31, 2017, partially offset by an increase in accounts payable as of December 31, 2017. Net cash used in investing activities amounted to \$72,000 for the year ended December 31, 2017, compared to \$165,000 for the year ended December 31, 2016. Cash capital expenditures amounted to approximately \$209,000 and \$128,000 for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. We received \$137,000 during 2017 related to the sale of fixed assets that we no longer utilize. Net cash provided by financing activities was \$1,208,000 in 2017, compared to \$910,000 in 2016. On December 20, 2017, we sold 2.5 million shares of our common stock to our largest investor for \$1,000,000 in proceeds. On February 10, 2016, we sold 2.6 million shares of our common stock to the same investor for \$988,000 in proceeds. No selling commission or other remuneration was paid in connection with either transaction. We have used, and expect to continue to use, the proceeds for general corporate purposes. Additionally, on March 4, 2016, we extended our Line of Credit Agreement with Libertyville Bank and Trust, a Wintrust Community Bank ("Libertyville"), until March 2017. During February 2017, we further extended this agreement until March 2018. Outstanding borrowings were \$300,000 and \$0 on this line of credit as of December 31, 2017, and December 31, 2016, respectively. During March 2018, we executed a new business loan agreement with Libertyville (the "New Line of Credit Agreement") on substantially similar terms, except the revolving credit limit was increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000, and there were certain limitations imposed on our ability to, among other things, incur additional indebtedness for borrowed money outside the ordinary course of business (like a capital lease, receivables factoring or a mortgage), sell, lease or use our assets as collateral for additional credit, pay cash dividends or engage in certain business transactions without Libertyville's prior written consent. Amounts due under the New Line of Credit Agreement must be paid in full on March 4, 2019. For more information regarding the New Line of Credit Agreement, see Note 3 to our Financial Statements referred to in Part II, Item 8 of this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

Our supply agreements with our largest customer, BASF, contain certain financial covenants which could potentially impact our liquidity. The most restrictive financial covenants under these agreements require that we maintain a minimum of \$1 million in cash, cash equivalents and certain investments, and that we not have the acceleration of any debt maturity having a principal amount of more than \$10 million, in order to avoid triggering the customer's potential right to transfer certain technology and equipment to that customer at a contractually-defined price. We had approximately \$2.0 million in cash on December 31, 2017 and borrowings under our line of credit of \$300,000. This supply agreement and its covenants are more fully described in Note 12, and our line of credit is more fully described in Note 3, to our Financial Statements referred to in Part II, Item 8, of this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

We believe that cash from operations and cash on hand, in addition to unused borrowing capacity, will be adequate to fund our operating plans through 2018. Given our expected growth in our Solésence[®] business, we are monitoring the temporary working capital demands that this could create, with timing being the most critical variable. Our actual future capital requirements in 2018 and beyond will depend on many factors, including customer acceptance of our current and potential advanced materials, applications, and products, continued progress in research and development activities and product testing programs, the magnitude of these activities and programs, and the costs necessary to increase and expand our manufacturing capabilities and to market and sell our advanced materials, applications, and products. Other important issues that will drive future capital requirements will be the development of new markets and new customers as well as the potential for significant unplanned growth with existing customers. Depending on the success of certain projects, we expect that capital spending relating to currently known capital needs for 2018 will be between \$400,000 and \$650,000, and we could enter into one or more financing leases to finance these acquisitions, subject to the provisions of our New Line of Credit Agreement. If those projects are delayed or ultimately prove unsuccessful, or if we fail to obtain financing on acceptable terms to us, we would expect our capital expenditures may fall below the lower end of the range. Similarly, substantial success in business development projects may cause the actual 2018 capital investment to exceed the top of this range.

Should events arise that make it appropriate for us to seek additional financing, such additional financing may not be available on acceptable terms or even at all, and any such additional financing could be dilutive to our shareholders. Such financing could be necessitated by such things as the loss of an existing customer; a significant decrease in revenue from one or more of our customers; temporary working capital demands resulting from our expected growth in our Solésence[®] business that we cannot fund with existing capital; currently unknown capital requirements considering the factors described above; new regulatory requirements that are outside our control; the need to meet previously discussed cash requirements to avoid a triggering event under our BASF agreement; or various other circumstances coming to pass that we currently do not anticipate. The failure to have access to sufficient capital to fund our business plans may result in a curtailment or other change in those plans, and under such circumstances, may raise doubt as to our ability to continue as a going concern.

On December 31, 2017, we had a net operating loss carryforward of approximately \$83 million for income tax purposes. Because the Company may have experienced "ownership changes" within the meaning of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code in connection with its various prior equity offerings, future utilization of this carryforward may be subject to certain limitations as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. If not utilized, the remaining carryforward will expire at various dates between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2037. As a result of the annual limitation and uncertainty as to the amount of future taxable income that will be earned prior to the expiration of the carryforward, we have concluded that it is likely that some portion of this carryforward will expire before ultimately becoming available to reduce income tax liabilities.

Off-Balance Sheet Arrangements

We have not created, and are not party to, any special-purpose or off-balance sheet entities for the purposes of raising capital, incurring debt or operating our business. We do not have any off-balance sheet arrangements or relationships with entities that are not consolidated into our financial statements that are reasonably likely to materially affect our liquidity or the availability of capital resources.

As more fully described in Note 3 to our Financial Statements, referenced in Part II, Item 8 and set forth on page F-11 of this Form 10-K, during July 2014 we entered into a new bank-issued letter of credit and promissory note for up to \$30,000 supporting our obligations under our facility lease agreement. No borrowings have been incurred under this promissory note.

Item 7A. Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk

Not required for a smaller reporting company.

Item 8. Financial Statements and Supplementary Data

The financial statements, with the report of independent auditors, listed in Item 15 appear on pages F-1 through F-18 of this Form 10-K.

Item 9. Changes in and Disagreements with Accountants on Accounting and Financial Disclosure

None.

Item 9A. Controls and Procedures

Evaluation of Disclosure Controls and Procedures. We are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures that are designed to ensure that information required to be disclosed by us in the reports filed by us under the Exchange Act is: (a) recorded, processed, summarized and reported within the time periods specified in the SEC's rules and forms; and (b) accumulated and communicated to our management, including our principal executive and principal financial officer, to allow timely decisions regarding required disclosures. It should be noted that in designing and evaluating our disclosure controls and procedures, we recognize that any controls and procedures, no matter how well designed and operated, can provide only reasonable assurance of achieving the desired control objectives, and that our management necessarily was required to apply its judgment regarding the design of our disclosure controls and procedures. As of the end of the period covered by this report, we conducted an evaluation, under the supervision (and with the participation) of our management, including our Chief Executive Officer (who is serving as both our principal executive officer and our principal financial officer), of the effectiveness of the design and operation of our disclosure controls and procedures pursuant to Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e) of the Exchange Act. Based on that evaluation, our Chief Executive Officer concluded that our disclosure controls and procedures were effective at reaching that level of reasonable assurance.

Management's Annual Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting. Management is responsible for the preparation, integrity and fair presentation of the financial statements and Notes to the financial statements. The financial statements were prepared in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S. and include certain amounts based on management's judgment and best estimates. Other financial information presented is consistent with the financial statements.

Management is also responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate internal control over financial reporting as defined in Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. The Company's internal control over financial reporting is designed under the supervision of the Company's principal executive and principal financial officer in order to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The Company's internal control over financial reporting includes those policies and procedures that:

- (i) Pertain to the maintenance of records that, in reasonable detail, accurately and fairly reflect the transactions and dispositions of assets of the Company;

- (ii) Provide reasonable assurance that transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and that receipts and expenditures of the Company are being made only in accordance with authorizations of management and directors of the Company; and
- (iii) Provide reasonable assurance regarding prevention or timely detection of unauthorized acquisition, use or disposition of the Company's assets that could have a material effect on the financial statements.

Because of its inherent limitations, internal control over financial reporting may not prevent or detect misstatements. Also, projections of any evaluation of effectiveness to future periods are subject to the risk that controls may become inadequate because of changes in conditions, or that the degree of compliance with the policies or procedures may deteriorate.

Management assessed the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017. In making this assessment, management used the criteria established in Internal Control–Integrated Framework (2013) issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission.

Based on our assessment and those criteria, management believes that the Company maintained effective internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017.

This annual report does not include an attestation report of the Company's registered public accounting firm regarding internal control over financial reporting. Management's report was not subject to attestation by the Company's registered public accounting firm pursuant to the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission that permit the Company to provide only management's report in this Form 10-K.

Changes in Internal Control over Financial Reporting. Frank J. Cesario resigned from his position as the Company's Chief Financial Officer effective as of November 17, 2017. Commencing on such date, Jess A. Jankowski, the Company's Chief Executive Officer, assumed the duties and responsibilities of the Company's principal financial officer, in addition to serving as the Company's principal executive officer. The Company's management, including the Chief Executive Officer and principal financial officer, confirm that there was no change in the Company's internal control over financial reporting during the quarter ended December 31, 2017 that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the Company's internal control over financial reporting.

Item 9B. Other Information

On March 26, 2018, we executed a new Business Loan Agreement (the "New Line of Credit Agreement"), dated as of March 4, 2018, with Libertyville, our primary bank, which replaces the Line of Credit Agreement with Libertyville that expired on March 4, 2018. Under the New Line of Credit Agreement, Libertyville will provide a maximum of (i) \$500,000 or (ii) two times the sum of (a) 75% of our eligible accounts receivables and (b) our cash deposited with Libertyville, whichever is less, of revolving credit to us, collateralized by a senior priority lien on our accounts receivables, inventory, equipment, general intangibles and fixtures. Interest is payable monthly on any advances at a floating interest rate of the prime rate at the time plus 1%. We must have \$1 million in cash, inclusive of the borrowed amount, at Libertyville on the date of any advance. Advances may only occur at the beginning or end of a fiscal quarter and must be repaid in full within five business days of the advance. Amounts due under the New Line of Credit Agreement must be paid in full on March 4, 2019. While the New Line of Credit Agreement is in effect, we cannot, among other things, engage in any business activities substantially different than those in which we are presently engaged, and there are limitations imposed on our ability to, among other things, incur additional indebtedness for borrowed money, including capital leases, sell, transfer, mortgage, assign, pledge, lease or grant a security interest in or encumber any of our assets, sell with recourse any of our accounts other than to Libertyville, cease operations, merge, transfer, acquire or consolidate with any other entity, change our name, dissolve or transfer or sell collateral outside the ordinary course of business, pay any cash dividends, loan, invest in or advance money or assets to any other person or entity, purchase, create or acquire any interest in any other entity, or incur any obligation as a surety or guarantor other than in the ordinary course of business, in each case without Libertyville's prior written consent.

We intend to utilize this borrowing capacity for short-term working capital needs on an as-needed basis. The foregoing description is not complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the full text of the Business Loan Agreement, the Promissory Note and the Commercial Security Agreement between the Company and Libertyville, all of which are dated March 4, 2018 and were executed on March 26, 2018, which are filed as Exhibits 10.33, 10.34 and 10.35, respectively, to this Form 10-K and are incorporated herein by reference.

PART III

Item 10. Directors, Executive Officers and Corporate Governance

DIRECTORS

Set forth below is certain information regarding the directors of the Company.

Name	Age	Position with Company	Served as Director Since	Term Expires	Class
James A. Henderson	83	Chairman of the Board of Directors	2001	2019	I
James A. McClung, Ph.D.	80	Director	2000	2019	I
R. Janet Whitmore	63	Director	2003	2019	I
		President, Chief Executive Officer			
Jess A. Jankowski	52	and Director	2009	2020	II
Richard W. Siegel, Ph.D.	80	Director	1989	2020	II
W. Ed Tyler	65	Director	2011	2020	II
George A. Vincent, III	73	Director	2007	2018	III

Mr. Henderson has served as a director of the Company since July 2001 and Chairman of the Board of Directors since August 2011. He retired as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cummins Engine Company (now Cummins Inc.) in December 1999, after joining the company in 1964. Mr. Henderson became President and Chief Operating Officer of Cummins in 1977, was promoted to President and Chief Executive Officer in 1994 and served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer from 1995 until his retirement in 1999. Mr. Henderson attended Culver Military Academy, holds an A.B. in public and international affairs from Princeton University and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. Mr. Henderson previously served as a director of AT&T, Inc., International Paper, Rohm & Haas, Hillenbrand, Inc., Inland Steel, and Ryerson, Inc. He serves as Chairman Emeritus of the Board of the Culver Education Foundation and is a past Chair of the Princeton University Board of Trustees. We believe that Mr. Henderson's extensive and diverse background in corporate leadership in technology-based companies, operations experience, and business acumen makes him a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Mr. McClung has served as a director of the Company since February 2000, and is chair of the Audit and Finance Committee. Currently he is Chair and CEO of Lismore International, a global business advisory firm. He retired as a senior vice president and executive officer for FMC Corporation (which has since split into 3 public corporations: FMC Corporation; TechnipFMC; JB Technologies), a leading producer of a diversified portfolio of chemicals and machinery. He has over 30 years of global business development and operational experience in over 75 countries. This includes managing and developing new technologies and operational processes, and strategic partnerships, for diversified global businesses, including specialized chemicals, process machinery, and health care systems while living in the United States, Europe and Africa. In addition to serving currently on the Boards of Directors of Nanophase, and 4 D Healthcare, and the Nuseed advisory board, he previously served on other corporate boards: Amway Corporation; NCCI; Turtle Wax; Beaulieu Corporation; and Hu-Friedy. He was a founding member of the US-Russia Business Council and is active in other international business organizations, such as Japan American Society, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Economic Club of Chicago and the Executive Club of Chicago. He is an active Emeritus Trustee for the College of Wooster (Ohio). Mr. McClung earned a bachelor's degree from the College of Wooster (Ohio), master's degree from the University of Kansas, and a doctorate from Michigan State University. We believe that Mr. McClung's extensive global business development and worldwide management experience, including experience in the specialty chemical industry, make him a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Ms. Whitmore joined the board in November 2003. She is a former director of Silverleaf Resorts, Inc., where she served as Chairman of the Compensation Committee and as a member of the Audit Committee. She is also a former director of Epoch Biosciences, a supplier of proprietary products used to accelerate genomic analysis. Ms. Whitmore is Founder of Benton Consulting, LLC, which specializes in business development and processes. From 1976 through 1999, Ms. Whitmore held numerous engineering and finance positions at Mobil Corporation, including Mobil's Chief Financial Analyst and Controller of Mobil's Global Petrochemicals Division. Ms. Whitmore holds a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Purdue University and an M.B.A. from Lewis University. We believe that Ms. Whitmore's combination of global financial, engineering, and management expertise makes her a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Mr. Jankowski joined the board in February 2009. He has served as the Company's President and Chief Executive Officer since that time. Mr. Jankowski has also served as the Company's principal financial officer and principal accounting officer since November 17, 2017. After joining the Company in 1995, Mr. Jankowski held offices including Vice President of Finance, Chief Financial Officer, Secretary, Treasurer and Controller. From 1990-1995 he served as Controller for two building and public works contractors in the Chicago area, during which time he had significant business development responsibilities. From 1986 to 1990, he worked for Kemper Financial Services in their accounting control corporate compliance unit, serving as unit supervisor during his last two years. Mr. Jankowski holds a B.S. from Northern Illinois University and an M.B.A. from Loyola University. He served on the TechAmerica Midwest Board from 2008 to 2012 and was a past member of the TechAmerica Midwest CFO Committee. He was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Nanobusiness Commercialization Association in 2009. Mr. Jankowski was also appointed to the Romeoville Economic Development Commission and served from 2004 to 2010. He has also served on the advisory board of NITECH (Formerly WESTEC), an Illinois Technology Enterprise Center focusing on the commercialization of advanced manufacturing technologies from 2003 to 2008. In 2009, Mr. Jankowski was appointed to the board of directors of the Northern Illinois Technology Foundation, an economic development and technology transfer entity that is part of Northern Illinois University. We believe that Mr. Jankowski's long-term and intimate experience with Nanophase operations, along with his financial and management expertise, makes him a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Dr. Siegel is a co-founder of the Company and has served as a director of the Company since 1989. Dr. Siegel served as a consultant to the Company from 1990 to 2002 with regard to the application and commercialization of nanomaterials. Dr. Siegel is an internationally recognized scientist in the field of nanomaterials. During his tenure on the research staff at Argonne National Laboratory from July 1974 to May 1995, he was the principal scientist engaged in research with the laboratory-scale synthesis process that was the progenitor of the Company's physical-vapor-synthesis production system. Dr. Siegel has been the Robert W. Hunt Professor in Materials Science and Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute since June 1995, and served as Department Head from 1995 to 2000. Dr. Siegel was the founding Director of both the Rensselaer Nanotechnology Center (2001-2015) and the U.S. National Science Foundation funded Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center for Directed Assembly of Nanostructures (2001-2013). During the period from 1995 until 1998, he was also a visiting professor at the Max Planck Institute for Microstructure Physics in Germany on an Alexander von Humboldt Research Prize received in 1994. During the period from 2003 until 2004 he was a visiting professor in Japan on a RIKEN Eminent Scientist Award. He chaired the World Technology Evaluation Center worldwide study of nanostructure science and technology for the U.S. government, has served on the Council of the Materials Research Society and as Chairman of the International Committee on Nanostructured Materials. He also served on the Committee on Materials with Sub-Micron Sized Microstructures of the National Materials Advisory Board and was the co-chairman of the Study Panel on Clusters and Cluster-Assembled Materials for the U.S. Department of Energy. He served on the Nanotechnology Technical Advisory Group to the U.S. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology during 2003-2009. Dr. Siegel holds an A.B. degree in physics from Williams College and an M.S. degree and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We believe that Dr. Siegel's value to our Board of Directors, as co-founder of the Company and inventor of our initial base technology, is self-explanatory.

Mr. Tyler joined Nanophase as a director in January 2011. Mr. Tyler is Chairman of the Board of First Industrial Realty Trust, where he has served as a director since 2000. He has also served in recent leadership positions at Ideapoint Ventures, an early stage venture fund that focuses on nanotechnologies, and Industrial Nanotech, Inc., an entity which develops and sells nanomaterial solutions. Previously, Mr. Tyler served as President and CEO of Moore Corporation Limited, a provider of data capture, information design, marketing services, digital communications and print solutions. Mr. Tyler also worked for 24 years with R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company in Chicago, beginning his career as an electronics engineer and ultimately serving as Executive Vice President, Sector President, and Chief Technology Officer. He also was responsible for 77 Capital, an early stage venture capital subsidiary of Donnelley, where he was directly responsible for investment decisions and worked closely with the portfolio companies while participating on many of their boards. Mr. Tyler is a former Chairman of the American Red Cross (Mid-America Chapter) and Campaign Chairman of the United Way of Lake County, and serves as a director for several small, private companies. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, where he is also an adjunct faculty member. We believe that Mr. Tyler's extensive and diverse background in corporate leadership in technology-based companies, operations experience, and business acumen makes him a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Mr. Vincent has served as a director of the Company since November 2007. He is the retired Chairman and President of The HallStar Company, where he served as CEO for twenty years. HallStar is a chemical manufacturer and innovator specializing in material science, marketing its products worldwide, primarily into the polymer and personal care industries. Prior to HallStar, Mr. Vincent held positions in purchasing, sales, commercial development and strategic planning with FMC Corporation (chemicals) and General Electric Company (chemicals and plastics). Mr. Vincent has served as Chairman of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA) and the Chemical Industry Council of Illinois (CICI), as well as Director of the American Chemistry Council (ACC). Mr. Vincent serves on the Boards of several closely-held companies in the chemicals and materials industry sector. Mr. Vincent holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry from Dartmouth College and an M.B.A. degree from Harvard Business School. We believe that Mr. Vincent's extensive experience in the chemicals industry and management leadership makes him a valuable member of our Board of Directors.

Meetings of the Board and Committees -- During the year ended December 31, 2017, the Board of Directors held five meetings, all of which were attended by each director. No director missed more than one committee meeting (for committees on which they served) during 2017.

Committees of the Board of Directors -- The Board of Directors has established an Audit and Finance Committee, Compensation Committee and Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee. Each operates in accordance with its charter (available on our website www.nanophase.com under the “Investor Relations” section). The members of the Audit and Finance Committee are Mr. McClung (Chairman), Mr. Vincent and Dr. Siegel. The members of the Compensation Committee are Mr. Tyler (Chairman), Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Vincent. The members of the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee are Mr. Henderson (Chairman), Mr. McClung, Dr. Siegel, Mr. Vincent, Mr. Tyler and Ms. Whitmore.

The Audit and Finance Committee generally has responsibility for retaining the Company’s independent public auditors, reviewing the plan and scope of the accountants’ annual audit, reviewing the Company’s internal control functions and financial management policies, reviewing and approving all related party transactions, and reporting to the Board of Directors regarding all of the foregoing. The Audit and Finance Committee held eight meetings during 2017. The Board of Directors has determined that Mr. Vincent and Mr. McClung are the “audit committee financial experts” as described in applicable SEC rules. Each member of the Audit and Finance Committee is independent, as defined in applicable SEC rules.

The Compensation Committee generally has responsibility for establishing executive officer and key employee compensation, reviewing, and establishing the Company’s executive compensation, evaluating our Outside Director compensation, and reporting to the Board of Directors regarding the foregoing. The Compensation Committee also has responsibility for administering the 2010 Equity Compensation Plan, as amended (the “2010 Equity Plan”), determining the number of options, if any, to be granted to the Company’s employees and consultants pursuant to the 2010 Equity Plan and reporting to the Board of Directors regarding the foregoing. Regarding most compensation matters, including executive compensation, our management provides recommendations to the Compensation Committee; however, the Compensation Committee does not delegate any of its functions to others in setting compensation. The Compensation Committee does not currently utilize external consultants in executive or director compensation matters. The Compensation Committee held five meetings during 2017. Each member of the Compensation Committee is independent, as defined in applicable SEC rules, is a “non-employee director” as defined in Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act and is an “Outside Director” as defined by the regulations under Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee generally has responsibility for evaluating and nominating candidates to serve on the Board of Directors, and for establishing and reviewing our Corporate Governance Principles. Five of the six members of the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee are independent, as defined in applicable SEC rules. The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee held one meeting during 2017.

The Board of Directors considers its role in risk oversight to focus primarily on evaluating risk at the entity and strategic levels, with management primarily responsible for managing day-to-day risk factors and presenting summary materials for those positions to the Board of Directors. Consistent with this philosophy, the Board of Directors has no formal policy as to whether the roles of Chief Executive Officer and Chairman should be segregated or combined. The Board of Directors considers the circumstances of the Company and makes a determination as to the appropriate leadership structure for the Company at that time. As of the time of this filing, the positions of CEO and Chairman are held by two individuals – Mr. Henderson serves as Chairman and Mr. Jankowski serves as CEO. Mr. Henderson brings extensive experience in corporate leadership from his own working experience and from the many Boards on which he serves or has served in the past, and Mr. Jankowski is expected to benefit from that experience. The Board of Directors believes that is the most appropriate structure for the Company at this time. Under our Corporate Governance Principles, in the event that the Chairman of the Board is not an Outside Director, the Board will elect a lead independent director, who will have the responsibility to schedule and prepare agendas for meetings of the Outside Directors, communicate with the CEO, disseminate information to the rest of the Board and raise issues with management on behalf of the Outside Directors when appropriate. The Board evaluates its leadership structure on an ongoing basis and may change it as circumstances warrant.

The Board of Directors does not have a stated policy regarding diversity, although pursuant to our Corporate Governance Principles, diversity is one factor that the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee considers when recommending directors for stockholder approval. The Board seeks experienced individuals for service who bring extensive experience in leadership, operations, finance, and engineering, particularly in areas directly applicable to the Company or its intended future endeavors.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Set forth below is certain information regarding the executive officers of the Company as of the date of this Form 10-K who are not identified above as directors.

Name	Age	Position
Kevin Cureton	56	Chief Commercial Officer
Nancy Baldwin	66	Vice President - Human Resources and Investor Relations

Mr. Cureton joined the Company in November 2012 as Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Business Development. Effective January 1, 2018, Mr. Cureton was named Chief Commercial Officer. His chemical industry experience has spanned more than twenty years with companies including twelve years at AMCOL, where one of his roles was Managing Director of its nanomaterial-based Health & Beauty Solutions division. Prior to that, he made significant contributions at Air Products, Borden, and other entities. He holds an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from Carnegie Mellon University and an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago.

Ms. Baldwin has served as the Director of Human Resources and Information Technology since joining the Company in 2000. In September of 2008, she was appointed as the Company's Vice President of Human Resources and Investor Relations. Prior to joining Nanophase, she served as Vice President of iLink Global, and Chief Human Resources Officer at the Marketing Store, a global supplier to McDonald's Corporation. Previous experience includes 14 years at Arthur Andersen, LLP & Andersen Consulting, LLP in various positions. Ms. Baldwin has a B.S. in Education from Western Illinois University and post graduate studies at Northern Illinois University. In 2010, Ms. Baldwin was appointed to the Romeoville Economic Development Commission. She is currently an active member of the Will County Three Rivers Manufacturing Human Resources Association.

The Board of Directors elects executive officers and such executive officers, subject to the terms of their employment agreements, serve at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Messrs. Jankowski and Cureton, and Ms. Baldwin, each have employment agreements with the Company. See Item 11 below. There are no family relationships among any of the directors or officers of the Company.

SECTION 16(a) BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP REPORTING COMPLIANCE

Section 16 of the Exchange Act requires the Company's officers (as defined under Section 16), directors and persons who beneficially own greater than 10% of a registered class of our equity securities to file reports of ownership and changes in ownership with the SEC. Based solely on a review of the forms we have received and on written representations from certain reporting persons that no such forms were required for them, we believe that during 2017 all Section 16 filing requirements applicable to our officers, directors and 10% beneficial owners were complied with by such persons.

CODE OF ETHICS

We have adopted a Code of Business Conduct and Ethics ("Code of Ethics") that applies to, among others, our principal executive officer, principal financial officer and principal accounting officer or controller, or persons performing similar functions. The Code of Ethics is posted on our Internet website www.nanophase.com under the "Investor Relations" section. In the event that we make any amendment to, or grant any waiver from, a provision of the Code of Ethics that requires disclosure under applicable SEC rules, we intend to disclose such amendment or waiver on our website.

Item 11. Executive Compensation

SUMMARY COMPENSATION TABLE

The following table sets forth a summary of the compensation for each of our named executive officers in U.S. dollars for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016.

Name and Principal Position	Year	Salary (\$)	Bonus (\$) (1)	Option Awards (\$) (2)	Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation (\$) (3)	All Other Compensation (\$) (4)	Total (\$)
Jess Jankowski Chief Executive Officer	2017	\$ 317,471	\$ —	\$ 44,242	\$ —	\$ 21,613	\$ 383,326
	2016	\$ 305,831	\$ —	\$ 23,247	\$ —	\$ 22,960	\$ 352,038
Kevin Cureton Chief Commercial Officer	2017	\$ 201,346	\$ —	\$ 27,310	\$ —	\$ 16,574	\$ 245,230
	2016	\$ 186,411	\$ —	\$ 14,656	\$ —	\$ 23,666	\$ 224,733
Nancy Baldwin Vice President Human Resources and Investor Relations	2017	\$ 157,342	\$ —	\$ 19,663	\$ —	\$ 9,221	\$ 186,227
	2016	\$ 166,686	\$ —	\$ 10,613	\$ —	\$ 9,348	\$ 186,647
Frank Cesario Former Chief Financial Officer (5)	2017	\$ 166,936	\$ —	\$ 19,663	\$ —	\$ 2,555	\$ 189,154
	2016	\$ 169,834	\$ —	\$ 10,613	\$ —	\$ 1,224	\$ 181,671

- (1) Any amounts earned during 2017 and 2016 would have been paid in early 2018 and 2017, respectively. Bonus compensation is driven by Company performance against its goals as ultimately determined by the Compensation Committee of the Board of Directors. A set of Company-level objectives is created at the beginning of the year, focusing on total revenue, revenue growth, particular sources of revenue growth, business development achievements, cash flows and related targets, as well as a small discretionary component designed to capture items not specifically listed. Each measure has varying levels of achievement, which is reflected in the aggregate bonus measurement. The resulting bonus calculation is then applied to each individual's bonus potential as a percentage of salary. Although total revenue growth was approximately 16% and 4% during 2017 and 2016, respectively, performance targets were not met and thus no bonus was awarded to any of the named executive officers for 2017 or 2016.
- (2) The amounts in this column represent the aggregate grant date fair value of awards granted in 2017 and 2016 in accordance with FASB ASC Topic 718. See Note 10 of the notes to our financial statements contained elsewhere in this Form 10-K for a discussion of all assumptions made by us in determining the FASB ASC Topic 718 values.
- (3) None.
- (4) The amounts in this column represent 401(k) match (total for executive officers of \$6,094 during 2017 and none during 2016), health and life insurance. Health insurance benefits are the same for all employees. Life insurance is provided in the amount of one times the annual base salary with a maximum of \$150,000.
- (5) Mr. Cesario resigned from his position as Chief Financial Officer effective November 17, 2017.

Employment Agreements

Effective as of August 12, 2009, we entered into an employment agreement with Jess Jankowski in connection with his services as President and Chief Executive Officer. No term has been assigned to Mr. Jankowski's employment agreement.

Pursuant to the terms of his employment agreement, Mr. Jankowski will receive an annual base salary of not less than \$275,000. In addition, Mr. Jankowski will be eligible for discretionary bonuses for services to be performed as an executive officer of the Company based on performance and achieving milestones approved by our Board of Directors (the "Board").

Mr. Jankowski will be eligible for such stock options and other equity compensation as the Board deems appropriate, subject to the provisions of the 2010 Equity Plan. Mr. Jankowski will also be entitled to the employee benefits made available by us generally to all of our other executive officers, subject to the terms and conditions of our employee benefit plan in effect from time to time.

In the event Mr. Jankowski's employment is terminated other than for "cause" (as such term is defined in the employment agreement), Mr. Jankowski will receive a sum equal to Mr. Jankowski's base salary in effect at the time of termination for 52 full weeks after the effective date of termination, payable in proportionate amounts on our regular pay cycle for professional employees, provided that Mr. Jankowski signs, without subsequent revocation, a separation agreement and release in a form acceptable to us. In addition, all stock options granted to Mr. Jankowski prior to termination will become fully vested and exercisable in accordance with the applicable option grant agreement and the 2010 Equity Plan. If he is terminated for cause, or if he resigns as an employee of the Company, Mr. Jankowski will not be entitled to any severance or other benefits accruing after the term of the employment agreement and such rights will be forfeited immediately upon the end of such term.

If, within two years after the occurrence of a change in control, as defined in his employment agreement, Mr. Jankowski's employment is terminated other than for cause, his responsibilities or annual compensation are materially reduced without his prior consent, or we cease to be publicly held (each, a "Trigger"), then, subject to Mr. Jankowski signing, without subsequently revoking, a separation agreement and release in a form acceptable to us, Mr. Jankowski will receive a sum equal to his base salary for 104 full weeks after the date the Trigger occurs. In addition, all stock options granted to Mr. Jankowski prior to the Trigger will become fully vested and exercisable in accordance with the applicable option grant agreement and the 2010 Equity Plan.

Effective as of November 28, 2012, we entered into an employment agreement with Mr. Kevin Cureton providing for an annual base salary of not less than \$190,000. No term has been assigned to Mr. Cureton's employment agreement. If Mr. Cureton is terminated other than for "cause" (as such term is defined in Mr. Cureton's employment agreement), Mr. Cureton will receive severance benefits in an amount equal to Mr. Cureton's base salary for 26 weeks. In addition, all stock options granted to Mr. Cureton prior to termination will become fully vested and exercisable in connection with the applicable option grant agreement and the 2010 Equity Plan. A signing bonus of \$25,000 was paid upon Mr. Cureton's acceptance of employment.

Effective as of September 25, 2008, we entered into an employment agreement with Ms. Nancy Baldwin providing for an annual full-time base salary of not less than \$150,000. No term has been assigned to Ms. Baldwin's employment agreement. If Ms. Baldwin is terminated other than for "cause" (as such term is defined in Ms. Baldwin's employment agreement), Ms. Baldwin will receive severance benefits in an amount equal to Ms. Baldwin's base salary for 26 weeks. In addition, all stock options granted to Ms. Baldwin prior to termination will become fully vested and exercisable in connection with the applicable option grant agreement and the 2010 Equity Plan.

Effective as of June 24, 2009, we entered into an employment agreement with Mr. Frank Cesario providing for an annual base salary of not less than \$150,000. We also granted to Mr. Cesario options to purchase up to 20,000 shares of common stock at an exercise price of \$1.07 per share with options for one-third of such shares becoming exercisable on each of the first three anniversaries of the date of grant. No term was assigned to Mr. Cesario's employment agreement. As subsequently amended during 2012, if Mr. Cesario would have been terminated other than for "cause" (as such term was defined in Mr. Cesario's employment agreement), Mr. Cesario would have received severance benefits in an amount equal to Mr. Cesario's base salary for 26 weeks. Mr. Cesario resigned from his position as Chief Financial Officer effective November 17, 2017 and did not receive any severance benefits under his employment agreement in connection with such resignation.

OUTSTANDING EQUITY AWARDS AT FISCAL YEAR-END

The following table sets forth information regarding each unexercised option held by each of our named executive officers as of December 31, 2017.

NAME	OPTION AWARDS				STOCK AWARDS	
	NUMBER OF SECURITIES UNDERLYING UNEXERCISED OPTIONS (#) EXERCISABLE	NUMBER OF SECURITIES UNDERLYING UNEXERCISED OPTIONS (#) UNEXERCISABLE	OPTION EXERCISE PRICE (\$)	OPTION EXPIRATION DATE	NUMBER OF SHARES OF STOCK THAT HAVE NOT VESTED (#)	MARKET VALUE OF SHARES OF STOCK THAT HAVE NOT VESTED (\$)
Jess Jankowski	23,000	-0-	\$ 3.140	05/12/18		
	30,000	-0-	\$ 1.020	05/04/19		
	27,000	-0-	\$ 1.700	05/03/20		
	85,000	-0-	\$ 1.260	05/02/21		
	98,000	-0-	\$ 0.300	08/07/22		
	90,000	-0-	\$ 0.415	02/14/23		
	90,000	-0-	\$ 0.520	02/13/24		
	54,000	27,000(1)	\$ 0.440	02/18/25		
	23,000	46,000(2)	\$ 0.420	02/23/26		
	-0-	81,000(3)	\$ 0.680	02/21/27		
Kevin Cureton	52,000	-0-	\$ 0.300	11/28/22		
	48,000	-0-	\$ 0.415	02/14/23		
	75,000	-0-	\$ 0.520	02/13/24		
	33,333	16,667(1)	\$ 0.440	02/18/25		
	14,500	29,000(2)	\$ 0.420	02/23/26		
	-0-	50,000(3)	\$ 0.680	02/21/27		
Nancy Baldwin	15,000	-0-	\$ 3.140	05/12/18		
	30,000	-0-	\$ 1.020	05/04/19		
	27,000	-0-	\$ 1.700	05/03/20		
	31,000	-0-	\$ 1.260	05/02/21		
	41,000	-0-	\$ 0.300	08/07/22		
	39,000	-0-	\$ 0.415	02/14/23		
	40,000	-0-	\$ 0.520	02/13/24		
	24,000	12,000(1)	\$ 0.440	02/18/25		
	10,500	21,000(2)	\$ 0.420	02/23/26		
	-0-	36,000(3)	\$ 0.680	02/21/27		
Frank Cesario (4)	20,000	-0-	\$ 1.070	06/24/19		
	20,000	-0-	\$ 1.700	05/03/20		
	31,000	-0-	\$ 1.260	05/02/21		
	18,204	-0-	\$ 0.440	02/18/25		
	10,500	-0-	\$ 0.420	02/23/26		

(1) The grants expiring February 18, 2025 vest in three equal installments on February 18, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

(2) The grants expiring February 23, 2026 vest in three equal installments on February 23, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

(3) The grants expiring February 21, 2027 vest in three equal installments on February 21, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

(4) Any options that were unvested and unexercisable upon Mr. Cesario's resignation from the Company effective November 17, 2017 were canceled upon his resignation. The options set forth in this table remained exercisable for 90 days after his resignation, at which time any that remained unexercised were canceled.

POTENTIAL PAYMENT UPON TERMINATION OR CHANGE IN CONTROL

Severance Benefits. Please see discussion of severance benefits under "Employment Agreements" above.

Change in Control. Upon a change in control, the 2010 Equity Plan provides that: (1) vesting under all outstanding stock options will automatically accelerate and each option will become fully exercisable; (2) the restrictions and conditions on all outstanding restricted shares shall immediately lapse; and (3) the holders of performance shares will receive a payment in settlement of the performance shares, in an amount determined by the Compensation Committee, based on the target payment for the performance period and the portion of the performance period that precedes the change in control. If the Company is not the surviving entity, the successor is required to assume all unexercised options.

Payments. The following table quantifies the estimated payments that would be made in each covered circumstance to the following named executive officers:

NAME	TERMINATION BY		INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION IN CONNECTION WITH OR FOLLOWING A CHANGE IN CONTROL (3)	
	COMPANY WITHOUT CAUSE (1)	CHANGE IN CONTROL (2)		
Jess Jankowski	\$ 326,011	\$ 6,761	\$	645,261
Kevin Cureton	\$ 105,485	\$ 4,235	\$	105,485
Nancy Baldwin	\$ 91,061	\$ 3,061	\$	91,061

- (1) This amount represents the severance benefits that would be received under the executive officer's employment agreement as described had the executive officer been terminated by the Company without cause on December 31, 2017, including the value of any stock options that would have accelerated in connection with such termination. For this purpose, the closing price of our common stock as of December 29, 2017, the last business day of 2017, was used. The amount represents the difference between the exercise price of any unvested options and \$0.52.
- (2) This amount represents an estimate of the value that would have been received under the 2010 Equity Plan had a change in control occurred as of December 31, 2017 and the executive officers benefited from an acceleration of vesting in the 2010 Equity Plan awards, as described above. For this purpose, the closing price of our common stock as of December 29, 2017, the last business day of 2017, was used. The amount represents the difference between the exercise price of any unvested options and \$0.52.
- (3) This amount represents an estimate of the payments and value (including acceleration of vesting of equity-based awards) that would have been received by the executive officers had the executive officers been terminated by the Company without cause on December 31, 2017 in connection with a change in control on this date. For this purpose, the closing price of our common stock as of December 29, 2017, the last business day of 2017, was used. The amount represents the difference between the exercise price of any unvested options and \$0.52.
- (4) Our former Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Frank Cesario, resigned from his position effective November 17, 2017 and did not receive any severance benefits or acceleration of vesting of his stock options in connection with such resignation.

DIRECTOR COMPENSATION

Upon first being elected to the Board of Directors, each director of the Company who is not an employee or consultant of the Company (an "Outside Director") is granted stock options to purchase shares of common stock at the closing price as of the date of issuance (the fair market value). This initial option grant to an Outside Director typically vests over three years, though may accelerate upon termination from the Board of Directors.

In 2017, we paid quarterly compensation to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, for an annual total of \$22,000. We paid quarterly compensation to the Chairman of the Audit and Finance Committee and to the Chairman of the Compensation Committee totaling \$18,000 to each. Each of our other Outside Directors was paid quarterly compensation for an annual total of \$16,000 per Outside Director for services performed in their capacity as a director.

During the first quarter of 2017, we granted our Outside Directors stock options totaling 69,000 shares under the 2010 Equity Plan, as follows: the Chairman of the Board of Directors received stock options to purchase 15,000 shares of our common stock, the Chairman of the Audit and Finance Committee and the Chairman of the Compensation Committee each received stock options to purchase 12,000 shares of our common stock and each of our other Outside Directors received stock options to purchase 10,000 shares of our common stock. Our Outside Directors had the following shares of our common stock underlying stock options (both vested and unvested) outstanding as of December 31, 2017: Mr. Henderson: 65,150 shares; Mr. McClung: 96,270 shares; Mr. Vincent: 86,850 shares; Ms. Whitmore: 81,100 shares; Dr. Siegel: 81,100 shares; and Mr. Tyler: 76,520 shares.

In 2005, we adopted, and our stockholders approved, the 2005 Non-Employee Director Restricted Stock Plan (the “Director Restricted Stock Plan”) which reserved 150,000 shares of our common stock to be issued to Outside Directors in the form of restricted shares. In 2005, no awards were made under the Director Restricted Stock Plan. In 2005, we also adopted the Non-Employee Director Deferred Compensation Plan (the “Director Deferred Compensation Plan”) which permits an Outside Director to defer the receipt of director fees until separation from service or the Company undergoes a change in control. We amended the Director Restricted Stock Plan in 2005 to permit an Outside Director to defer receipt of restricted stock granted under it. The deferred restricted shares are accounted for under the Director Deferred Compensation Plan and issued upon separation from service or the Company’s change in control. Under the Director Deferred Compensation Plan, the deferred fees that would have been paid in cash are deemed invested in 5-year U.S. Treasury Bonds during the deferral period. The accumulated hypothetical earnings are paid following the Outside Director’s separation from service or the Company’s change in control. The deferred fees that would have been paid as restricted shares are deemed invested in our common stock during the deferral period. The Director Deferred Compensation Plan is an unfunded, nonqualified deferred compensation arrangement. In 2009, all Outside Directors elected to defer receipts of all of the restricted shares they became entitled to under the Director Restricted Stock Plan, which was consolidated into the 2010 Equity Plan.

All Outside Directors are reimbursed for their reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in attending board and committee meetings.

2017 Outside Director Compensation

Name	Fees Earned or Paid in Cash (S)	Option Awards (S) (1)	Total (S)
James A. Henderson	\$ 22,000	\$ 8,193	\$ 30,193
James A. McClung	\$ 18,000	\$ 6,554	\$ 24,554
W. Ed Tyler	\$ 18,000	\$ 6,554	\$ 24,554
R. Janet Whitmore	\$ 16,000	\$ 5,462	\$ 21,462
George A. Vincent, III	\$ 16,000	\$ 5,462	\$ 21,462
Dr. Richard Siegel	\$ 16,000	\$ 5,462	\$ 21,462

- (1) The amounts in this column represent the aggregate grant date fair value of awards granted in fiscal 2017 in accordance with FASB ASC Topic 718. See Note 10 of the notes to our financial statements contained elsewhere in this Form 10-K for a discussion of all assumptions made by us in determining the FASB ASC Topic 718 values.

Item 12. Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management and Related Stockholder Matters

**SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF MANAGEMENT
AND PRINCIPAL STOCKHOLDERS**

The following table sets forth, as of March 14, 2018 certain information with respect to the beneficial ownership of our common stock by (1) each person known by us to own beneficially more than 5% of the outstanding shares of common stock, (2) each of our directors, (3) each of our named executive officers and (4) all of our current executive officers and directors as a group. There were 33,847,793 shares of common stock outstanding as of March 14, 2018.

Name	Number of Shares Beneficially Owned (1)	Percent of Shares Beneficially Owned
Bradford T. Whitmore	15,993,599(2)	47.3%
Spurgeon Corporation	3,034,710(3)	9.0%
Grace Brothers, Ltd.	2,433,300(4)	7.2%
John H. Conley, Jr.	2,340,000(5)	6.9%
James A. Henderson	533,215(6)	1.6%
Richard W. Siegel, Ph.D.	461,571(7)	1.4%
James A. McClung	132,683(8)	*
W. Ed Tyler	65,280(9)	*
R. Janet Whitmore	1,553,733(10)	4.6%
George A. Vincent, III	77,483(11)	*
Jess A. Jankowski	636,801(12)	1.9%
Kevin Cureton	270,667(13)	*
Nancy Baldwin	292,987(14)	*
Frank Cesario	83,783(15)	*
All current executive officers and directors as a group (9 persons)	4,024,420(16)	11.4%

Unless otherwise indicated below, the person's address is the same as the address for the Company.

*Denotes beneficial ownership of less than one percent.

- (1) Beneficial ownership is determined in accordance with the rules of the SEC. Unless otherwise indicated below, the persons in the above table have sole voting and investment power with respect to all shares of common stock shown as beneficially owned by them.
- (2) Includes 2,433,300 shares of common stock held by Grace Brothers, Ltd., 601,410 shares of common stock held by Grace Investments, Ltd. and 12,907,435 shares held by Bradford T. Whitmore, as well as 51,454 shares held by his daughter. Mr. Whitmore is a general partner of both Grace entities. In such capacities, Mr. Whitmore shares voting and investment power with respect to the shares of common stock held by the Grace entities. This information is based on information reported on a Form 4 filed on December 21, 2017 with the SEC. The address of the stockholder is 1603 Orrington Avenue, Suite 900, Evanston, Illinois 60201.
- (3) Includes 2,433,300 shares of common stock held by Grace Brothers, Ltd. and 601,410 shares of common stock held by Grace Investments, Ltd. Spurgeon Corporation is a general partner of both Grace entities and shares voting and investment power with respect to the shares of common stock held by such Grace entities. This information is based on information reported on the Form 4 referenced above. The address of the stockholder is 1603 Orrington Avenue, Suite 900, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

- (4) This information is based on information reported on the Form 4 referenced above. The address of the stockholder is 1603 Orrington Avenue, Suite 900, Evanston, Illinois 60201.
- (5) This information is based on information reported on Schedule 13G/A filed with the SEC on December 29, 2017. The address of the stockholder is 8 Rene Carr Street, Elkton, Maryland 21921.
- (6) Includes Mr. Henderson's 51,100 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (7) Includes Dr. Siegel's 71,733 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (8) Includes Mr. McClung's 85,030 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018, as well as 30,071 shares held by his spouse.
- (9) Includes Mr. Tyler's 65,280 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (10) Includes Ms. Whitmore's 71,733 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018, as well as 238,493 shares held by her children.
- (11) Includes Mr. Vincent's 77,483 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (12) Includes Mr. Jankowski's 597,000 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018, as well as 1,000 shares held by his spouse.
- (13) Includes Mr. Cureton's 270,667 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (14) Includes Ms. Baldwin's 292,000 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.
- (15) Mr. Cesario resigned from his position as Chief Financial Officer effective November 17, 2017. This information is based on Mr. Cesario's last Form 4 filing on November 17, 2017.
- (16) Includes all current executive officers and directors as a group's 1,582,026 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of options exercisable currently or within 60 days of March 14, 2018.

Item 13. Certain Relationships and Related Transactions, and Director Independence

Under our Audit and Finance Committee's charter, the Audit and Finance Committee must review and approve all related person transactions in which any executive officer, director, director nominee or more than 5% stockholder, or any of their immediate family members, has a direct or indirect material interest. The Audit and Finance Committee may not approve a related person transaction unless it is in, or not inconsistent with, our best interests and, where applicable, the terms of such transaction are at least as favorable to us as could be obtained from an unrelated third party.

We did not engage in any transactions in which a related person had or will have a direct or indirect material interest during 2017 or 2016, except for the December 20, 2017 sale of 2.5 million shares of our common stock and the February 2016 sale of 2.6 million shares of our common stock, both to our largest shareholder, Bradford T. Whitmore, at a price of \$0.40 and \$0.38 per share, respectively, for proceeds of \$1.0 million and \$988,000, respectively, which were each reviewed and approved in advance by our Audit and Finance Committee pursuant to the parameters described above. No related person transactions are currently contemplated.

Director Independence. The Board of Directors has determined that the following directors are “independent” as that term is defined in the rules and regulations of the SEC and the Nasdaq Stock Market: Mr. McClung, Mr. Henderson, Dr. Siegel, Mr. Tyler and Mr. Vincent. Though we are no longer listed on Nasdaq, our Board of Directors used the Nasdaq listing standards in making its independence determinations.

The Board of Directors has established an Audit and Finance Committee, Compensation Committee and Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee. The members of the Audit and Finance Committee are Mr. McClung (Chairman), Mr. Vincent, and Dr. Siegel. The members of the Compensation Committee are Mr. Tyler (Chairman), Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Vincent. The members of the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee are Mr. Henderson (Chairman), Mr. McClung, Dr. Siegel, Mr. Vincent, Mr. Tyler and Ms. Whitmore.

Item 14. Principal Accountant Fees and Services

Audit Fees. The aggregate amount billed by our principal accountant, RSM US LLP (“RSM”), for audit services performed for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 was approximately \$176,000 and \$142,000, respectively. Audit services include the auditing of financial statements and quarterly reviews.

Audit Related Fees. There were no audit related fees billed by RSM for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, which may include costs incurred for reviews of registration statements, assistance with Staff comment letters, and consultation on various accounting matters in support of our financial statements.

Tax Fees. There were no fees billed by our principal accountant for tax related services for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016.

All Other Fees. Other than those fees described above, during the fiscal years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, there were no other fees billed for services performed by our principal accountant.

All of the fees described above were approved by our Audit and Finance Committee.

Audit and Finance Committee Pre-Approval Policies and Procedures. Our Audit and Finance Committee pre-approves the audit and non-audit services performed by RSM, our principal accountants, in order to assure that the provision of such services does not impair RSM’s independence. Unless a type of service to be provided by RSM has received general pre-approval, it will require specific pre-approval by the Audit and Finance Committee. In addition, any proposed services exceeding pre-approval cost levels or budgeted amounts will require specific pre-approval by the Audit and Finance Committee.

The term of any pre-approval is 12 months from the date of pre-approval, unless the Audit and Finance Committee specifically provides for a different period. The Audit and Finance Committee will periodically revise the list of pre-approved services, based on subsequent determinations, and has delegated pre-approval authority to the Chairman of the Audit and Finance Committee. In the event the Chairman exercises such delegated authority, he shall report such pre-approval decisions to the Audit and Finance Committee at its next scheduled meeting. The Audit and Finance Committee does not delegate its responsibilities to pre-approve services performed by the independent auditor to management.

PART IV

Item 15. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

(a) The following documents are filed as part of this Form 10-K:

1. The following financial statements of the Company, with the report of independent registered public accounting firm, are filed as part of this Form 10-K:

Report of RSM US LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm
Balance Sheets as of December 31, 2017 and 2016
Statements of Operations for the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016
Statements of Stockholders' Equity for the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016
Statements of Cash Flows for the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016
Notes to Financial Statements
2. A list of exhibits required to be filed as part of this Form 10-K is set forth in the Exhibit Index beginning on page E-1 of this Form 10-K, and is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 16. Form 10-K Summary

NONE.

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

INDEX TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

To the Stockholders and the Board of Directors of
Nanophase Technologies Corporation

Opinion on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Nanophase Technologies Corporation (the Company) as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, the related statements of operations, stockholders' equity and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements. In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Company as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Company's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Company's financial statements based on our audits. We are a public accounting firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States) (PCAOB) and are required to be independent with respect to the Company in accordance with U.S. federal securities laws and the applicable rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the PCAOB.

We conducted our audits in accordance with the standards of the PCAOB. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether due to error or fraud. The Company is not required to have, nor were we engaged to perform, an audit of its internal control over financial reporting. As part of our audits we are required to obtain an understanding of internal control over financial reporting but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion.

Our audits included performing procedures to assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and performing procedures that respond to those risks. Such procedures included examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. Our audits also included evaluating the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

/s/ RSM US LLP

We have served as the Company's auditor since 2001.

Schaumburg, Illinois
March 30, 2018

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

BALANCE SHEETS

(in thousands except share and per share data)
As of December 31,

ASSETS	2017	2016
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 1,955	\$ 1,779
Trade accounts receivable, less allowance for doubtful accounts of \$5 on December 31, 2017 and 2016	1,115	434
Inventories, net	1,139	772
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	415	442
Total current assets	4,624	3,427
Equipment and leasehold improvements, net	1,624	1,395
Other assets, net	18	20
	<u>\$ 6,266</u>	<u>\$ 4,842</u>
LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Current liabilities:		
Line of credit	\$ 300	\$ 0
Current portion of capital lease obligations	143	107
Accounts payable	1,038	669
Accrued expenses	543	521
Total current liabilities	2,024	1,297
Long-term portion of capital lease obligations	416	110
Long-term deferred rent	410	466
Asset retirement obligations	184	178
Total long-term liabilities	1,010	754
Contingent liabilities	—	—
Stockholders' equity:		
Preferred stock, \$.01 par value, 24,088 shares authorized and no shares issued and outstanding	—	—
Common stock, \$.01 par value, 42,000,000 shares authorized; 33,847,793 and 31,229,996 shares issued and outstanding on December 31, 2017 and December 31, 2016, respectively	338	312
Additional paid-in capital	98,563	97,359
Accumulated deficit	(95,669)	(94,880)
Total stockholders' equity	3,232	2,791
	<u>\$ 6,266</u>	<u>\$ 4,842</u>

(See accompanying Notes to Financial Statements)

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS

(in thousands except share and per share data)

Years ended December 31,

2017

2016

Revenue:

Product revenue	\$ 12,129	\$ 10,720
Other revenue	342	63
Total revenue	<u>12,471</u>	<u>10,783</u>

Operating expense:

Cost of revenue	<u>8,621</u>	<u>7,543</u>
Gross profit	3,850	3,240
Research and development expense	1,736	1,554
Selling, general and administrative expense	<u>2,886</u>	<u>2,954</u>
Loss from operations	(772)	(1,268)
Interest expense	(34)	(15)
Other, net	<u>17</u>	<u>—</u>
Loss before provision for income taxes	(789)	(1,283)
Provision for income taxes	—	—
Net loss	<u>\$ (789)</u>	<u>\$ (1,283)</u>
Net loss per share-basic and diluted	<u>\$ (0.03)</u>	<u>\$ (0.04)</u>
Weighted average number of basic and diluted common shares outstanding	<u>31,335,956</u>	<u>30,911,869</u>

(See accompanying Notes to Financial Statements)

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

STATEMENTS OF STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY

(in thousands except share data)

Description	Preferred Stock		Common Stock		Additional Paid-in Capital	Accumulated Deficit	Total
	Shares	Amount	Shares	Amount			
Balance on December 31, 2015	—	\$ —	28,585,496	\$ 286	\$ 96,172	\$ (93,597)	\$ 2,861
Sale of common stock	—	—	2,600,000	26	962	—	988
Stock option exercises	—	—	44,500	—	18	—	18
Stock-based compensation	—	—	—	—	207	—	207
Net loss for the year ended December 31, 2016	—	—	—	—	—	(1,283)	(1,283)
Balance on December 31, 2016	—	\$ —	31,229,996	\$ 312	\$ 97,359	\$ (94,880)	\$ 2,791
Sale of common stock	—	—	2,500,000	25	975	—	1,000
Stock option exercises	—	—	117,797	1	46	—	47
Stock-based compensation	—	—	—	—	183	—	183
Net loss for the year ended December 31, 2017	—	—	—	—	—	(789)	(789)
Balance on December 31, 2017	—	\$ —	33,847,793	\$ 338	\$ 98,563	\$ (95,669)	\$ 3,232

(See accompanying Notes to Financial Statements)

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

	(in thousands)	
	Years ended December 31,	
	2017	2016
Operating activities:		
Net loss	\$ (789)	(1,283)
Adjustments to reconcile net loss to cash used in operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	344	610
Impairment (gain on disposal) of fixed asset	(12)	54
Share-based compensation	183	207
Changes in assets and liabilities related to operations:		
Trade accounts receivable	(681)	73
Inventories	(367)	(110)
Prepaid expenses and other assets	27	(194)
Accounts payable	369	161
Accrued expenses	(34)	241
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(960)</u>	<u>(241)</u>
Investing activities:		
Acquisition of equipment and leasehold improvements	(209)	(128)
Proceeds from disposal of equipment	137	—
Payment of accounts payable incurred for the purchase of equipment and leasehold improvements	—	(37)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(72)</u>	<u>(165)</u>
Financing activities:		
Principal payment on capital leases	(139)	(96)
Proceeds from line of credit	300	—
Proceeds from sale of common stock	1,000	988
Proceeds from exercise of stock options	47	18
Net cash provided by financing activities	<u>1,208</u>	<u>910</u>
Increase in cash and cash equivalents	176	504
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	1,779	1,275
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	<u>\$ 1,955</u>	<u>\$ 1,779</u>
Supplemental cash flow information:		
Interest paid	<u>\$ 34</u>	<u>\$ 15</u>
Supplemental non-cash investing and financing activities:		
Capital lease obligations incurred in the purchase of equipment	<u>\$ 481</u>	<u>\$ 75</u>

(See accompanying Notes to Financial Statements)

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(In thousands, except share and per share data or as otherwise noted herein)

(1) Description of Business

Nanophase Technologies Corporation (“Nanophase”, “Company”, “we”, “our”, or “us”) is an advanced materials and applications developer and commercial manufacturer with an integrated family of materials technologies. We produce engineered nano and “non-nano” materials for use in a variety of diverse markets: personal care including sunscreens as active ingredients and in fully formulated cosmetics of our own design, architectural coatings, industrial coating applications, abrasion-resistant additives, plastics additives, medical diagnostics, energy (including solar control) and a variety of surface finishing technologies (polishing) applications, including optics. We have expanded our offerings beyond active ingredients to include targeted full formulations of skin care products, marketed and sold by our wholly-owned subsidiary, Solésence[®], LLC.

We target markets in which we believe practical solutions may be found using our products. We work closely with current and potential customers in these target markets to identify their material and performance requirements and market our advanced materials to various end-use applications manufacturers, and our Solésence[®] solutions to cosmetics and skin care brands. Recently developed technologies have made certain new products possible and opened potential new markets. During 2015 we were granted a patent on a new type of particle surface treatment (coating), which became the cornerstone of our new product development in personal care, with first revenue recognized during 2016. In addition, through the creation of our Solésence[®], LLC subsidiary, we utilize this particle surface treatment to manufacture and sell fully developed solutions to targeted customers in the skin care industry, in addition to the additives we have traditionally sold in the personal care area.

Although our primary strategic focus has been the North American market, we currently sell material to customers overseas and have been working to expand our reach within foreign markets. The Company was incorporated in Illinois on November 25, 1989, and became a Delaware corporation during November 1997. Our common stock trades on the OTCQB marketplace under the symbol NANX.

While product sales comprise the majority of our revenue, we also recognize revenue from other sources from time to time. These activities are not expected to drive the long-term growth of the business. For this reason, we classify such revenue as “other revenue” in our Statements of Operations, as it does not represent revenue directly from our nanocrystalline materials.

(2) Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Use of Estimates and Risks and Uncertainties

The preparation of financial statements requires us to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results could differ from those estimates. Certain assumptions are also necessary to assess the impact of risks and uncertainties on the financial statements, such as cash flow projections, availability of capital if needed to support the ongoing operations of the business, and our expected compliance with contractual commitments. These risks and uncertainties are further discussed in Note 12. Any changes in these assumptions or business plans could have a material impact on the financial statements.

Cash

Cash primarily consists of demand deposits.

Trade Accounts Receivable

Trade accounts receivable are carried at original invoice amount less an estimate made for doubtful receivables based on a review of all outstanding amounts on a monthly basis. We determine the allowance for doubtful accounts by identifying troubled accounts and by using historical experience applied to an aging of accounts. Trade accounts receivable are written off when deemed uncollectible. Recoveries of trade accounts receivable previously written off are recorded when received. Our typical credit terms are thirty days from shipment and invoicing.

Inventories

Inventories are stated at the lower of cost, maintained on a first in, first out basis, or net realizable value. We have recorded allowances to reduce inventory relating to excess quantities of certain materials. Write-downs of inventories establish a new cost basis, which is not increased for future increases in market value of inventories or changes in estimated excess quantities.

Equipment and Leasehold Improvements

Equipment is stated at cost and is being depreciated over its estimated useful life (3-20 years) using the straight-line method. Leasehold improvements are stated at cost and are being amortized using the straight-line method over the shorter of the useful life of the asset or the term of the lease (3-7 years). Depreciation expense for leased assets is included with depreciation expense for owned assets. From time to time we have self-constructed assets. These assets are stated at cost plus the capitalization of labor and are depreciated over an estimated useful life (7-10 years) using the straight-line method.

Long Lived Assets

We review long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the asset's carrying amount may not be recoverable. We conduct long-lived asset impairment analyses in accordance with ASC 360-10-15, *Impairment or Disposal of Long-Lived Assets*. ASC 360-10-15 requires us to group assets and liabilities at the lowest level for which identifiable cash flows are largely independent of the cash flows of other assets and liabilities and evaluate the asset group against the sum of the undiscounted future cash flows. If the undiscounted cash flows do not indicate the carrying amount of the asset is recoverable, an impairment charge is measured as the amount by which the carrying amount of the asset group exceeds its fair value based on discounted cash flow analysis or appraisals.

Asset Retirement Obligations

In connection with our leased facilities, we are required to remove certain leasehold improvements upon termination of our occupancy. We follow the provisions of the FASB issued ASC 410-20, *Asset Retirement Obligations*, under which we recognize a liability for the fair value of these asset retirement obligations. The fair value of that liability is measured on an expected cash flow approach and accretion expense is recognized each period to recognize increases to the fair value of the liability due to the passage of time. Increases to the fair value of the liability, except for accretion, are added to the carrying value of the long-lived asset. Those increases are then reported in amortization expense over the estimated useful life of the long-lived asset.

Activity in the asset retirement obligation account for the years ended December 31, is as follows:

	2017	2016
Balance, beginning	\$ 178	\$ 172
Accretion of liability due to passage of time	6	6
Amortization of asset due to passage of time	—	—
Balance, ending	<u>\$ 184</u>	<u>\$ 178</u>

Financial Instruments

We follow ASC Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, which defines fair value, establishes a framework for measuring fair value, and expands disclosures about fair value measurements. The fair value framework requires the categorization of assets and liabilities into three levels based upon the assumptions (inputs) used to price the assets or liabilities. Level 1 provides the most reliable measure of fair value, whereas Level 3 generally requires significant management judgment.

Our financial instruments include cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued expenses, along with the promissory note with no related borrowings described in Note 3, and any borrowings on the working capital line of credit described in Note 3. The fair values of all financial instruments were not materially different from their carrying values.

There were no financial assets or liabilities adjusted to fair value on December 31, 2017 and 2016.

Product Revenue

Product revenue consists of sales of product that are recognized when realized and earned. This occurs when persuasive evidence of an arrangement exists, title transfers via shipment of products or when delivery has occurred, the price is fixed or determinable and collectability is reasonably assured.

Other Revenue

Other revenue may include revenue from technology license fees and paid development projects. Technology license fees and paid development projects are recognized when earned pursuant to the agreed upon contractual arrangement, when performance obligations are satisfied, the amount is fixed or determinable, and collectability is reasonably assured. We recognized a one-time technology development fee of \$250,000 in 2017 relating to our agreement with Eminess Technologies, Inc.

Shipping and handling costs are included in other revenue when products are shipped and invoiced to the customer. We include the related cost of shipping and handling in cost of goods sold.

Research and Development Expenses

Research and development expenses are recognized as expense when incurred.

Income Taxes

We account for income taxes using the liability method. As such, deferred income taxes reflect the net tax effects of temporary differences between the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities for financial reporting purposes and the amounts used for income tax purposes. Deferred tax assets and liabilities are calculated using the enacted tax rates and laws that are expected to be in effect when the anticipated reversal of these differences is scheduled to occur. Deferred tax assets are reduced by a valuation allowance when, in the opinion of management, it is more likely than not that some portion or all of the deferred tax assets will not be realized.

When tax returns are filed, it is highly certain that some positions taken would be sustained upon examination by the taxing authorities, while others are subject to uncertainty about merits of the position taken or the amount of the position that would be ultimately sustained. The benefit of a tax position is recognized in the financial statements in the period during which, based on all available evidence, management believes it is more likely than not that the position will be sustained upon examination, including the resolution of appeals or litigation processes, if any. Tax positions taken are not offset or aggregated with other positions. Tax positions that meet the more-likely-than-not recognition threshold are measured as the largest amount of tax benefit that is more than 50 percent likely of being realized upon settlement with the applicable taxing authority. The portion of the benefits associated with tax positions taken that exceeds the amount measured, as described above, is reflected as a liability for uncertain tax benefits in the accompanying balance sheets along with any associated interest and penalties that would be payable to the taxing authorities upon examination.

We have not recorded a reserve for any tax positions for which the ultimate deductibility is highly certain but for which there is uncertainty about the timing of such deductibility. We file tax returns in all appropriate jurisdictions, which includes a federal tax return and Illinois state tax return. When and if applicable, potential interest and penalty costs are accrued as incurred, with expenses recognized in selling, general and administrative expenses in the statements of operations. As of December 31, 2017 and 2016, we had no liability for unrecognized tax benefits.

Earnings Per Share

Options to purchase approximately 646,000 shares of common stock that were outstanding as of December 31, 2017 were not included in the computation of earnings per share for the year ended December 31, 2017, as the impact of such shares would be both negligible and anti-dilutive. Options to purchase approximately 859,000 shares of common stock that were outstanding as of December 31, 2016 were not included in the computation of earnings per share for the year ended December 31, 2016, as the impact of such shares would be both negligible and anti-dilutive.

New Accounting Pronouncements

During May 2014, the FASB issued Accounting Standards Update (“ASU”) No. 2014-09 (“ASU 2014-09”), *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*, and several related updates including ASU No. 2016-08 and ASU No. 2016-10, which supersedes nearly all existing revenue recognition guidance under U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. The new standard requires a company to recognize revenue when it transfers goods or services to customers in an amount that reflects the consideration that the company expects to receive for those goods or services. Additionally, the guidance requires certain disclosures designed to help users of financial statements better understand the nature, amount, timing, and uncertainty of revenue and cash flows arising from contracts with customers. ASU 2014-09 became effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2017, including interim periods within that reporting period, which is our first quarter of 2018. We adopted the provisions of ASU 2014-09 and ASU 2015-14 for the year beginning January 1, 2018 and have elected the modified retrospective approach. We have assessed the impact of adoption on our material revenue streams, evaluated the new disclosure requirements, and identified and implemented appropriate changes to our business processes, systems and controls to support recognition and disclosure under the new guidance. Based on completing this assessment, we have determined that the adoption of the guidance will not result in a material impact on our consolidated financial statements.

During February 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-02 (“ASU 2016-02”), *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard requires the recognition of assets and liabilities arising from lease transactions on the balance sheet and the disclosure of key information about leasing arrangements. Accordingly, a lessee will recognize a lease asset for its right to use the underlying asset and a lease liability for the corresponding lease obligation. Both the asset and liability will initially be measured at the present value of the future minimum lease payments over the lease term. Subsequent measurement, including the presentation of expenses and cash flows, will depend on the classification of the lease as either a finance or an operating lease. Initial costs directly attributable to negotiating and arranging the lease will be included in the asset. For leases with a term of 12 months or less, a lessee can make an accounting policy election by class of underlying asset to not recognize an asset and corresponding liability. Lessees will also be required to provide additional qualitative and quantitative disclosures regarding the amount, timing and uncertainty of cash flows arising from leases. These disclosures are intended to supplement the amounts recorded in the financial statements and provide additional information about the nature of an organization’s leasing activities. The amendments in this standard are effective for fiscal years, and interim periods within those fiscal years, beginning after December 15, 2018, with early adoption permitted. We are currently evaluating the impact its adoption will have on the presentation of our financial statements and related disclosures.

(3) Note and Line of Credit

During July 2014 we entered into a bank-issued letter of credit and related promissory note for up to \$30,000 in borrowings to support our obligations under our facility lease agreement. We then sold our certificates of deposit. No borrowings have been incurred under this promissory note. Should any borrowings occur in the future, the interest rate would be the prime rate plus 1%, with the bank having the right to “set off” or apply unpaid balances against our checking account if we fail to meet our obligations under any borrowings under the note. It is our intention to renew this note annually, for as long as we need to do so pursuant to the terms of our facility lease agreement. Because there were no amounts outstanding on the note at any time during 2017 or 2016, we have recorded no related liability on our balance sheet.

During March 2015, we entered into a Business Loan Agreement (the “Line of Credit Agreement”) with Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, a Wintrust Community Bank (“Libertyville”), our primary bank. This Line of Credit Agreement was subsequently amended on April 13, 2015 and was extended on each of March 4, 2016 and February 14, 2017. Under the Line of Credit Agreement, as amended, Libertyville will provide a maximum of \$300,000 or 75% of our eligible accounts receivable, whichever is less, of revolving credit, collateralized by a senior priority lien on our accounts receivable, inventory, equipment, general intangibles and fixtures. Interest on any borrowings would be the prime rate at the time plus 1%. Availability to draw on the line requires us to have at least \$1 million in cash, including any amounts borrowed, at Libertyville on the date of any advance. Advances may only occur at the beginning or end of a fiscal quarter and must be repaid in full within five days of the advance. Borrowings on this line were \$300,000 on December 31, 2017. These borrowings were repaid in January 2018. The Line of Credit Agreement expired on March 4, 2018.

On March 26, 2018, we executed a new Business Loan Agreement (the “New Line of Credit Agreement”), dated as of March 4, 2018, with Libertyville, which replaces the Line of Credit Agreement with Libertyville that expired on March 4, 2018. Under the New Line of Credit Agreement, Libertyville will provide a maximum of (i) \$500,000 or (ii) two times the sum of (a) 75% our eligible accounts receivables and (b) our cash deposited with Libertyville, whichever is less, of revolving credit to us, collateralized by a senior priority lien on our accounts receivables, inventory, equipment, general intangibles and fixtures. Interest is payable monthly on any advances at a floating interest rate of the prime rate at the time plus 1%. We must have \$1 million in cash, inclusive of the borrowed amount, at Libertyville on the date of any advance. Advances may only occur at the beginning or end of a fiscal quarter and must be repaid in full within five business days of the advance. Amounts due under the New Line of Credit Agreement must be paid in full on March 4, 2019. While the New Line of Credit Agreement is in effect, we cannot, among other things, engage in any business activities substantially different than those in which we are presently engaged, and there are limitations imposed on our ability to, among other things, incur additional indebtedness for borrowed money, including capital leases, sell, transfer, mortgage, assign, pledge, lease or grant a security interest in or encumber any of our assets, sell with recourse any of our accounts other than to Libertyville, cease operations, merge, transfer, acquire or consolidate with any other entity, change our name, dissolve or transfer or sell collateral outside the ordinary course of business, pay any cash dividends, loan, invest in or advance money or assets to any other person or entity, purchase, create or acquire any interest in any other entity, or incur any obligation as a surety or guarantor other than in the ordinary course of business, in each case without Libertyville’s prior written consent.

(4) Inventories

Inventories consist of the following:

	As of December 31,	
	2017	2016
Raw materials	\$ 297	\$ 283
Finished goods	863	510
	1,160	793
Allowance for excess quantities	(21)	(21)
	<u>\$ 1,139</u>	<u>\$ 772</u>

(5) Equipment and Leasehold Improvements

Equipment and leasehold improvements consist of the following:

	As of December 31,	
	2017	2016
Machinery and equipment	\$ 14,936	\$ 14,587
Office equipment	811	790
Office furniture	110	110
Leasehold improvements	4,839	4,814
Construction in progress	157	75
	20,853	20,376
Less: Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(19,229)	(18,981)
	<u>\$ 1,624</u>	<u>\$ 1,395</u>

Depreciation expense was \$336 and \$605, for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

(6) Lease Commitments

We lease our operating facilities under operating leases. During October 2016 we entered into a Third Lease Amendment related to our primary facility in Romeoville, Illinois, extending the term of the lease through December 31, 2024. The current monthly rent on this lease amounts to \$37.

During March 2017, we entered into a new Building Lease for our Burr Ridge, Illinois facility that began in September 2017 and extends through September 2021, with our having the option to further extend this lease by three additional one-year periods. The current monthly rent on this lease amounts to \$14. During 2016 we also renewed our lease for offsite warehouse in Romeoville, Illinois, through August 2019. The current monthly rent on this lease amounts to \$7.

The following is a schedule of future minimum lease payments including real estate taxes as required under the above operating leases, as well as the remaining lease payments under capital leases as referenced below:

Year ending December 31:	Operating Leases	Capital Leases
2018	\$ 699	144
2019	689	141
2020	587	134
2021	554	91
2022	420	49
Thereafter	869	—
Total minimum payments required:	<u>\$ 3,819</u>	<u>\$ 559</u>

Rent expense, including real estate taxes, under these leases amounted to \$621 and \$597, for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. Amortization expense related to assets under capital lease is included in depreciation expense.

On December 31, 2017 equipment under capital leases had a cost of \$757 with accumulated depreciation of \$43, compared to \$362 and \$62, respectively, on December 31, 2016. Principal and interest payments are due monthly under the capital lease obligations through October 2022. The remaining payments under capital leases include principal of \$559 and interest of \$100. We entered into three new capital leases during 2017 for \$481 and a 5-year duration (through 2022). We entered into one new capital lease during 2016 for \$75 and a 5-year duration (through August 2021), and recognized an impairment charge, reducing the value of two other pieces of capital equipment by \$54 in aggregate.

(7) Accrued Expenses

Accrued expenses consist of the following:

	As of December 31,	
	2017	2016
Accrued payroll and related expenses	\$ 196	\$ 167
Customer net volume rebate payable	214	201
Other	133	153
	<u>\$ 543</u>	<u>\$ 521</u>

(8) Income Taxes

Our net income tax provision, including both current and deferred, related to U.S. federal and state income taxes, is none.

A reconciliation of income tax expense to the amount computed by applying the Federal income tax rate to loss before provision for income taxes as of December 31, 2017 and 2016 is as follows:

	2017	2016
Income tax credit at statutory rates	\$ (268)	\$ (436)
Nondeductible expenses	2	2
State income tax, net of federal benefits	(45)	(66)
Effect of US tax rate change	9,284	0
Expiration of stock options	188	149
Other	0	(5)
Change in valuation allowance	(9,161)	356
	<u>\$ —</u>	<u>\$ —</u>

Deferred income taxes reflect the net tax effects of temporary differences between the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities for financial reporting purposes and the amounts used for income tax purposes. Significant components of our deferred income taxes consist of the following:

	As of December 31,	
	2017	2016
Deferred tax assets:		
Net operating loss carryforwards	\$ 23,520	\$ 31,935
Inventory and other allowances	12	16
Charitable contribution carryforwards	2	5
Excess (tax) book depreciation	577	805
Excess (tax) book amortization	53	69
Share-based compensation	885	1,328
Other accrued costs	167	219
Total deferred tax assets	25,216	34,377
Less: Valuation allowance	(25,216)	(34,377)
Deferred income taxes	\$ —	\$ —

The valuation allowance decreased approximately \$9.2 million and increased \$0.4 million for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively (with no expiring net operating loss carryforwards and credits for either period; a portion of the charitable contribution carryforward expired during 2017 and 2016) due principally to the change in the Federal tax rate, the change in State tax rate, the change in the net operating loss carryforward and uncertainty as to whether future taxable income will be generated prior to the expiration of the carryforward period. Under the Internal Revenue Code, certain ownership changes, including the prior issuance of preferred stock and our public offering of common stock, may subject us to annual limitations on the utilization of our net operating loss carryforward. As of December 31, 2017, the amounts subject to limitations have not yet been determined.

On December 22, 2017, the President of the United States signed into law the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act tax reform legislation. This legislation makes significant changes in U.S. tax law, including a reduction in the corporate tax rates, changes in net operating loss carryforwards and carrybacks and a repeal of the corporate alternative minimum tax. The legislation reduced the U.S. corporate tax rate from the current rate of 34% to 21%. As a result of the enacted law, the Company was required to revalue deferred tax assets and liabilities at the enacted rate. This revaluation resulted in a reduction in the deferred tax asset and valuation allowance of \$9.3 million. The other provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act did not have a material impact on the financial statements as of December 31, 2017 and for the year then ended. With the new legislation, the Securities and Exchange Commission issued guidance under Staff Accounting Bulletin No. 118, Income Tax Accounting Implications of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (“SAB 118”) directing taxpayers to consider the impact of the U.S. legislation as “provisional” when it does not have the necessary information prepared or analyzed in reasonable detail to complete its accounting for the change in tax law. There is no impact on the current year income tax expense for the federal corporate tax rate change due to our current year taxable loss and the calculation related to the change is complete.

We had net operating loss carryforwards for tax purposes of approximately \$83 million on December 31, 2017, which expire between 2018 and 2037.

(9) Capital Stock

As of December 31, 2017 and 2016, we had 24,088 authorized but unissued shares of preferred stock. In addition, as of December 31, 2017, 796,000 authorized but unissued shares of common stock have been reserved for future equity grants under our 2010 Equity Compensation Plan. During August 2016, our stockholders authorized an additional 7,000,000 shares of common stock, increasing our authorized shares of common stock from 35,000,000 to 42,000,000 authorized shares. Our stockholders also authorized an additional 1,200,000 shares of common stock that may be issued pursuant to our 2010 Equity Compensation Plan.

(10) Stock Options and Stock Grants

We have entered into stock option agreements with certain officers, employees and directors. The stock options generally expire ten years from the date of grant.

Employee Stock Options

We follow ASC Topic 718, *Share-Based Payments*, in which compensation expense is recognized only for share-based payments expected to vest. We recognized compensation expense related to stock options of \$183 and \$207 for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

As of December 31, 2017, there was approximately \$241 of total unrecognized compensation cost related to non-vested share-based compensation arrangements granted under our stock option plans. That cost is expected to be recognized over a remaining weighted-average period of 1.9 years.

The following table illustrates the various assumptions used to calculate the Black-Scholes option pricing model for options granted for all years presented:

	Years Ended December 31,	
	2017	2016
Weighted-average risk-free interest rates:	2.1%	1.5%
Dividend yield:	0.00%	0.00%
Weighted-average expected life of the option:	7 years	7 years
Weighted-average expected stock price volatility:	94%	95%
Weighted-average fair value of the options granted:	\$0.55	\$0.36

We use the Black-Scholes option pricing model to determine the fair value of stock-based compensation. The Black-Scholes model requires us to make several assumptions, including the estimated length of time employees will retain their vested stock options before exercising them ("expected term"), the estimated volatility of our common stock price over the expected term and estimated forfeitures. Expected price volatility of the fiscal 2017 and 2016 grants is based on the daily market rate changes of our stock going back to January 1, 2011. The shares granted in fiscal 2017 and 2016 had a vesting period of three years and a contractual life of 10 years. Forfeitures were estimated at 4% for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, based on our historical experience. The Black-Scholes model also requires a risk-free interest rate, which is based on the U.S. Treasury yield curve in effect at the time of the grant, and the dividend yield on our common stock, which is assumed to be zero since we do not pay dividends and have no current plans to do so in the future. Changes in these assumptions can materially affect the estimate of fair value of stock-based compensation and consequently, the related expense recognized on the statement of operations. We recognize stock-based compensation expense on a straight-line basis.

The following table summarizes the option activity for our employees and directors during the year ended December 31, 2017:

Options	(rounded) Shares	Weighted Average Exercise Price per Share	Weighted Average Remaining Contractual Term (years)	Aggregate Intrinsic Value
Outstanding on January 1, 2017	2,933,000	\$ 0.81		
Granted	515,000	\$ 0.68		
Exercised	(118,000)	\$ 0.40		
Forfeited or expired	(189,000)	\$ 2.08		
Outstanding on December 31, 2017	3,141,000	\$ 0.73	5.8	\$ 183
Exercisable on December 31, 2017	2,296,000	\$ 0.79	4.8	\$ 147
Shares available for grant	796,000			

The aggregate intrinsic value in the table above is based on our closing stock price of \$0.52 on the last business day for the year ended December 31, 2017.

During the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, the total intrinsic value of our stock options exercised was \$26 and \$19, respectively. Cash received for option exercises was \$47 and \$18 during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. We had approximately 118,000 options exercised during the year ended December 31, 2017, compared to 44,000 in 2016. Based on our election of the “with and without” approach, no realized tax benefits from stock options were recognized for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016.

(11) 401(k) Profit-Sharing Plan

We have a 401(k) profit-sharing plan covering substantially all employees who meet defined service requirements. During 2017, we implemented a new Company contribution program, in which 10% of the employee’s contribution will be matched up to an 8% contribution (for a match of up to 0.8% of a participant’s salary). Contributions made in 2017 aggregated \$19. No contributions were made in 2016.

(12) Significant Customers and Contingencies

Revenue from three customers constituted approximately 61%, 11% and 4%, respectively, of our 2017 revenue. Amounts included in accounts receivable on December 31, 2017 relating to these three customers were approximately \$6, \$446 and \$35, respectively. Revenue from these three customers constituted approximately 69%, 4% and 5%, respectively, of our 2016 revenue. Amounts included in accounts receivable on December 31, 2016 relating to these three customers were approximately \$6, \$432 and \$35, respectively. The loss of one of these significant customers or the failure to attract new customers could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

We currently have exclusive supply agreements with BASF Corporation (“BASF”), our largest customer, that have contingencies outlined which could potentially result in the license of technology and/or the sale of production equipment from the Company to the customer intended to provide capacity sufficient to meet the customer’s production needs. This outcome may occur if we fail to meet certain performance requirements, certain other obligations and/or certain financial condition covenants. The financial condition covenants in one of our supply agreements with BASF “trigger” a technology transfer right (license and equipment sale at BASF’s option) in the event (a) that earnings for the twelve-month period ending with our most recently published quarterly financial statements are less than zero and our cash, cash equivalents and certain investments are less than \$1 million, or (b) of an acceleration of any debt maturity having a principal amount of more than \$10 million. Our supply agreements with BASF also “trigger” a technology transfer right in the event of our insolvency, as further defined within the agreements. In the event of an equipment sale, upon incurring a triggering event, the equipment would be sold to the customer at either 115% of the equipment’s net book value or the greater of 30% of the original book value of such equipment, and any associated upgrades to it, or 115% of the equipment’s net book value, depending on the equipment and related products.

We believe that we have sufficient cash and credit availability (See Liquidity and Capital Resources in Management’s Discussion and Analysis in Part II, Item 7 of this Form 10-K for a further discussion, as well as the description of our Line of Credit Agreement described in Note 3) to operate our business during 2018. If a triggering event were to occur and BASF elected to proceed with the license and related equipment sale mentioned above, we would receive royalty payments from this customer for products sold using our technology; however, we would lose both significant revenue and the ability to generate significant revenue to replace that which was lost in the near term. Replacement of necessary equipment that could be purchased and removed by the customer pursuant to this triggering event could take in excess of twelve months. Any additional capital outlays required to rebuild capacity would probably be greater than the proceeds from the purchase of the assets as dictated by our agreement with the customer. Similar consequences would occur if we were determined to have materially breached certain other provisions of the supply agreement with BASF. Any such event would also likely result in the loss of many of our key staff and line employees due to economic realities. We believe that our employees are a critical component of our success and it could be difficult to replace them quickly. Given the occurrence of any such event, we might not be able to hire and retain skilled employees given the stigma relating to such an event and its impact on us. Finally, any shortfall in capital needed to operate the business as management intends, including with respect to avoiding this triggering event as described above, may result in a curtailment of certain activities or anticipated investments.

We expect to expend resources on research, development and product testing, and in expanding current capacity or capability for new business. In addition, we may incur significant costs in preparing, filing, prosecuting, maintaining and enforcing our patents and other proprietary rights. We may need additional financing if we were to lose an existing customer or suffer a significant decrease in revenue from one or more of our customers or because of currently unknown capital requirements, new regulatory requirements or the need to meet the cash requirements discussed above to avoid a triggering event under our BASF agreement. Given our expected growth in our Solésence® business, we may also have temporary working capital demands that we cannot fund with existing capital, while remaining in compliance with the covenants included in our BASF agreement described above. If necessary, we may seek funding through public or private financing and through contracts with governmental entities or other companies. Additional financing may not be available on acceptable terms or at all, and any such additional financing could be dilutive to our shareholders. If we are unable to obtain adequate funds, we may be required to delay, scale-back or eliminate some of our manufacturing and marketing operations or we may need to obtain funds through arrangements on less favorable terms. Such circumstances could raise doubt as to our ability to continue as a going concern. If we obtain funding on unfavorable terms, we may be required to relinquish rights to some of our intellectual property.

(13) Business Segmentation and Geographical Distribution

Revenue from international sources approximated \$1,835 and \$1,039 for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. As part of our revenue from international sources, we recognized approximately \$1,713 and \$902 in product revenue from a number of German companies, in the aggregate, for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Our operations comprise a single business segment and all of our long-lived assets are located within the United States.

(14) Subsequent Events

As discussed in Note 3, the Line of Credit Agreement with our primary bank (Libertyville) expired in March 2018, but during March 2018 we executed the New Line of Credit Agreement with Libertyville. Under the New Line of Credit Agreement, Libertyville will provide a maximum of (i) \$500,000 or (ii) two times the sum of (a) 75% of our eligible accounts receivables and (b) our cash deposited with Libertyville, whichever is less, of revolving credit to us, collateralized by a senior priority lien on our accounts receivables, inventory, equipment, general intangibles and fixtures. Interest is payable monthly on any advances at a floating interest rate of the prime rate at the time plus 1%. We must have \$1 million in cash, inclusive of the borrowed amount, at Libertyville on the date of any advance. Advances may only occur at the beginning or end of a fiscal quarter and must be repaid in full within five business days of the advance. Amounts due under the New Line of Credit Agreement must be paid in full on March 4, 2019. While the New Line of Credit Agreement is in effect, we cannot, among other things, engage in any business activities substantially different than those in which we are presently engaged, and there are limitations imposed on our ability to, among other things, incur additional indebtedness for borrowed money, including capital leases, sell, transfer, mortgage, assign, pledge, lease or grant a security interest in or encumber any of our assets, sell with recourse any of our accounts other than to Libertyville, cease operations, merge, transfer, acquire or consolidate with any other entity, change our name, dissolve or transfer or sell collateral outside the ordinary course of business, pay any cash dividends, loan, invest in or advance money or assets to any other person or entity, purchase, create or acquire any interest in any other entity, or incur any obligation as a surety or guarantor other than in the ordinary course of business, in each case without Libertyville's prior written consent.

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit Number

- [2](#) Plan and Agreement of Merger dated as of November 25, 1997 by and between the Company and its Illinois predecessor, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 2 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997 (the "1997 10-K"), SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [3\(i\).1](#) Certificate of Incorporation of the Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the 1997 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [3\(i\).2](#) First Amendment to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Company dated July 27, 2006, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.3 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed July 27, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [3\(i\).3](#) Second Amendment to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Company dated August 23, 2010, incorporated by reference to Exhibit A of the Company's Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed July 9, 2010, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [3\(i\).4](#) Third Amendment to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 29, 2016.
- [3\(ii\).1](#) By-Laws of the Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.2 to the 1997 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [4.1](#) Specimen stock certificate representing common stock, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-1/A filed November 4, 1997 (File No. 333-36937) (the "Form S-1/A").
- [4.2](#) Form of Warrants, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-1 filed October 1, 1997 (File No. 333-36937) (the "IPO S-1").
- [4.3](#) Certificate of Designations of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.4 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1998, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [4.4](#) Stock Purchase Agreement dated March 23, 2004 between the Company and Altana Chemie AG, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.10 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 (the "2003 10-K"), SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [4.5](#) Registration Rights Agreement dated March 23, 2004 between the Company and Altana Chemie AG, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.11 to the 2003 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [4.6](#) Stock Purchase Agreement dated August 25, 2006 between the Company and Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials CMP Holdings, Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 28, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [4.7](#) Registration Rights Agreement dated August 25, 2006 between the Company and Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials CMP Holdings, Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.2 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 28, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333.

- [4.8](#) Common Stock Purchase Agreement, dated February 10, 2016, between the Company and Bradford T. Whitmore, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed February 10, 2016.
- [4.9](#) Common Stock Purchase Agreement, dated December 19, 2017, between the Company and Bradford T. Whitmore, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed December 21, 2017.
- [10.1](#) Industrial Building Lease dated September 15, 2004 between the Company and the Village of Burr Ridge, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.32 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004 (the "2004 10-K"), SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.2](#) Industrial Building Lease Agreement between Centerpoint Properties Trust (formerly CP Financing Trust) and the Company, dated June 15, 2000, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.23 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000 (the "2000 10-K"), SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.3](#) Lease Amendment effective October 1, 2005 between the Company and Centerpoint Properties Trust, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed October 20, 2005, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.4](#) Second Amendment to Industrial Lease Agreement, dated as of November 13, 2014 between the Company and MLRP 1319 Marquette LLC, successor-in-interest to Centerpoint Properties Trust, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.4 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014.
- [10.5](#) Third Amendment to Industrial Lease Agreement, entered into on October 17, 2016 and effective October 1, 2016, by and between the Company and 1319 Marquette, LLC, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed October 19, 2016.
- [10.6](#) Mutual Cooperation Agreement entered into on January 17, 2012, by and among the Company, C.I. Kasei Co., Ltd. and CIK NanoTek Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed January 20, 2012, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.7](#) Trademark Ownership Assignment Agreement, dated March 31, 2012, between the Company and CIK NanoTek Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed April 4, 2012, SEC File No 000-22333.
- [10.8](#) Memorandum on the Payment of Royalty, dated March 31, 2012, between the Company and CIK NanoTek Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed April 4, 2012, SEC File No 000-22333.
- [10.9](#) Supply Agreement between the Company and Schering-Plough HealthCare Products, Inc. dated as of March 15, 1997, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.17 to the Form S-1/A.
- [10.10*](#) Zinc Oxide Supply Agreement dated as of September 16, 1999 between the Company and BASF Corporation, as assignee, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.22 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1999, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.11*](#) Amendment No. 1 to Zinc Oxide Supply Agreement dated as of January, 2001 between the Company and BASF Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.24 to the 2000 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.12](#) Amendment No. 2. to Zinc Oxide Supply Agreement dated as of March 17, 2003 between the Company and BASF Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.26 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002 (the "2002 10-K"), SEC File No. 000-22333.

- [10.13*](#) Amendment No. 3 to Zinc Oxide Supply Agreement entered into on December 2, 2012, between the Company and BASF Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 of the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed December 6, 2012, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.14](#) Z-COTE HP-2 Brand Supply Agreement dated May 15, 2006 between the Company and BASF Corporation, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed June 20, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.15*](#) Amended and Restated Cooperation Agreement dated August 25, 2006 between the Company and Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials CMP Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.3 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 28, 2006, SEC File No. 000- 22333.
- [10.16](#) Supply Agreement effective as of March 23, 2009, between the Company and Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials CMP Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.56 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.17*](#) Distributor Agreement dated October 24, 2005 between Johnson Matthey Catalog Company, Inc., d/b/a ALFA AESAR and the Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed November 1, 2005, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.18*](#) Supply Agreement dated March 3, 2006 between Roche Diagnostics GmbH and the Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 9, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.19*](#) First Amendment to the Supply Agreement entered into on November 19, 2014 between the Company and Roche Diagnostics GmbH, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed November 25, 2014.
- [10.20*](#) Second Amendment to the Supply Agreement, entered into on November 21, 2016, between the Company and Roche Diagnostics GmbH, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed November 28, 2016.
- [10.21](#) Joint Development Agreement dated March 23, 2004 between the Company and Altana Chemie AG, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.29 to the 2003 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.22*](#) Agreement dated July 7, 2008 between the Company and Altana Chemie GmbH, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed July 18, 2008, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.23*](#) Settlement and Termination Agreement, dated August 20, 2010, between the Company and Altana Chemie GmbH, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 25, 2010, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.24*](#) Supply Agreement, dated August 20, 2010, between the Company and Altana Chemie GmbH, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 25, 2010, SEC File No. 000-22333.
- [10.25*](#) Supply Agreement, dated as of March 31, 2016, between the Company and Ester Solutions Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed April 6, 2016.

- [10.26](#) Business Loan Agreement, dated March 4, 2015, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 10, 2015.
- [10.27](#) Promissory Note, dated March 4, 2015, granted by the Company in favor of Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 10, 2015.
- [10.28](#) Commercial Security Agreement, dated March 4, 2015, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.3 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 10, 2015.
- [10.29](#) Change in Terms Agreement and Business Loan Agreement, dated April 13, 2015, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2015.
- [10.30](#) Business Loan Agreement, dated March 4, 2016, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 of the Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 10, 2016.
- [10.31](#) Change in Terms Agreement, dated March 4, 2016, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 of the Current Report on Form 8-K filed March 10, 2016.
- [10.32](#) Change in Terms Agreement, dated February 14, 2017, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.32 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016.
- [10.33](#) Business Loan Agreement, executed by the Company on March 26, 2018, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company.
- [10.34](#) Promissory Note, executed by the Company on March 26, 2018, granted by the Company in favor of Libertyville Bank and Trust Company.
- [10.35](#) Commercial Security Agreement, executed by the Company on March 26, 2018, between the Company and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company.
- [10.36](#) Employment Agreement effective as of September 25, 2008, between the Company and Nancy Baldwin, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed October 2, 2008, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.37](#) Employment Agreement dated June 24, 2009 between the Company and Frank Cesario, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed June 26, 2009, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.38](#) Employment Agreement effective August 12, 2009 between the Company and Jess Jankowski, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.3 to the Company's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2009, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.39](#) Employment Agreement dated November 28, 2012, between the Company and Kevin Cureton, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.36 to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.40](#) Form of Indemnification Agreement between the Company and each of its directors and executive officers, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to the Form S-1/A. +
- [10.41](#) Nanophase Technologies Corporation 2004 Equity Compensation Plan ("2004 Equity Plan"), incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4 to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-8 (File No. 333-119466). +
- [10.42](#) First Amendment to 2004 Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed July 27, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333. +

- [10.43](#) Form of Stock Option Agreement under the 2004 Equity Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.13 to the 2004 10-K, SEC File No. 000- 22333. +
- [10.44](#) Form of Restricted Share Grant Agreement under the 2004 Equity Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.14 to the 2004 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.45](#) Form of Performance Share Grant Agreement under the 2004 Equity Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.15 to the 2004 10-K, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.46](#) Nanophase Technologies Corporation Non-Employee Director Deferred Compensation Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.2 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed January 9, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.47](#) 2006 Stock Appreciation Rights Plan (the “2006 Plan”), incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed October 3, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.48](#) Amended and Restated 2006 Stock Appreciation Rights Plan, adopted April 8, 2009, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.1 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed April 9, 2009, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.49](#) Form of Grant Agreement under the 2006 Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.2 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed October 3, 2006, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.50](#) 2008 Long-Term Cash Incentive Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed July 25, 2008, SEC File No. 000-22333. +
- [10.51](#) Nanophase Technologies Corporation 2010 Equity Compensation Plan, as amended, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed August 29, 2016. +
- [10.52](#) Form of Stock Option Award Agreement under the 2010 Equity Compensation Plan, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.47 to the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013. +
- [10.53](#) Building Lease, dated as of September 15, 2010, between the Company and the Village of Burr Ridge, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.50 to the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016.
- [10.54](#) Building Lease, dated as of March 13, 2017, between the Company and the Village of Burr Ridge, incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.51 to the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016.
- [10.55*](#) Know-How License Agreement, executed by the Company on June 26, 2017, between the Company and Eminess Technologies, Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 of the Current Report on Form 8-K filed June 29, 2017.
- [10.56*](#) Exclusive Supply Agreement, executed by the Company on June 26, 2017, between the Company and Eminess Technologies, Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 of the Current Report on Form 8-K filed June 29, 2017.
- [10.57](#) Technology Development Agreement, executed by the Company on June 26, 2017, between the Company and Eminess Technologies, Inc., incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.3 of the Current Report on Form 8-K filed June 29, 2017.
- [21.1](#) Subsidiary of the Company.
- [23.1](#) Consent of RSM US LLP.
- [31.1](#) Certification of the Chief Executive Officer (principal executive officer and principal financial officer) pursuant to Rules 13a-14(a) and 15d-14(a) under the Exchange Act.
- [32](#) Certification of the Chief Executive Officer (principal executive officer and principal financial officer) pursuant to 18 U.S.C. Section 1350.
- 101 The following materials from the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017, formatted in XBRL (Extensible Business Reporting Language): (1) the Balance Sheets, (2) the Statements of Operations, (3) the Statements of Cash Flows, (4) the Statements of Stockholders’ Equity, and (5) the Notes to the Financial Statements.
- * Confidentiality previously granted for portions of this agreement.
- + Indicates management contracts or compensatory plans or arrangements.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, on the 30th day of March, 2018.

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

By: /s/ Jess A. Jankowski

Jess A. Jankowski

President and Chief Executive Officer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, this Report has been signed below by the following persons on behalf of the registrant and in the capacities indicated on the 30th day of March, 2018.

Signature	Title
<u>/s/ Jess A. Jankowski</u> Jess A. Jankowski	President, Chief Executive Officer (principal executive officer, principal financial officer, and principal accounting officer) and Director
<u>/s/ James A. Henderson</u> James A. Henderson	Chairman of the Board of Directors
<u>/s/ George A. Vincent, III</u> George A. Vincent, III	Director
<u>/s/ James A. McClung</u> James A. McClung	Director
<u>/s/ Richard W. Siegel</u> Richard W. Siegel	Director
<u>/s/ W. Ed Tyler</u> W. Ed Tyler	Director
<u>/s/ R. Janet Whitmore</u> R. Janet Whitmore	Director

BUSINESS LOAN AGREEMENT (ASSET BASED)

Borrower: Nanophase Technologies Corporation
1319 Marquette Drive
Romeoville, IL 60446

Lender: Libertyville Bank and Trust Company
507 N. Milwaukee Ave
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 367-6800

THIS BUSINESS LOAN AGREEMENT (ASSET BASED) dated March 4, 2018, is made and executed between Nanophase Technologies Corporation (“Borrower”) and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company (“Lender”) on the following terms and conditions. Borrower has received prior commercial loans from Lender or has applied to Lender for a commercial loan or loans or other financial accommodations, including those which may be described on any exhibit or schedule attached to this Agreement. Borrower understands and agrees that: (A) in granting, renewing, or extending any Loan, Lender is relying upon Borrower’s representations, warranties, and agreements as set forth in this Agreement; (B) the granting, renewing, or extending of any Loan by Lender at all times shall be subject to Lender’s sole judgment and discretion; and (C) all such Loans shall be and remain subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. This Agreement shall apply to any and all present and future loans, loan advances, extension of credit, financial accommodations and other agreements and undertakings of every nature and kind that may be entered into by and between Borrower and Lender now and in the future.

TERM. This Agreement shall be effective as of March 4, 2018, and shall continue in full force and effect until such time as all of Borrower’s Loans in favor of Lender have been paid in full, including principal, interest, costs, expenses, attorneys’ fees, and other fees and charges, or until such time as the parties may agree in writing to terminate this Agreement.

ADVANCE AUTHORITY. The following person or persons are authorized to request advances and authorize payments under the line of credit until Lender receives from Borrower, at Lender’s address shown above, written notice of revocation of such authority: **Jess Jankowski, President of Nanophase Technologies Corporation.**

LINE OF CREDIT. Lender agrees to make Advances to Borrower from time to time from the date of this Agreement to the Expiration Date, provided the aggregate amount of such Advances outstanding at any time does not exceed the Borrowing Base. Within the foregoing limits, Borrower may borrow, partially or wholly prepay, and reborrow under this Agreement as follows:

Conditions Precedent to Each Advance. Lender’s obligation to make any Advance to or for the account of Borrower under this Agreement is subject to the following conditions precedent, with all documents, instruments, opinions, reports, and other items required under this Agreement to be in form and substance satisfactory to Lender:

- (1) Lender shall have received evidence that this Agreement and all Related Documents have been duly authorized, executed, and delivered by Borrower to Lender.
- (2) Lender shall have received such opinions of counsel, supplemental opinions, and documents as Lender may request.
- (3) The security interests in the Collateral shall have been duly authorized, created, and perfected with first lien priority and shall be in full force and effect.
- (4) All guaranties required by Lender for the credit facility(ies) shall have been executed by each Guarantor, delivered to Lender, and be in full force and effect.
- (5) Lender, at its option and for its sole benefit, shall have conducted an audit of Borrower’s Accounts, books, records, and operations, and Lender shall be satisfied as to their condition.
- (6) Borrower shall have paid to Lender all fees, costs, and expenses specified in this Agreement and the Related Documents as are then due and payable.
- (7) There shall not exist at the time of any Advance a condition which would constitute an Event of Default under this Agreement, and Borrower shall have delivered to Lender the compliance certificate called for in the paragraph below titled “Compliance Certificate.”

Making Loan Advances. Advances under this credit facility, as well as directions for payment from Borrower’s accounts, may be requested orally or in writing by authorized persons. Lender may, but need not, require that all oral requests be confirmed in writing. Each Advance shall be conclusively deemed to have been made at the request of and for the benefit of Borrower (1) when credited to any deposit account of Borrower maintained with Lender or (2) when advanced in accordance with the instructions of an authorized person. Lender, at its option, may set a cutoff time, after which all requests for Advances will be treated as having been requested on the next succeeding Business Day.

Mandatory Loan Repayments. If at any time the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding Advances shall exceed the applicable Borrowing Base, Borrower, immediately upon written or oral notice from Lender, shall pay to Lender an amount equal to the difference between the outstanding principal balance of the Advances and the Borrowing Base. On the Expiration Date, Borrower shall pay to Lender in full the aggregate unpaid principal amount of all Advances then outstanding and all accrued unpaid interest, together with all other applicable fees, costs and charges, if any, not yet paid.

Loan Account. Lender shall maintain on its books a record of account in which Lender shall make entries for each Advance and such other debits and credits as shall be appropriate in connection with the credit facility. Lender shall provide Borrower with periodic statements of Borrower’s account, which statements shall be considered to be correct and conclusively binding on Borrower unless Borrower notifies Lender to the contrary within thirty (30) days after Borrower’s receipt of any such statement which Borrower deems to be incorrect.

COLLATERAL. To secure payment of the Primary Credit Facility and performance of all other Loans, obligations and duties owed by Borrower to Lender, Borrower (and others, if required) shall grant to Lender Security Interests in such property and assets as Lender may require. Lender’s Security Interests in the Collateral shall be continuing liens and shall include the proceeds and products of the Collateral, including without limitation the proceeds of any insurance. With respect to the Collateral, Borrower agrees and represents and warrants to Lender:

Perfection of Security Interests. Borrower agrees to execute all documents perfecting Lender’s Security Interest and to take whatever actions are requested by Lender to perfect and continue Lender’s Security Interests in the Collateral. Upon request of Lender, Borrower will deliver to Lender any and all of the documents evidencing or constituting the Collateral, and Borrower will note Lender’s interest upon any and all chattel paper and instruments if not delivered to Lender for possession by Lender. Contemporaneous with the execution of this Agreement, Borrower will execute one or more UCC financing statements and any similar statements as may be required by applicable law, and Lender will file such financing statements and all such similar statements in the appropriate location or locations. Borrower hereby appoints Lender as its irrevocable attorney-in-fact for the purpose of executing any documents necessary to perfect or to continue any Security Interest. Lender may at any time, and without further authorization from Borrower, file a carbon, photograph, facsimile, or other reproduction of any financing statement for use as a financing statement. Borrower will reimburse Lender for all expenses for the perfection, termination, and the continuation of the perfection of Lender’s security interest in the Collateral. Borrower promptly will notify Lender before any change in Borrower’s name including any change to the assumed business names of Borrower. Borrower also promptly will notify Lender before any change in Borrower’s Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number. Borrower further agrees to notify Lender in writing prior to any change in address or location of Borrower’s principal governance office or should Borrower merge or consolidate with any other entity.

Collateral Records. Borrower does now, and at all times hereafter shall, keep correct and accurate records of the Collateral, all of which records shall be available to Lender or Lender's representative upon demand for inspection and copying at any reasonable time. With respect to the Accounts, Borrower agrees to keep and maintain such records as Lender may require, including without limitation information concerning Eligible Accounts and Account balances and agings. Records related to Accounts (Receivables) are or will be located at 1319 Marquette Drive, Romeoville, IL 60446. The above is an accurate and complete list of all locations at which Borrower keeps or maintains business records concerning Borrower's collateral.

Collateral Schedules. Concurrently with the execution and delivery of this Agreement, Borrower shall execute and deliver to Lender schedules of Accounts and schedules of Eligible Accounts in form and substance satisfactory to the Lender. Thereafter supplemental schedules shall be delivered according to the following schedule: With respect to Eligible Accounts, schedules shall be delivered as soon as available, but in no event later than fifteen (15) days after the end of each fiscal quarter. Schedules include Accounts Receivable Aging report.

Representations and Warranties Concerning Accounts. With respect to the Accounts, Borrower represents and warrants to Lender: (1) Each Account represented by Borrower to be an Eligible Account for purposes of this Agreement conforms to the requirements of the definition of an Eligible Account; (2) All Account information listed on schedules delivered to Lender will be true and correct, subject to immaterial variance; and (3) Lender, its assigns, or agents shall have the right at any time and at Borrower's expense to inspect, examine, and audit Borrower's records and to confirm with Account Debtors the accuracy of such Accounts.

CONDITIONS PRECEDENT TO EACH ADVANCE. Lender's obligation to make the initial Advance and each subsequent Advance under this Agreement shall be subject to the fulfillment to Lender's satisfaction of all of the conditions set forth in this Agreement and in the Related Documents.

Loan Documents. Borrower shall provide to Lender the following documents for the Loan: (1) the Note; (2) Security Agreements granting to Lender security interests in the Collateral; (3) financing statements and all other documents perfecting Lender's Security Interests; (4) evidence of insurance as required below; (5) together with all such Related Documents as Lender may require for the Loan; all in form and substance satisfactory to Lender and Lender's counsel.

Borrower's Authorization. Borrower shall have provided in form and substance satisfactory to Lender properly certified resolutions, duly authorizing the execution and delivery of this Agreement, the Note and the Related Documents. In addition, Borrower shall have provided such other resolutions, authorizations, documents and instruments as Lender or its counsel, may require.

Fees and Expenses Under This Agreement. Borrower shall have paid to Lender all fees, costs, and expenses specified in this Agreement and the Related Documents as are then due and payable.

Representations and Warranties. The representations and warranties set forth in this Agreement, in the Related Documents, and in any document or certificate delivered to Lender under this Agreement are true and correct.

No Event of Default. There shall not exist at the time of any Advance a condition which would constitute an Event of Default under this Agreement or under any Related Document.

Minimum Account Balance Requirement for Advance Request. Borrower shall have combined minimum balance its accounts with Lender, including funds advanced under the Primary Credit Facility and deposited into said accounts of not less than \$1,000,000.00.

Advance Request. Borrower agrees that advances under the Primary Credit Facility are limited to the beginning or end of each fiscal quarter.

REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES. Borrower represents and warrants to Lender, as of the date of this Agreement, as of the date of each disbursement of loan proceeds, as of the date of any renewal, extension or modification of any Loan, and at all times any Indebtedness exists:

Organization. Borrower is a corporation for profit which is, and at all times shall be, duly organized, validly existing, and in good standing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware. Borrower is duly authorized to transact business in all other states in which Borrower is doing business, having obtained all necessary filings, governmental licenses and approvals for each state in which Borrower is doing business. Specifically, Borrower is, and at all times shall be, duly qualified as a foreign corporation in all states in which the failure to so qualify would have a material adverse effect on its business or financial condition. Borrower has the full power and authority to own its properties and to transact the business in which it is presently engaged or presently proposes to engage. Borrower maintains an office at 1319 Marquette Drive, Romeoville, IL 60446. Unless Borrower has designated otherwise in writing, the principal office is the office at which Borrower keeps its books and records including its records concerning the Collateral. Borrower will notify Lender prior to any change in the location of Borrower's state of organization or any change in Borrower's name. Borrower shall do all things necessary to preserve and to keep in full force and effect its existence, rights and privileges, and shall comply with all regulations, rules, ordinances, statutes, orders and decrees of any governmental or quasi-governmental authority or court applicable to Borrower and Borrower's business activities.

Assumed Business Names. Borrower has filed or recorded all documents or filings required by law relating to all assumed business names used by Borrower. Excluding the name of Borrower, the following is a complete list of all assumed business names under which Borrower does business: **None.**

Authorization. Borrower's execution, delivery, and performance of this Agreement and all the Related Documents have been duly authorized by all necessary action by Borrower, do not require the consent or approval of any other person, regulatory authority, or governmental body, and do not conflict with, result in a violation of, or constitute a default under (1) any provision of (a) Borrower's articles of incorporation or organization, or bylaws, or (b) any agreement or other instrument binding upon Borrower or (2) any law, governmental regulation, court decree, or order applicable to Borrower or to Borrower's properties. Borrower has the power and authority to enter into the Note and the Related Documents and to grant collateral as security for the Loan. Borrower has the further power and authority to own and to hold all of Borrower's assets and properties, and to carry on Borrower's business as presently conducted.

Financial Information. Each of Borrower's financial statements supplied to Lender truly and completely disclosed Borrower's financial condition as of the date of the statement, and there has been no material adverse change in Borrower's financial condition subsequent to the date of the most recent financial statement supplied to Lender. Borrower has no material contingent obligations except as disclosed in such financial statements.

Legal Effect. This Agreement constitutes, and any instrument or agreement Borrower is required to give under this Agreement when delivered will constitute legal, valid, and binding obligations of Borrower enforceable against Borrower in accordance with their respective terms.

Properties. Except as contemplated by this Agreement or as previously disclosed in Borrower's financial statements or in writing to Lender and as accepted by Lender, and except for property tax liens for taxes not presently due and payable, Borrower owns and has good title to all of Borrower's properties free and clear of all Security Interests, and has not executed any security documents or financing statements relating to such properties. All of Borrower's properties are titled in Borrower's legal name, and Borrower has not used or filed a financing statement under any other name for at least the last five (5) years.

Hazardous Substances. Except as disclosed to and acknowledged by Lender in writing, Borrower represents and warrants that: (1) During the period of Borrower's ownership of the Collateral, there has been no use, generation, manufacture, storage, treatment, disposal, release or threatened release of any Hazardous Substance by any person on, under, about or from any of the Collateral. (2) Borrower has no knowledge of, or reason to believe that there has been (a) any breach or violation of any Environmental Laws; (b) any use, generation, manufacture, storage, treatment, disposal, release or threatened release of any Hazardous Substance on, under, about or from the Collateral by any prior owners or occupants of any of the Collateral; or (c) any actual or threatened litigation or claims of any kind by any person relating to such matters. (3) Neither Borrower nor any tenant, contractor, agent or other authorized user of any of the Collateral shall use, generate, manufacture, store, treat, dispose of or release any Hazardous Substance on, under, about or from any of the Collateral; and any such activity shall be conducted in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances, including without limitation all Environmental Laws. Borrower authorizes Lender and its agents to enter upon the Collateral to make such inspections and tests as Lender may deem appropriate to determine compliance of the Collateral with this section of the Agreement. Any inspections or tests made by Lender shall be at Borrower's expense and for Lender's purposes only and shall not be construed to create any responsibility or liability on the part of Lender to Borrower or to any other person. The representations and warranties contained herein are based on Borrower's due diligence in investigating the Collateral for hazardous waste and Hazardous Substances. Borrower hereby (1) releases and waives any future claims against Lender for indemnity or contribution in the event Borrower becomes liable for cleanup or other costs under any such laws, and (2) agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Lender against any and all claims, losses, liabilities, damages, penalties, and expenses which Lender may directly or indirectly sustain or suffer resulting from a breach of this section of the Agreement or as a consequence of any use, generation, manufacture, storage, disposal, release or threatened release of a hazardous waste or substance on the Collateral. The provisions of this section of the Agreement, including the obligation to indemnify and defend, shall survive the payment of the Indebtedness and the termination, expiration or satisfaction of this Agreement and shall not be affected by Lender's acquisition of any interest in any of the Collateral, whether by foreclosure or otherwise.

Litigation and Claims. No litigation, claim, investigation, administrative proceeding or similar action (including those for unpaid taxes) against Borrower is pending or threatened, and no other event has occurred which may materially adversely affect Borrower's financial condition or properties, other than litigation, claims, or other events, if any, that have been disclosed to and acknowledged by Lender in writing.

Taxes. To the best of Borrower's knowledge, all of Borrower's tax returns and reports that are or were required to be filed, have been filed, and all taxes, assessments and other governmental charges have been paid in full, except those presently being or to be contested by Borrower in good faith in the ordinary course of business and for which adequate reserves have been provided.

Lien Priority. Unless otherwise previously disclosed to Lender in writing, Borrower has not entered into or granted any Security Agreements, or permitted the filing or attachment of any Security Interests on or affecting any of the Collateral directly or indirectly securing repayment of Borrower's Loan and Note, that would be prior or that may in any way be superior to Lender's Security Interests and rights in and to such Collateral.

Binding Effect. This Agreement, the Note, all Security Agreements (if any), and all Related Documents are binding upon the signers thereof, as well as upon their successors, representatives and assigns, and are legally enforceable in accordance with their respective terms.

Commercial Purposes. Borrower intends to use the Loan proceeds solely for business or commercially related purposes.

Employee Benefit Plans. Each employee benefit plan as to which Borrower may have any liability complies in all material respects with all applicable requirements of law and regulations, and (1) no Reportable Event nor Prohibited Transaction (as defined in ERISA) has occurred with respect to any such plan, (2) Borrower has not withdrawn from any such plan or initiated steps to do so, (3) no steps have been taken to terminate any such plan or to appoint a trustee to administer such a plan, and (4) there are no unfunded liabilities other than those previously disclosed to Lender in writing.

Investment Company Act. Borrower is not an "investment company" or a company "controlled" by an "investment company", within the meaning of the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended.

Public Utility Holding Company Act. Borrower is not a "holding company", or a "subsidiary company" of a "holding company", or an "affiliate" of a "holding company" or of a "subsidiary company" of a "holding company", within the meaning of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, as amended.

Regulations T and U. Borrower is not engaged principally, or as one of its important activities, in the business of extending credit for the purpose of purchasing or carrying margin stock (within the meaning of Regulations T and U of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System).

Information. All information previously furnished or which is now being furnished by Borrower to Lender for the purposes of or in connection with this Agreement or any transaction contemplated by this Agreement is, and all information furnished by or on behalf of Borrower to Lender in the future will be, true and accurate in every material respect on the date as of which such information is dated or certified; and no such information is or will be incomplete by omitting to state any material fact the omission of which would cause the information to be misleading.

Claims and Defenses. There are no defenses or counterclaims, offsets or other adverse claims, demands or actions of any kind, personal or otherwise, that Borrower, any Grantor, or any Guarantor could assert with respect to the Note, Loan, this Agreement, or the Related Documents.

Replacement and Restatement. Borrower acknowledges that this Business Loan Agreement (Asset Based) restates and replaces that certain Business Loan Agreement (Asset Based) dated March 4, 2016 between Borrower and Lender.

AFFIRMATIVE COVENANTS. Borrower covenants and agrees with Lender that, so long as this Agreement remains in effect, Borrower will:

Repayment. Repay the Loan in accordance with its terms and the terms of this Agreement.

Notices of Claims and Litigation. Promptly inform Lender in writing of (1) all material adverse changes in Borrower's financial condition, and (2) all existing and all threatened litigation, claims, investigations, administrative proceedings or similar actions affecting Borrower or any Guarantor which could materially affect the financial condition of Borrower or the financial condition of any Guarantor. In addition, Borrower shall provide Lender with written notice of the occurrence of any Event of Default, the occurrence of any Reportable Event under, or the institution of steps by Borrower to withdraw from, or the institution of any steps to terminate, any employee benefit plan as to which Borrower may have any liability.

Financial Records. Maintain its books and records in accordance with GAAP, applied on a consistent basis, and permit Lender to examine and audit Borrower's books and records at all reasonable times.

Financial Statements. Furnish Lender with the following:

Tax Returns. As soon as available, but in no event later than 45 days after the applicable filing date for the tax reporting period ended, Borrower's Federal and other governmental tax returns, prepared by a tax professional satisfactory to Lender.

Additional Requirements.

Annual Statements. As soon as available, but in no event later than thirty (30) days after Lender's request, Borrower's balance sheet and income statement for the most recent fiscal year end, prepared by Borrower.

Interim Statements. As soon as available, but in no event later than thirty (30) days after Lender's request, Borrower's balance sheet and profit and loss statement for the most recent period, prepared by Borrower.

All financial reports required to be provided under this Agreement shall be prepared in accordance with GAAP, applied on a consistent basis, and certified by Borrower as being true and correct.

Additional Information. Furnish such additional information and statements, as Lender may request from time to time.

Insurance. Maintain fire and other risk insurance, public liability insurance, and such other insurance as Lender may require with respect to Borrower's properties and operations, in form, amounts, coverages and with insurance companies acceptable to Lender. Borrower, upon request of Lender, will deliver to Lender from time to time the policies or certificates of insurance in form satisfactory to Lender, including stipulations that coverages will not be cancelled or diminished without at least ten (10) days prior written notice to Lender. Each insurance policy also shall include an endorsement providing that coverage in favor of Lender will not be impaired in any way by any act, omission or default of Borrower or any other person. In connection with all policies covering assets in which Lender holds or is offered a security interest for the Loans, Borrower will provide Lender with such lender's loss payable or other endorsements as Lender may require.

Insurance Reports. Furnish to Lender, upon request of Lender, reports on each existing insurance policy showing such information as Lender may reasonably request, including without limitation the following: (1) the name of the insurer; (2) the risks insured; (3) the amount of the policy; (4) the properties insured; (5) the then current property values on the basis of which insurance has been obtained, and the manner of determining those values; and (6) the expiration date of the policy. In addition, upon request of Lender (however not more often than annually), Borrower will have an independent appraiser satisfactory to Lender determine, as applicable, the actual cash value or replacement cost of any Collateral. The cost of such appraisal shall be paid by Borrower.

Other Agreements. Comply with all terms and conditions of all other agreements, whether now or hereafter existing, between Borrower and any other party and notify Lender immediately in writing of any default in connection with any other such agreements.

Loan Proceeds. Use all Loan proceeds solely for Borrower's business operations, unless specifically consented to the contrary by Lender in writing.

Taxes, Charges and Liens. Pay and discharge when due all of its indebtedness and obligations, including without limitation all assessments, taxes, governmental charges, levies and liens, of every kind and nature, imposed upon Borrower or its properties, income, or profits, prior to the date on which penalties would attach, and all lawful claims that, if unpaid, might become a lien or charge upon any of Borrower's properties, income, or profits. Provided however, Borrower will not be required to pay and discharge any such assessment, tax, charge, levy, lien or claim so long as (1) the legality of the same shall be contested in good faith by appropriate proceedings, and (2) Borrower shall have established on Borrower's books adequate reserves with respect to such contested assessment, tax, charge, levy, lien, or claim in accordance with GAAP.

Performance. Perform and comply, in a timely manner, with all terms, conditions, and provisions set forth in this Agreement, in the Related Documents, and in all other instruments and agreements between Borrower and Lender, and in all other loan agreements now or in the future existing between Borrower and any other party. Borrower shall notify Lender immediately in writing of any default in connection with any agreement.

Operations. Maintain executive and management personnel with substantially the same qualifications and experience as the present executive and management personnel; provide written notice to Lender of any change in executive and management personnel; conduct its business affairs in a reasonable and prudent manner.

Environmental Studies. Promptly conduct and complete, at Borrower's expense, all such investigations, studies, samplings and testings as may be requested by Lender or any governmental authority relative to any substance, or any waste or by-product of any substance defined as toxic or a hazardous substance under applicable federal, state, or local law, rule, regulation, order or directive, at or affecting any property or any facility owned, leased or used by Borrower.

Compliance with Governmental Requirements. Comply with all laws, ordinances, and regulations, now or hereafter in effect, of all governmental authorities applicable to the conduct of Borrower's properties, businesses and operations, and to the use or occupancy of the Collateral, including without limitation, the Americans With Disabilities Act. Borrower may contest in good faith any such law, ordinance, or regulation and withhold compliance during any proceeding, including appropriate appeals, so long as Borrower has notified Lender in writing prior to doing so and so long as, in Lender's sole opinion, Lender's interests in the Collateral are not jeopardized. Lender may require Borrower to post adequate security or a surety bond, reasonably satisfactory to Lender, to protect Lender's interest.

Inspection. Permit employees or agents of Lender at any reasonable time to inspect any and all Collateral for the Loan or Loans and Borrower's other properties and to examine or audit Borrower's books, accounts, and records and to make copies and memoranda of Borrower's books, accounts, and records. If Borrower now or at any time hereafter maintains any records (including without limitation computer generated records and computer software programs for the generation of such records) in the possession of a third party, Borrower, upon request of Lender, shall notify such party to permit Lender free access to such records at all reasonable times and to provide Lender with copies of any records it may request, all at Borrower's expense.

Change of Location. Immediately notify Lender in writing of any additions to or changes in the location of Borrower's businesses.

Title to Assets and Property. Maintain good and marketable title to all of Borrower's assets and properties.

Notice of Default, Litigation and ERISA Matters. Forthwith upon learning of the occurrence of any of the following, Borrower shall provide Lender with written notice thereof, describing the same and the steps being taken by Borrower with respect thereto: (1) the occurrence of any Event of Default, or (2) the institution of, or any adverse determination in, any litigation, arbitration proceeding or governmental proceeding, or (3) the occurrence of a Reportable Event under, or the institution of steps by Borrower to withdraw from, or the institution of any steps to terminate, any employee benefit plan as to which Borrower may have any liability.

Other Information. From time to time Borrower will provide Lender with such other information as Lender may reasonably request.

Employee Benefit Plans. So long as this Agreement remains in effect, Borrower will maintain each employee benefit plan as to which Borrower may have any liability, in compliance with all applicable requirements of law and regulations.

Environmental Compliance and Reports. Borrower shall comply in all respects with any and all Environmental Laws; not cause or permit to exist, as a result of an intentional or unintentional action or omission on Borrower's part or on the part of any third party, on property owned and/or occupied by Borrower, any environmental activity where damage may result to the environment, unless such environmental activity is pursuant to and in compliance with the conditions of a permit issued by the appropriate federal, state or local governmental authorities; shall furnish to Lender promptly and in any event within thirty (30) days after receipt thereof a copy of any notice, summons, lien, citation, directive, letter or other communication from any governmental agency or instrumentality concerning any intentional or unintentional action or omission on Borrower's part in connection with any environmental activity whether or not there is damage to the environment and/or other natural resources.

Additional Assurances. Make, execute and deliver to Lender such promissory notes, mortgages, deeds of trust, security agreements, assignments, financing statements, instruments, documents and other agreements as Lender or its attorneys may reasonably request to evidence and secure the Loans and to perfect all Security Interests.

Repayment of Draws. Borrower agrees to repay any advance under the Primary Credit Facility within five (5) Business Days of said advance.

RECOVERY OF ADDITIONAL COSTS. If the imposition of or any change in any law, rule, regulation, guideline, or generally accepted accounting principle, or the interpretation or application of any thereof by any court, administrative or governmental authority, or standard-setting organization (including any request or policy not having the force of law) shall impose, modify or make applicable any taxes (except federal, state or local income or franchise taxes imposed on Lender), reserve requirements, capital adequacy requirements or other obligations which would (A) increase the cost to Lender for extending or maintaining the credit facilities to which this Agreement relates, (B) reduce the amounts payable to Lender under this Agreement or the Related Documents, or (C) reduce the rate of return on Lender's capital as a consequence of Lender's obligations with respect to the credit facilities to which this Agreement relates, then Borrower agrees to pay Lender such additional amounts as will compensate Lender therefor, within five (5) days after Lender's written demand for such payment, which demand shall be accompanied by an explanation of such imposition or charge and a calculation in reasonable detail of the additional amounts payable by Borrower, which explanation and calculations shall be conclusive in the absence of manifest error.

LENDER'S EXPENDITURES. If any action or proceeding is commenced that would materially affect Lender's interest in the Collateral or if Borrower fails to comply with any provision of this Agreement or any Related Documents, including but not limited to Borrower's failure to discharge or pay when due any amounts Borrower is required to discharge or pay under this Agreement or any Related Documents, Lender on Borrower's behalf may (but shall not be obligated to) take any action that Lender deems appropriate, including but not limited to discharging or paying all taxes, liens, security interests, encumbrances and other claims, at any time levied or placed on any Collateral and paying all costs for insuring, maintaining and preserving any Collateral. All such expenditures incurred or paid by Lender for such purposes will then bear interest at the rate charged under the Note from the date incurred or paid by Lender to the date of repayment by Borrower. All such expenses will become a part of the Indebtedness and, at Lender's option, will (A) be payable on demand; (B) be added to the balance of the Note and be apportioned among and be payable with any installment payments to become due during either (1) the term of any applicable insurance policy; or (2) the remaining term of the Note; or (C) be treated as a balloon payment which will be due and payable at the Note's maturity.

NEGATIVE COVENANTS. Borrower covenants and agrees with Lender that while this Agreement is in effect, Borrower shall not, without the prior written consent of Lender:

Indebtedness and Liens. (1) Except for trade debt incurred in the normal course of business and indebtedness to Lender contemplated by this Agreement, create, incur or assume indebtedness for borrowed money, including capital leases, (2) sell, transfer, mortgage, assign, pledge, lease, grant a security interest in, or encumber any of Borrower's assets (except as allowed as Permitted Liens), or (3) sell with recourse any of Borrower's accounts, except to Lender.

Continuity of Operations. (1) Engage in any business activities substantially different than those in which Borrower is presently engaged, (2) cease operations, liquidate, merge, transfer, acquire or consolidate with any other entity, change its name, dissolve or transfer or sell Collateral out of the ordinary course of business, or (3) pay any dividends on Borrower's stock (other than dividends payable in its stock), provided, however that notwithstanding the foregoing, but only so long as no Event of Default has occurred and is continuing or would result from the payment of dividends, if Borrower is a "Subchapter S Corporation" (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended), Borrower may pay cash dividends on its stock to its shareholders from time to time in amounts necessary to enable the shareholders to pay income taxes and make estimated income tax payments to satisfy their liabilities under federal and state law which arise solely from their status as Shareholders of a Subchapter S Corporation because of their ownership of shares of Borrower's stock, or purchase or retire any of Borrower's outstanding shares or alter or amend Borrower's capital structure.

Loans, Acquisitions and Guaranties. (1) Loan, invest in or advance money or assets to any other person, enterprise or entity, (2) purchase, create or acquire any interest in any other enterprise or entity, or (3) incur any obligation as surety or guarantor other than in the ordinary course of business.

Agreements. Enter into any agreement containing any provisions which would be violated or breached by the performance of Borrower's obligations under this Agreement or in connection herewith.

CESSATION OF ADVANCES. If Lender has made any commitment to make any Loan to Borrower, whether under this Agreement or under any other agreement, Lender shall have no obligation to make Loan Advances or to disburse Loan proceeds if: (A) Borrower or any Guarantor is in default under the terms of this Agreement or any of the Related Documents or any other agreement that Borrower or any Guarantor has with Lender; (B) Borrower or any Guarantor dies, becomes incompetent or becomes insolvent, files a petition in bankruptcy or similar proceedings, or is adjudged a bankrupt; (C) there occurs a material adverse change in Borrower's financial condition, in the financial condition of any Guarantor, or in the value of any Collateral securing any Loan; or (D) any Guarantor seeks, claims or otherwise attempts to limit, modify or revoke such Guarantor's guaranty of the Loan or any other loan with Lender; or (E) Lender in good faith deems itself insecure, even though no Event of Default shall have occurred.

RIGHT OF SETOFF. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Lender reserves a right of setoff in all Borrower's accounts with Lender (whether checking, savings, or some other account). This includes all accounts Borrower holds jointly with someone else and all accounts Borrower may open in the future. However, this does not include any IRA or Keogh accounts, or any trust accounts for which setoff would be prohibited by law. Borrower authorizes Lender, to the extent permitted by applicable law, to charge or setoff all sums owing on the Indebtedness against any and all such accounts, and, at Lender's option, to administratively freeze all such accounts to allow Lender to protect Lender's charge and setoff right provided in this paragraph.

DEFAULT. Each of the following shall constitute an Event of Default under this Agreement:

Payment Default. Borrower fails to make any payment when due under the Loan.

Other Defaults. Borrower fails to comply with or to perform any other term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in this Agreement or in any of the Related Documents or to comply with or to perform any term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in any other agreement between Lender and Borrower.

Default in Favor of Third Parties. Borrower or any Grantor defaults under any loan, extension of credit, security agreement, purchase or sales agreement, or any other agreement, in favor of any other creditor or person that may materially affect any of Borrower's or any Grantor's property or Borrower's or any Grantor's ability to repay the Loans or perform their respective obligations under this Agreement or any of the Related Documents.

False Statements. Any warranty, representation or statement made or furnished to Lender by Borrower or on Borrower's behalf, or made by Guarantor, under this Agreement or the Related Documents in connection with the obtaining of the Loan evidenced by the Note or any security document directly or indirectly securing repayment of the Note is false or misleading in any material respect, either now or at the time made or furnished or becomes false or misleading at any time thereafter.

Insolvency. The dissolution or termination of Borrower's existence as a going business, the insolvency of Borrower, the appointment of a receiver for any part of Borrower's property, any assignment for the benefit of creditors, any type of creditor workout, or the commencement of any proceeding under any bankruptcy or insolvency laws by or against Borrower.

Defective Collateralization. This Agreement or any of the Related Documents ceases to be in full force and effect (including failure of any collateral document to create a valid and perfected security interest or lien) at any time and for any reason.

Creditor or Forfeiture Proceedings. Commencement of foreclosure or forfeiture proceedings, whether by judicial proceeding, self-help, repossession or any other method, by any creditor of Borrower or by any governmental agency against any collateral securing the Loan. This includes a garnishment of any of Borrower's accounts. Including deposit accounts, with Lender. However, this Event of Default shall not apply if there is a good faith dispute by Borrower as to the validity or reasonableness of the claim which is the basis of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and if Borrower gives Lender written notice of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and deposits with Lender monies or a surety bond for the creditor or forfeiture proceeding, in an amount determined by Lender, in its sole discretion, as being an adequate reserve or bond for the dispute.

Execution; Attachment. Any execution or attachment is levied against the Collateral, and such execution or attachment is not set aside, discharged or stayed within thirty (30) days after the same is levied.

Change in Zoning or Public Restriction. Any change in any zoning ordinance or regulation or any other public restriction is enacted, adopted or implemented, that limits or defines the uses which may be made of the Collateral such that the present or intended use of the Collateral, as specified in the Related Documents, would be in violation of such zoning ordinance or regulation or public restriction, as changed.

Default Under Other Lien Documents. A default occurs under any other mortgage, deed of trust or security agreement covering all or any portion of the Collateral.

Judgment. Unless adequately covered by insurance in the opinion of Lender, the entry of a final judgment for the payment of money involving more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) against Borrower and the failure by Borrower to discharge the same, or cause it to be discharged, or bonded off to Lender's satisfaction, within thirty (30) days from the date of the order, decree or process under which or pursuant to which such judgment was entered.

Events Affecting Guarantor. Any of the preceding events occurs with respect to any Guarantor of any of the Indebtedness or any Guarantor dies or becomes incompetent, or revokes or disputes the validity of, or liability under, any Guaranty of the Indebtedness.

Change in Ownership. Any change in ownership of twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the common stock of Borrower.

Adverse Change. A material adverse change occurs in Borrower's financial condition, or Lender believes the prospect of payment or performance of the Loan is impaired.

Insecurity. Lender in good faith believes itself insecure.

Right to Cure. If any default, other than a default on Indebtedness, is curable and if Borrower or Grantor, as the case may be, has not been given a notice of a similar default within the preceding twelve (12) months, it may be cured if Borrower or Grantor, as the case may be, after Lender sends written notice to Borrower or Grantor, as the case may be, demanding cure of such default: (1) cure the default within fifteen (15) days; or (2) if the cure requires more than fifteen (15) days, immediately initiate steps which Lender deems in Lender's sole discretion to be sufficient to cure the default and thereafter continue and complete all reasonable and necessary steps sufficient to produce compliance as soon as reasonably practical.

EFFECT OF AN EVENT OF DEFAULT. If any Event of Default shall occur, except where otherwise provided in this Agreement or the Related Documents, all commitments and obligations of Lender under this Agreement or the Related Documents or any other agreement immediately will terminate (including any obligation to make further Loan Advances or disbursements), and, at Lender's option, all Indebtedness immediately will become due and payable, all without notice of any kind to Borrower, except that in the case of an Event of Default of the type described in the "Insolvency" subsection above, such acceleration shall be automatic and not optional. In addition, Lender shall have all the rights and remedies provided in the Related Documents or available at law, in equity, or otherwise. Except as may be prohibited by applicable law, all of Lender's rights and remedies shall be cumulative and may be exercised singularly or concurrently. Election by Lender to pursue any remedy shall not exclude pursuit of any other remedy, and an election to make expenditures or to take action to perform an obligation of Borrower or of any Grantor shall not affect Lender's right to declare a default and to exercise its rights and remedies.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS. Borrower shall provide Lender with the following additional documents:

Corporate Resolution. Borrower has provided or will provide Lender with a certified copy of resolutions properly adopted by Borrower's Board of Directors, and certified by Borrower's corporate secretary, assistant secretary, or other authorized officer, under which Borrower's Board of Directors authorized one or more designated officers or employees to execute this Agreement, the Note and any and all Security Agreements directly or indirectly securing repayment of the same, and to consummate the borrowings and other transactions as contemplated under this Agreement, and to consent to the remedies following any default by Borrower as provided in this Agreement and in any Security Agreements.

Opinion of Counsel. When required by Lender, Borrower has provided or will provide Lender with an opinion of Borrower's counsel certifying to and that: (1) Borrower's Note, any Security Agreements and this Agreement constitute valid and binding obligations on Borrower's part that are enforceable in accordance with their respective terms; (2) Borrower is validly existing and in good standing; (3) Borrower has authority to enter into this Agreement and to consummate the transactions contemplated under this Agreement; and (4) such other matters as may have been requested by Lender or by Lender's counsel.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS. The following miscellaneous provisions are a part of this Agreement:

Amendments. This Agreement, together with any Related Documents, constitutes the entire understanding and agreement of the parties as to the matters set forth in this Agreement. No alteration of or amendment to this Agreement shall be effective unless given in writing and signed by the party or parties sought to be charged or bound by the alteration or amendment.

Attorneys' Fees; Expenses. Borrower agrees to pay upon demand all of Lender's costs and expenses, including Lender's attorneys' fees and Lender's legal expenses, incurred in connection with the enforcement of this Agreement. Lender may hire or pay someone else to help enforce this Agreement, and Borrower shall pay the costs and expenses of such enforcement. Costs and expenses include Lender's attorneys' fees and legal expenses whether or not there is a lawsuit, including attorneys' fees and legal expenses for bankruptcy proceedings (including efforts to modify or vacate any automatic stay or injunction), appeals, and any anticipated post-judgment collection services. Borrower also shall pay all court costs and such additional fees as may be directed by the court.

Borrower Information. Borrower consents to the release of information on or about Borrower by Lender in accordance with any court order, law or regulation and in response to credit inquiries concerning Borrower.

Caption Headings. Caption headings in this Agreement are for convenience purposes only and are not to be used to interpret or define the provisions of this Agreement.

Consent to Loan Participation. Borrower agrees and consents to Lender's sale or transfer, whether now or later, of one or more participation interests in the Loan to one or more purchasers, whether related or unrelated to Lender. Lender may provide, without any limitation whatsoever, to any one or more purchasers, or potential purchasers, any information or knowledge Lender may have about Borrower or about any other matter relating to the Loan, and Borrower hereby waives any rights to privacy Borrower may have with respect to such matters. Borrower additionally waives any and all notices of sale of participation interests, as well as all notices of any repurchase of such participation interests. Borrower also agrees that the purchasers of any such participation interests will be considered as the absolute owners of such interests in the Loan and will have all the rights granted under the participation agreement or agreements governing the sale of such participation interests. Borrower further waives all rights of offset or counterclaim that it may have now or later against Lender or against any purchaser of such a participation interest and unconditionally agrees that either Lender or such purchaser may enforce Borrower's obligation under the Loan irrespective of the failure or insolvency of any holder of any interest in the Loan. Borrower further agrees that the purchaser of any such participation interests may enforce its interests irrespective of any personal claims or defenses that Borrower may have against Lender.

Governing Law. This Agreement will be governed by federal law applicable to Lender and, to the extent not preempted by federal law, the laws of the State of Illinois without regard to its conflicts of law provisions. This Agreement has been accepted by Lender in the State of Illinois.

Non-Liability of Lender. The relationship between Borrower and Lender created by this Agreement is strictly a debtor and creditor relationship and not fiduciary in nature, nor is the relationship to be construed as creating any partnership or joint venture between Lender and Borrower. Borrower is exercising Borrower's own judgment with respect to Borrower's business. All information supplied to Lender is for Lender's protection only and no other party is entitled to rely on such information. There is no duty for Lender to review, inspect, supervise or inform Borrower of any matter with respect to Borrower's business. Lender and Borrower intend that Lender may reasonably rely on all information supplied by Borrower to Lender, together with all representations and warranties given by Borrower to Lender, without investigation or confirmation by Lender and that any investigation or failure to investigate will not diminish Lender's right to so rely.

Notice of Lender's Breach. Borrower must notify Lender in writing of any breach of this Agreement or the Related Documents by Lender and any other claim, cause of action or offset against Lender within thirty (30) days after the occurrence of such breach or after the accrual of such claim, cause of action or offset. Borrower waives any claim, cause of action or offset for which notice is not given in accordance with this paragraph. Lender is entitled to rely on any failure to give such notice.

Indemnification of Lender. Borrower agrees to indemnify, to defend and to save and hold Lender harmless from any and all claims, suits obligations, damages, losses, costs and expenses (including, without limitation, Lender's attorneys' fees), demands, liabilities, penalties, fines and forfeitures of any nature whatsoever that may be asserted against or incurred by Lender, its officers, directors, employees, and agents arising out of, relating to, or in any manner occasioned by this Agreement and the exercise of the rights and remedies granted Lender under this, as well as by: (1) the ownership, use, operation, construction, renovation, demolition, preservation, management, repair, condition, or maintenance of any part of the Collateral; (2) the exercise of any of Borrower's rights collaterally assigned and pledged to Lender hereunder; (3) any failure of Borrower to perform any of its obligations hereunder; and/or (4) any failure of Borrower to comply with the environmental and ERISA obligations, representations and warranties set forth herein. The foregoing indemnity provisions shall survive the cancellation of this Agreement as to all matters arising or accruing prior to such cancellation and the foregoing indemnity shall survive in the event that Lender elects to exercise any of the remedies as provided under this Agreement following default hereunder. Borrower's indemnity obligations under this section shall not in any way be affected by the presence or absence of covering insurance, or by the amount of such insurance or by the failure or refusal of any insurance carrier to perform any obligation on its part under any insurance policy or policies affecting the Collateral and/or Borrower's business activities. Should any claim, action or proceeding be made or brought against Lender by reason of any event as to which Borrower's indemnification obligations apply, then, upon Lender's demand, Borrower, at its sole cost and expense, shall defend such claim, action or proceeding in Borrower's name, if necessary, by the attorneys for Borrower's insurance carrier (if such claim, action or proceeding is covered by insurance), or otherwise by such attorneys as Lender shall approve. Lender may also engage its own attorneys at its reasonable discretion to defend Borrower and to assist in its defense and Borrower agrees to pay the fees and disbursements of such attorneys.

Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts, each of which, when so executed, shall be deemed an original, but all such counterparts, taken together, shall constitute one and the same Agreement.

No Waiver by Lender. Lender shall not be deemed to have waived any rights under this Agreement unless such waiver is given in writing and signed by Lender. No delay or omission on the part of Lender in exercising any right shall operate as a waiver of such right or any other right. A waiver by Lender of a provision of this Agreement shall not prejudice or constitute a waiver of Lender's right otherwise to demand strict compliance with that provision or any other provision of this Agreement. No prior waiver by Lender, nor any course of dealing between Lender and Borrower, or between Lender and any Grantor, shall constitute a waiver of any of Lender's rights or of any of Borrower's or any Grantor's obligations as to any future transactions. Whenever the consent of Lender is required under this Agreement, the granting of such consent by Lender in any instance shall not constitute continuing consent to subsequent instances where such consent is required and in all cases such consent may be granted or withheld in the sole discretion of Lender.

Notices. Any notice required to be given under this Agreement shall be given in writing, and shall be effective when actually delivered, when actually received by telefacsimile (unless otherwise required by law), when deposited with a nationally recognized overnight courier, or, if mailed, when deposited in the United States mail, as first class, certified or registered mail postage prepaid, directed to the addresses shown near the beginning of this Agreement. Any party may change its address for notices under this Agreement by giving formal written notice to the other parties, specifying that the purpose of the notice is to change the party's address. For notice purposes, Borrower agrees to keep Lender informed at all times of Borrower's current address. Unless otherwise provided or required by law, if there is more than one Borrower, any notice given by Lender to any Borrower is deemed to be notice given to all Borrowers.

Severability. If a court of competent jurisdiction finds any provision of this Agreement to be illegal, invalid, or unenforceable as to any circumstance, that finding shall not make the offending provision illegal, invalid, or unenforceable as to any other circumstance. If feasible, the offending provision shall be considered modified so that it becomes legal, valid and enforceable. If the offending provision cannot be so modified, it shall be considered deleted from this Agreement. Unless otherwise required by law, the illegality, invalidity, or unenforceability of any provision of this Agreement shall not affect the legality, validity or enforceability of any other provision of this Agreement.

Sole Discretion of Lender. Whenever Lender's consent or approval is required under this Agreement, the decision as to whether or not to consent or approve shall be in the sole and exclusive discretion of Lender and Lender's decision shall be final and conclusive.

Subsidiaries and Affiliates of Borrower. To the extent the context of any provisions of this Agreement makes it appropriate, including without limitation any representation, warranty or covenant, the word "Borrower" as used in this Agreement shall include all of Borrower's subsidiaries and affiliates. Notwithstanding the foregoing however, under no circumstances shall this Agreement be construed to require Lender to make any Loan or other financial accommodation to any of Borrower's subsidiaries or affiliates.

Successors and Assigns. All covenants and agreements by or on behalf of Borrower contained in this Agreement or any Related Documents shall bind Borrower's successors and assigns and shall inure to the benefit of Lender and its successors and assigns. Borrower shall not, however, have the right to assign Borrower's rights under this Agreement or any interest therein, without the prior written consent of Lender.

Survival of Representations and Warranties. Borrower understands and agrees that in extending Loan Advances, Lender is relying on all representations, warranties, and covenants made by Borrower in this Agreement or in any certificate or other instrument delivered by Borrower to Lender under this Agreement or the Related Documents. Borrower further agrees that regardless of any investigation made by Lender, all such representations, warranties and covenants will survive the extension of Loan Advances and delivery to Lender of the Related Documents, shall be continuing in nature, shall be deemed made and redated by Borrower at the time each Loan Advance is made, and shall remain in full force and effect until such time as Borrower's Indebtedness shall be paid in full, or until this Agreement shall be terminated in the manner provided above, whichever is the last to occur.

Time is of the Essence. Time is of the essence in the performance of this Agreement.

Waive Jury. All parties to this Agreement hereby waive the right to any jury trial in any action, proceeding, or counterclaim brought by any party against any other party.

DEFINITIONS. The following capitalized words and terms shall have the following meanings when used in this Agreement. Unless specifically stated to the contrary, all references to dollar amounts shall mean amounts in lawful money of the United States of America. Words and terms used in the singular shall include the plural, and the plural shall include the singular, as the context may require. Words and terms not otherwise defined in this Agreement shall have the meanings attributed to such terms in the Uniform Commercial Code. Accounting words and terms not otherwise defined in this Agreement shall have the meanings assigned to them in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as in effect on the date of this Agreement:

Account. The word "Account" means a trade account, account receivable, other receivable, or other right to payment for goods sold or services rendered owing to Borrower (or to a third party grantor acceptable to Lender).

Account Debtor. The words "Account Debtor" mean the person or entity obligated upon an Account.

Advance. The word "Advance" means a disbursement of Loan funds made, or to be made, to Borrower or on Borrower's behalf under the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

Agreement. The word "Agreement" means this Business Loan Agreement (Asset Based), as this Business Loan Agreement (Asset Based) may be amended or modified from time to time, together with all exhibits and schedules attached to this Business Loan Agreement (Asset Based) from time to time.

Borrower. The word "Borrower" means Nanophase Technologies Corporation and includes all co-signers and co-makers signing the Note and all their successors and assigns.

Borrowing Base. The words "Borrowing Base" mean the lesser of (1) \$500,000.00 or (2) 2 times the sum of (a) 75.000% of Eligible Accounts and Borrower's cash deposited with Lender.

Business Day. The words "Business Day" mean a day on which commercial banks are open in the State of Illinois.

Collateral. The word "Collateral" means all property and assets granted as collateral security for a Loan, whether real or personal property, whether granted directly or indirectly, whether granted now or in the future, and whether granted in the form of a security interest, mortgage, collateral mortgage, deed of trust, assignment, pledge, crop pledge, chattel mortgage, collateral chattel mortgage, chattel trust, factor's lien, equipment trust, conditional sale, trust receipt, lien, charge, lien or title retention contract, lease or consignment intended as a security device, or any other security or lien interest whatsoever, whether created by law, contract, or otherwise. The word Collateral also includes without limitation all collateral described in the Collateral section of this Agreement.

Eligible Accounts. The words "Eligible Accounts" mean at any time, all of Borrower's Accounts which contain selling terms and conditions acceptable to Lender. The net amount of any Eligible Account against which Borrower may borrow shall exclude all returns, discounts, credits, and offsets of any nature. Unless otherwise agreed to by Lender in writing, Eligible Accounts do not include:

- (1) Accounts with respect to which the Account Debtor is employee or agent of Borrower.
- (2) Accounts with respect to which the Account Debtor is a subsidiary of, or affiliated with Borrower or its shareholders, officers, or directors.
- (3) Accounts with respect to which goods are placed on consignment, guaranteed sale, or other terms by reason of which the payment by the Account Debtor may be conditional.
- (4) Accounts with respect to which Borrower is or may become liable to the Account Debtor for goods sold or services rendered by the Account Debtor to Borrower.
- (5) Accounts which are subject to dispute, counterclaim, or setoff.
- (6) Accounts with respect to which the goods have not been shipped or delivered, or the services have not been rendered, to the Account Debtor.

(7) Accounts with respect to which Lender, in its sole discretion, deems the creditworthiness or financial condition of the Account Debtor to be unsatisfactory.

(8) Accounts of any Account Debtor who has filed or has had filed against it a petition in bankruptcy or an application for relief under any provision of any state or federal bankruptcy, insolvency, or debtor-in-relief acts; or who has had appointed a trustee, custodian, or receiver for the assets of such Account Debtor; or who has made an assignment for the benefit of creditors or has become insolvent or fails generally to pay its debts (including its payrolls) as such debts become due.

(9) Accounts which have not been paid in full within **ninety (90) days** from the invoice date. The entire balance of any Account of any single Account Debtor will be ineligible whenever the portion of the Account which has not been paid within **ninety (90) days** from the invoice date is in excess of **25.000%** of the total amount outstanding on the Account.

Environmental Laws. The words “Environmental Laws” mean any and all state, federal and local statutes, regulations and ordinances relating to the protection of human health or the environment, including without limitation the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 9601, et seq. (“CERCLA”), the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-499 (“SARA”), the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, 49 U.S.C. Section 1801, et seq., the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 6901, et seq., or other applicable state or federal laws, rules, or regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

ERISA. The word “ERISA” means the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended from time to time, and including all regulations and published interpretations of the act.

Event of Default. The words “Event of Default” mean individually, collectively, and interchangeably any of the events of default set forth in this Agreement in the default section of this Agreement.

Expiration Date. The words “Expiration Date” mean the date of termination of Lender’s commitment to lend under this Agreement.

GAAP. The word “GAAP” means generally accepted accounting principles.

Grantor. The word “Grantor” means each and all of the persons or entities granting a Security Interest in any Collateral for the Loan, including without limitation all Borrowers granting such a Security Interest.

Guarantor. The word “Guarantor” means any guarantor, surety, or accommodation party of any or all of the Loan, and, in each case, Borrower’s successors, assigns, heirs, personal representatives, executors and administrators of any guarantor, surety, or accommodation party.

Guaranty. The word “Guaranty” means the guaranty from Guarantor to Lender, including without limitation a guaranty of all or part of the Note.

Hazardous Substances. The words “Hazardous Substances” mean materials that, because of their quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may cause or pose a present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly used, treated, stored, disposed of, generated, manufactured, transported or otherwise handled. The words “Hazardous Substances” are used in their very broadest sense and include without limitation any and all hazardous or toxic substances, materials or waste as defined by or listed under the Environmental Laws. The term “Hazardous Substances” also includes, without limitation, petroleum and petroleum by-products or any fraction thereof and asbestos.

Indebtedness. The word “Indebtedness” means the indebtedness evidenced by the Note or Related Documents, including all principal and interest together with all other indebtedness and costs and expenses for which Borrower is responsible under this Agreement or under any of the Related Documents.

Lender. The word “Lender” means Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, its successors and assigns.

Loan. The word “Loan” means any and all loans and financial accommodations from Lender to Borrower whether now or hereafter existing, and however evidenced, including without limitation those loans and financial accommodations described herein or described on any exhibit or schedule attached to this Agreement from time to time, and further including any and all subsequent amendments, additions, substitutions, renewals and refinancings of any of Borrower’s Loans.

Note. The word “Note” means the Note dated March 4, 2018 and executed by Nanophase Technologies Corporation in the principal amount of \$500,000.00, together with all renewals of, extensions of, modifications of, refinancings of, consolidations of, and substitutions for the note or credit agreement.

Permitted Liens. The words “Permitted Liens” mean (1) liens and security interests securing Indebtedness owed by Borrower to Lender; (2) liens for taxes, assessments, or similar charges either not yet due or being contested in good faith; (3) liens of materialmen, mechanics, warehousemen, or carriers, or other like liens arising in the ordinary course of business and securing obligations which are not yet delinquent; (4) purchase money liens or purchase money security interests upon or in any property acquired or held by Borrower in the ordinary course of business to secure indebtedness outstanding on the date of this Agreement or permitted to be incurred under the paragraph of this Agreement titled “Indebtedness and Liens”; (5) liens and security interests which, as of the date of this Agreement, have been disclosed to and approved by the Lender in writing; and (6) those liens and security interests which in the aggregate constitute an immaterial and insignificant monetary amount with respect to the net value of Borrower’s assets.

Primary Credit Facility. The words “Primary Credit Facility” mean the credit facility described in the Line of Credit section of this Agreement.

Related Documents. The words “Related Documents” mean all promissory notes, credit agreements, loan agreements, environmental agreements, guaranties, security agreements, mortgages, deeds of trust, security deeds, collateral mortgages, and all other instruments, agreements and documents, whether now or hereafter existing, executed in connection with the Loan.

Security Agreement. The words “Security Agreement” mean and include without limitation any agreements, promises, covenants arrangements, understandings or other agreements, whether created by law, contract, or otherwise, evidencing, governing, representing, or creating a Security Interest.

Security Interest. The words “Security Interest” mean, individually, collectively, and interchangeably, without limitation, any and all types of collateral security, present and future, whether in the form of a lien, charge, encumbrance, mortgage, deed of trust, security deed, assignment, pledge, crop pledge, chattel mortgage, collateral chattel mortgage, chattel trust, factor’s lien, equipment trust, conditional sale, trust receipt, lien or title retention contract, lease or consignment intended as a security device, or any other security or lien interest whatsoever whether created by law, contract, or otherwise.

BORROWER ACKNOWLEDGES HAVING READ ALL THE PROVISIONS OF THIS BUSINESS LOAN AGREEMENT (ASSET BASED) AND BORROWER AGREES TO ITS TERMS. THIS BUSINESS LOAN AGREEMENT (ASSET BASED) IS DATED MARCH 4, 2018.

BORROWER:

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

By: /s/ Jess A. Jankowski
Jess Jankowski, President of Nanophase Technologies Corporation

LENDER:

LIBERTYVILLE BANK AND TRUST COMPANY

By: /s/ Benjamin J. Johnson
Benjamin J. Johnson, Vice President

PROMISSORY NOTE

Borrower: Nanophase Technologies Corporation
1319 Marquette Drive
Romeoville, IL 60446

Lender: Libertyville Bank and Trust Company
507 N. Milwaukee Ave
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 367-6800

Principal Amount: \$500,000.00

Date of Note: March 4, 2018

PROMISE TO PAY. Nanophase Technologies Corporation (“Borrower”) promises to pay to Libertyville Bank and Trust Company (“Lender”), or order, in lawful money of the United States of America, the principal amount of Five Hundred Thousand & 00/100 Dollars (\$500,000.00) or so much as may be outstanding, together with interest on the unpaid outstanding principal balance of each advance. Interest shall be calculated from the date of each advance until repayment of each advance.

PAYMENT. Borrower will pay this loan in one payment of all outstanding principal plus all accrued unpaid interest on March 4, 2019. In addition, Borrower will pay regular monthly payments of all accrued unpaid interest due as of each payment date, beginning April 4, 2018, with all subsequent interest payments to be due on the same day of each month after that. Unless otherwise agreed or required by applicable law, payments will be applied first to any accrued unpaid interest; then to principal; then to any escrow or reserve account payments as required under any mortgage, deed of trust, or other security instrument or security agreement securing this Note; then to any late charges; and then to any unpaid collection costs. Borrower will pay Lender at Lender’s address shown above or at such other place as Lender may designate in writing.

VARIABLE INTEREST RATE. The interest rate on this Note is subject to change from time to time based on changes in an independent index which is the Prime Rate as published in the Money Rates section of The Wall Street Journal (the “Index”). The Index is not necessarily the lowest rate charged by Lender on its loans. If the Index becomes unavailable during the term of this loan, Lender may designate a substitute index after notifying Borrower. Lender will tell Borrower the current Index rate upon Borrower’s request. The interest rate change will not occur more often than each day. Borrower understands that Lender may make loans based on other rates as well. Interest on the unpaid principal balance of this Note will be calculated as described in the “INTEREST CALCULATION METHOD” paragraph using a rate of 1.000 percentage point over the Index, rounded to the nearest 0.001 percent. NOTICE: Under no circumstances will the interest rate on this Note be more than the maximum rate allowed by applicable law.

INTEREST CALCULATION METHOD. Interest on this Note is computed on a 365/360 basis; that is, by applying the ratio of the interest rate over a year of 360 days, multiplied by the outstanding principal balance, multiplied by the actual number of days the principal balance is outstanding. All interest payable under this Note is computed using this method.

PREPAYMENT. Borrower may pay without penalty all or a portion of the amount owed earlier than it is due. Early payments will not, unless agreed to by Lender in writing, relieve Borrower of Borrower’s obligation to continue to make payments of accrued unpaid interest. Rather, early payments will reduce the principal balance due. Borrower agrees not to send Lender payments marked “paid in full”, “without recourse”, or similar language. If Borrower sends such a payment, Lender may accept it without losing any of Lender’s rights under this Note, and Borrower will remain obligated to pay any further amount owed to Lender. **All written communications concerning disputed amounts, including any check or other payment instrument that indicates that the payment constitutes “payment in full” of the amount owed or that is tendered with other conditions or limitations or as full satisfaction of a disputed amount must be mailed or delivered to: Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, 507 N. Milwaukee Ave Libertyville, IL 60048.**

LATE CHARGE. If a payment is 10 days or more late, Borrower will be charged 5.000% of the unpaid portion of the regularly scheduled payment.

INTEREST AFTER DEFAULT. Upon default, including failure to pay upon final maturity, the interest rate on this Note shall be increased by adding an additional 6.000 percentage point margin (“Default Rate Margin”). The Default Rate Margin shall also apply to each succeeding interest rate change that would have applied had there been no default. However, in no event will the interest rate exceed the maximum interest rate limitations under applicable law.

DEFAULT. Each of the following shall constitute an event of default (“Event of Default”) under this Note:

Payment Default. Borrower fails to make any payment when due under this Note.

Other Defaults. Borrower fails to comply with or to perform any other term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in this Note or in any of the related documents or to comply with or to perform any term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in any other agreement between Lender and Borrower.

Default in Favor of Third Parties. Borrower or any Grantor defaults under any loan, extension of credit, security agreement, purchase or sales agreement, or any other agreement, in favor of any other creditor or person that may materially affect any of Borrower’s property or Borrower’s ability to repay this Note or perform Borrower’s obligations under this Note or any of the related documents.

False Statements. Any warranty, representation or statement made or furnished to Lender by Borrower or on Borrower’s behalf under this Note or the related documents is false or misleading in any material respect, either now or at the time made or furnished or becomes false or misleading at any time thereafter.

Insolvency. The dissolution or termination of Borrower’s existence as a going business, the insolvency of Borrower, the appointment of a receiver for any part of Borrower’s property, any assignment for the benefit of creditors, any type of creditor workout, or the commencement of any proceeding under any bankruptcy or insolvency laws by or against Borrower.

Creditor or Forfeiture Proceedings. Commencement of foreclosure or forfeiture proceedings, whether by judicial proceeding, self-help, repossession or any other method, by any creditor of Borrower or by any governmental agency against any collateral securing the loan. This includes a garnishment of any of Borrower’s accounts, including deposit accounts, with Lender. However, this Event of Default shall not apply if there is a good faith dispute by Borrower as to the validity or reasonableness of the claim which is the basis of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and if Borrower gives Lender written notice of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and deposits with Lender monies or a surety bond for the creditor or forfeiture proceeding, in an amount determined by Lender, in its sole discretion, as being an adequate reserve or bond for the dispute.

Events Affecting Guarantor. Any of the preceding events occurs with respect to any guarantor, endorser, surety, or accommodation party of any of the indebtedness or any guarantor, endorser, surety, or accommodation party dies or becomes incompetent, or revokes or disputes the validity of, or liability under, any guaranty of the indebtedness evidenced by this Note.

Change In Ownership. Any change in ownership of twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the common stock of Borrower.

Adverse Change. A material adverse change occurs in Borrower’s financial condition, or Lender believes the prospect of payment or performance of this Note is impaired.

Insecurity. Lender in good faith believes itself insecure.

Cure Provisions. If any default, other than a default in payment, is curable and if Borrower has not been given a notice of a breach of the same provision of this Note within the preceding twelve (12) months, it may be cured if Borrower, after Lender sends written notice to Borrower demanding cure of such default: (1) cures the default within fifteen (15) days; or (2) if the cure requires more than fifteen (15) days, immediately initiates steps which Lender deems in Lender's sole discretion to be sufficient to cure the default and thereafter continues and completes all reasonable and necessary steps sufficient to produce compliance as soon as reasonably practical.

LENDER'S RIGHTS. Upon default, Lender may declare the entire unpaid principal balance under this Note and all accrued unpaid interest immediately due, and then Borrower will pay that amount.

ATTORNEYS' FEES; EXPENSES. Lender may hire or pay someone else to help collect this Note if Borrower does not pay. Borrower will pay Lender that amount. This includes, subject to any limits under applicable law, Lender's attorneys' fees and Lender's legal expenses, whether or not there is a lawsuit, including attorneys' fees, expenses for bankruptcy proceedings (including efforts to modify or vacate any automatic stay or injunction), and appeals. If not prohibited by applicable law, Borrower also will pay any court costs, in addition to all other sums provided by law.

JURY WAIVER. Lender and Borrower hereby waive the right to any jury trial in any action, proceeding, or counterclaim brought by either Lender or Borrower against the other.

GOVERNING LAW. This Note will be governed by federal law applicable to Lender and, to the extent not preempted by federal law, the laws of the State of Illinois without regard to its conflicts of law provisions. This Note has been accepted by Lender in the State of Illinois.

CONFESSION OF JUDGMENT. Borrower hereby irrevocably authorizes and empowers any attorney-at-law to appear in any court of record and to confess judgment against Borrower for the unpaid amount of this Note as evidenced by an affidavit signed by an officer of Lender setting forth the amount then due, attorneys' fees plus costs of suit, and to release all errors, and waive all rights of appeal. If a copy of this Note, verified by an affidavit, shall have been filed in the proceeding, it will not be necessary to file the original as a warrant of attorney. Borrower waives the right to any stay of execution and the benefit of all exemption laws now or hereafter in effect. No single exercise of the foregoing warrant and power to confess judgment will be deemed to exhaust the power, whether or not any such exercise shall be held by any court to be invalid, voidable, or void; but the power will continue undiminished and may be exercised from time to time as Lender may elect until all amounts owing on this Note have been paid in full. Borrower hereby waives and releases any and all claims or causes of action which Borrower might have against any attorney acting under the terms of authority which Borrower has granted herein arising out of or connected with the confession of judgment hereunder.

RIGHT OF SETOFF. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Lender reserves a right of setoff in all Borrower's accounts with Lender (whether checking, savings, or some other account). This includes all accounts Borrower holds jointly with someone else and all accounts Borrower may open in the future. However, this does not include any IRA or Keogh accounts, or any trust accounts for which setoff would be prohibited by law. Borrower authorizes Lender, to the extent permitted by applicable law, to charge or setoff all sums owing on the indebtedness against any and all such accounts, and, at Lender's option, to administratively freeze all such accounts to allow Lender to protect Lender's charge and setoff rights provided in this paragraph.

LINE OF CREDIT. This Note evidences a revolving line of credit. Advances under this Note may be requested either orally or in writing by Borrower or as provided in this paragraph. Lender may, but need not, require that all oral requests be confirmed in writing. All communications, instructions, or directions by telephone or otherwise to Lender are to be directed to Lender's office shown above. The following person or persons are authorized to request advances and authorize payments under the line of credit until Lender receives from Borrower, at Lender's address shown above, written notice of revocation of such authority: **Jess Jankowski, President of Nanophase Technologies Corporation.** Borrower agrees to be liable for all sums either: (A) advanced in accordance with the instructions of an authorized person or (B) credited to any of Borrower's accounts with Lender. The unpaid principal balance owing on this Note at any time may be evidenced by endorsements on this Note or by Lender's internal records, including daily computer print-outs. Lender will have no obligation to advance funds under this Note if: (A) Borrower or any guarantor is in default under the terms of this Note or any agreement that Borrower or any guarantor has with Lender, including any agreement made in connection with the signing of this Note; (B) Borrower or any guarantor ceases doing business or is insolvent; (C) any guarantor seeks, claims or otherwise attempts to limit, modify or revoke such guarantor's guarantee of this Note or any other loan with Lender; (D) Borrower has applied funds provided pursuant to this Note for purposes other than those authorized by Lender; or (E) Lender in good faith believes itself insecure.

PRIOR NOTE. This Note restates and replaces a certain Promissory Note dated March 4, 2015, as amended from time to time, between Borrower and Lender in the original principal amount of \$300,000.00 (the "Prior Note") and is not a repayment or novation of the Prior Note.

SUCCESSOR INTERESTS. The terms of this Note shall be binding upon Borrower, and upon Borrower's heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns, and shall inure to the benefit of Lender and its successors and assigns.

NOTIFY US OF INACCURATE INFORMATION WE REPORT TO CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES. Borrower may notify Lender if Lender reports any inaccurate information about Borrower's account(s) to a consumer reporting agency. Borrower's written notice describing the specific inaccuracy(ies) should be sent to Lender at the following address: Libertyville Bank and Trust Company 507 N. Milwaukee Ave Libertyville, IL 60048.

GENERAL PROVISIONS. If any part of this Note cannot be enforced, this fact will not affect the rest of the Note. Lender may delay or forgo enforcing any of its rights or remedies under this Note without losing them. Borrower and any other person who signs, guarantees or endorses this Note, to the extent allowed by law, waive presentment, demand for payment, and notice of dishonor. Upon any change in the terms of this Note, and unless otherwise expressly stated in writing, no party who signs this Note, whether as maker, guarantor, accommodation maker or endorser, shall be released from liability. All such parties agree that Lender may renew or extend (repeatedly and for any length of time) this loan or release any party or guarantor or collateral; or impair, fail to realize upon or perfect Lender's security interest in the collateral; and take any other action deemed necessary by Lender without the consent of or notice to anyone. All such parties also agree that Lender may modify this loan without the consent of or notice to anyone other than the party with whom the modification is made. The obligations under this Note are joint and several.

ILLINOIS INSURANCE NOTICE. Unless Borrower provides Lender with evidence of the insurance coverage required by Borrower's agreement with Lender, Lender may purchase insurance at Borrower's expense to protect Lender's interests in the collateral. This insurance may, but need not, protect Borrower's interests. The coverage that Lender purchases may not pay any claim that Borrower makes or any claim that is made against Borrower in connection with the collateral. Borrower may later cancel any insurance purchased by Lender, but only after providing Lender with evidence that Borrower has obtained insurance as required by their agreement. If Lender purchases insurance for the collateral, Borrower will be responsible for the costs of that insurance, including interest and any other charges Lender may impose in connection with the placement of the insurance, until the effective date of the cancellation or expiration of the insurance. The costs of the insurance may be added to Borrower's total outstanding balance or obligation. The costs of the insurance may be more than the cost of insurance Borrower may be able to obtain on Borrower's own.

PRIOR TO SIGNING THIS NOTE, BORROWER READ AND UNDERSTOOD ALL THE PROVISIONS OF THIS NOTE, INCLUDING THE VARIABLE INTEREST RATE PROVISIONS. BORROWER AGREES TO THE TERMS OF THE NOTE.

BORROWER ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS PROMISSORY NOTE.

BORROWER:

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORTION

By: /s/ Jess Jankowski
Jess Jankowski, President of Nanophase Technologies Corporation

COMMERCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT

Grantor: Nanophase Technologies Corporation
1319 Marquette Drive
Romeoville, IL 60446

Lender: Libertyville Bank and Trust Company
507 N. Milwaukee Ave
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 367-6800

THIS COMMERCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT dated March 4, 2018, Is made and executed between Nanophase Technologies Corporation (“Grantor”) and Libertyville Bank and Trust Company (“Lender”).

GRANT OF SECURITY INTEREST. For valuable consideration, Grantor grants to Lender a security interest in the Collateral to secure the Indebtedness and agrees that Lender shall have the rights stated in this Agreement with respect to the Collateral, in addition to all other rights which Lender may have by law.

COLLATERAL DESCRIPTION. The word “Collateral” as used in this Agreement means the following described property, whether now owned or hereafter acquired, whether now existing or hereafter arising, and wherever located, in which Grantor is giving to Lender a security interest for the payment of the Indebtedness and performance of all other obligations under the Note and this Agreement:

All Inventory, Chattel Paper, Accounts, Equipment, General Intangibles and Fixtures

In addition, the word “Collateral” also includes all the following, whether now owned or hereafter acquired, whether now existing or hereafter arising, and wherever located:

- (A) All accessions, attachments, accessories, tools, parts, supplies, replacements of and additions to any of the collateral described herein, whether added now or later.
- (B) All products and produce of any of the property described in this Collateral section.
- (C) All accounts, general intangibles, instruments, rents, monies, payments, and all other rights, arising out of a sale, lease, consignment or other disposition of any of the property described in this Collateral section.
- (D) All proceeds (including insurance proceeds) from the sale, destruction, loss, or other disposition of any of the property described in this Collateral section, and sums due from a third party who has damaged or destroyed the Collateral or from that party’s insurer, whether due to judgment, settlement or other process.
- (E) All records and data relating to any of the property described in this Collateral section, whether in the form of a writing, photograph, microfilm, microfiche, or electronic media, together with all of Grantor’s right, title, and interest in and to all computer software required to utilize, create, maintain, and process any such records or data on electronic media.

CROSS-COLLATERALIZATION. In addition to the Note, this Agreement secures all obligations, debts and liabilities, plus interest thereon, of Grantor to Lender, or any one or more of them, as well as all claims by Lender against Grantor or any one or more of them, whether now existing or hereafter arising, whether related or unrelated to the purpose of the Note, whether voluntary or otherwise, whether due or not due, direct or indirect, determined or undetermined, absolute or contingent, liquidated or unliquidated, whether Grantor may be liable individually or jointly with others, whether obligated as guarantor, surety, accommodation party or otherwise, and whether recovery upon such amounts may be or hereafter may become barred by any statute of limitations, and whether the obligation to repay such amounts may be or hereafter may become otherwise unenforceable.

FUTURE ADVANCES. In addition to the Note, this Agreement secures all future advances made by Lender to Grantor regardless of whether the advances are made a) pursuant to a commitment or b) for the same purposes.

RIGHT OF SETOFF. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Lender reserves a right of setoff in all Grantor’s accounts with Lender (whether checking, savings, or some other account). This includes all accounts Grantor holds jointly with someone else and all accounts Grantor may open in the future. However, this does not include any IRA or Keogh accounts, or any trust accounts for which setoff would be prohibited by law. Grantor authorizes Lender, to the extent permitted by applicable law, to charge or setoff all sums owing on the Indebtedness against any and all such accounts, and, at Lender’s option, to administratively freeze all such accounts to allow Lender to protect Lender’s charge and setoff rights provided in this paragraph.

GRANTOR’S REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE COLLATERAL. With respect to the Collateral, Grantor represents and promises to Lender that:

Perfection of Security Interest. Grantor agrees to take whatever actions are requested by Lender to perfect and continue Lender’s security interest in the Collateral. Upon request of Lender, Grantor will deliver to Lender any and all of the documents evidencing or constituting the Collateral, and Grantor will note Lender’s interest upon any and all chattel paper and instruments if not delivered to Lender for possession by Lender. **This is a continuing Security Agreement and will continue in effect even though all or any part of the Indebtedness is paid in full and even though for a period of time Grantor may not be indebted to Lender.**

Notices to Lender. Grantor will promptly notify Lender in writing at Lender’s address shown above (or such other addresses as Lender may designate from time to time) prior to any (1) change in Grantor’s name; (2) change in Grantor’s assumed business name(s); (3) change in the management of the Corporation Grantor; (4) change in the authorized signer(s); (5) change in Grantor’s principal office address; (6) change in Grantor’s state of organization; (7) conversion of Grantor to a new or different type of business entity; or (8) change in any other aspect of Grantor that directly or indirectly relates to any agreements between Grantor and Lender. No change in Grantor’s name or state of organization will take effect until after Lender has received notice.

No Violation. The execution and delivery of this Agreement will not violate any law or agreement governing Grantor or to which Grantor is a party, and its certificate or articles of incorporation and bylaws do not prohibit any term or condition of this Agreement.

Enforceability of Collateral. To the extent the Collateral consists of accounts, chattel paper, or general intangibles, as defined by the Uniform Commercial Code, the Collateral is enforceable in accordance with its terms, is genuine, and fully complies with all applicable laws and regulations concerning form, content and manner of preparation and execution, and all persons appearing to be obligated on the Collateral have authority and capacity to contract and are in fact obligated as they appear to be on the Collateral. At the time any account becomes subject to a security interest in favor of Lender, the account shall be a good and valid account representing an undisputed, bona fide indebtedness incurred by the account debtor, for merchandise held subject to delivery instructions or previously shipped or delivered pursuant to a contract of sale, or for services previously performed by Grantor with or for the account debtor. So long as this Agreement remains in effect, Grantor shall not, without Lender’s prior written consent, compromise, settle, adjust, or extend payment under or with regard to any such Accounts. There shall be no setoffs or counterclaims against any of the Collateral, and no agreement shall have been made under which any deductions or discounts may be claimed concerning the Collateral except those disclosed to Lender in writing.

Location of the Collateral. Except in the ordinary course of Grantor's business, Grantor agrees to keep the Collateral (or to the extent the Collateral consists of intangible property such as accounts or general intangibles, the records concerning the Collateral) at Grantor's address shown above or at such other locations as are acceptable to Lender. Upon Lender's request, Grantor will deliver to Lender in form satisfactory to Lender a schedule of real properties and Collateral locations relating to Grantor's operations, including without limitation the following: (1) all real property Grantor owns or is purchasing; (2) all real property Grantor is renting or leasing; (3) all storage facilities Grantor owns, rents, leases, or uses; and (4) all other properties where Collateral is or may be located.

Removal of the Collateral. Except in the ordinary course of Grantor's business, including the sales of inventory, Grantor shall not remove the Collateral from its existing location without Lender's prior written consent. To the extent that the Collateral consists of vehicles, or other titled property, Grantor shall not take or permit any action which would require application for certificates of title for the vehicles outside the State of Delaware, without Lender's prior written consent. Grantor shall, whenever requested, advise Lender of the exact location of the Collateral.

Transactions Involving Collateral. Except for inventory sold or accounts collected in the ordinary course of Grantor's business, or as otherwise provided for in this Agreement, Grantor shall not sell, offer to sell, or otherwise transfer or dispose of the Collateral. While Grantor is not in default under this Agreement, Grantor may sell inventory, but only in the ordinary course of its business and only to buyers who qualify as a buyer in the ordinary course of business. A sale in the ordinary course of Grantor's business does not include a transfer in partial or total satisfaction of a debt or any bulk sale. Grantor shall not pledge, mortgage, encumber or otherwise permit the Collateral to be subject to any lien, security interest, encumbrance, or charge, other than the security interest provided for in this Agreement, without the prior written consent of Lender. This includes security interests even if junior in right to the security interests granted under this Agreement. Unless waived by Lender, all proceeds from any disposition of the Collateral (for whatever reason) shall be held in trust for Lender and shall not be commingled with any other funds; provided however, this requirement shall not constitute consent by Lender to any sale or other disposition. Upon receipt, Grantor shall immediately deliver any such proceeds to Lender.

Title. Grantor represents and warrants to Lender that Grantor holds good and marketable title to the Collateral, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances except for the lien of this Agreement. No financing statement covering any of the Collateral is on file in any public office other than those which reflect the security interest created by this Agreement or to which Lender has specifically consented. Grantor shall defend Lender's rights in the Collateral against the claims and demands of all other persons.

Repairs and Maintenance. Grantor agrees to keep and maintain, and to cause others to keep and maintain, the Collateral in good order, repair and condition at all times while this Agreement remains in effect. Grantor further agrees to pay when due all claims for work done on, or services rendered or material furnished in connection with the Collateral so that no lien or encumbrance may ever attach to or be filed against the Collateral.

Inspection of Collateral. Lender and Lender's designated representatives and agents shall have the right at all reasonable times to examine and inspect the Collateral wherever located.

Taxes, Assessments and Liens. Grantor will pay when due all taxes, assessments and liens upon the Collateral, its use or operation, upon this Agreement, upon any promissory note or notes evidencing the Indebtedness, or upon any of the other Related Documents. Grantor may withhold any such payment or may elect to contest any lien if Grantor is in good faith conducting an appropriate proceeding to contest the obligation to pay and so long as Lender's interest in the Collateral is not jeopardized in Lender's sole opinion. If the Collateral is subjected to a lien which is not discharged within fifteen (15) days, Grantor shall deposit with Lender cash, a sufficient corporate surety bond or other security satisfactory to Lender in an amount adequate to provide for the discharge of the lien plus any interest, costs, reasonable attorneys' fees or other charges that could accrue as a result of foreclosure or sale of the Collateral. In any contest Grantor shall defend itself and Lender and shall satisfy any final adverse judgment before enforcement against the Collateral. Grantor shall name Lender as an additional obligee under any surety bond furnished in the contest proceedings. Grantor further agrees to furnish Lender with evidence that such taxes, assessments, and governmental and other charges have been paid in full and in a timely manner. Grantor may withhold any such payment or may elect to contest any lien if Grantor is in good faith conducting an appropriate proceeding to contest the obligation to pay and so long as Lender's interest in the Collateral is not jeopardized.

Compliance with Governmental Requirements. Grantor shall comply promptly with all laws, ordinances, rules and regulations of all governmental authorities, now or hereafter in effect, applicable to the ownership, production, disposition, or use of the Collateral, including all laws or regulations relating to the undue erosion of highly-erodible land or relating to the conversion of wetlands for the production of an agricultural product or commodity. Grantor may contest in good faith any such law, ordinance or regulation and withhold compliance during any proceeding, including appropriate appeals, so long as Lender's interest in the Collateral, in Lender's opinion, is not jeopardized.

Hazardous Substances. Grantor represents and warrants that the Collateral never has been, and never will be so long as this Agreement remains a lien on the Collateral, used in violation of any Environmental Laws or for the generation, manufacture, storage, transportation, treatment, disposal, release or threatened release of any Hazardous Substance. The representations and warranties contained herein are based on Grantor's due diligence in investigating the Collateral for Hazardous Substances. Grantor hereby (1) releases and waives any future claims against Lender for indemnity or contribution in the event Grantor becomes liable for cleanup or other costs under any Environmental Laws, and (2) agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Lender against any and all claims and losses resulting from a breach of this provision of this Agreement. This obligation to indemnify and defend shall survive the payment of the Indebtedness and the satisfaction of this Agreement.

Maintenance of Casualty Insurance. Grantor shall procure and maintain all risks insurance, including without limitation fire, theft and liability coverage together with such other insurance as Lender may require with respect to the Collateral, in form, amounts, coverages and basis reasonably acceptable to Lender and issued by a company or companies reasonably acceptable to Lender. Grantor, upon request of Lender, will deliver to Lender from time to time the policies or certificates of insurance in form satisfactory to Lender, including stipulations that coverages will not be cancelled or diminished without at least ten (10) days' prior written notice to Lender and not including any disclaimer of the insurer's liability for failure to give such a notice. Each insurance policy also shall include an endorsement providing that coverage in favor of Lender will not be impaired in any way by any act, omission or default of Grantor or any other person. In connection with all policies covering assets in which Lender holds or is offered a security interest, Grantor will provide Lender with such loss payable or other endorsements as Lender may require. If Grantor at any time fails to obtain or maintain any insurance as required under this Agreement, Lender may (but shall not be obligated to) obtain such insurance as Lender deems appropriate, including if Lender so chooses "single interest insurance," which will cover only Lender's interest in the Collateral.

Application of Insurance Proceeds. Grantor shall promptly notify Lender of any loss or damage to the Collateral if the estimated cost of repair or replacement exceeds \$1,000.00, whether or not such casualty or loss is covered by insurance. Lender may make proof of loss if Grantor fails to do so within fifteen (15) days of the casualty. All proceeds of any insurance on the Collateral, including accrued proceeds thereon, shall be held by Lender as part of the Collateral. If Lender consents to repair or replacement of the damaged or destroyed Collateral, Lender shall, upon satisfactory proof of expenditure, pay or reimburse Grantor from the proceeds for the reasonable cost of repair or restoration. If Lender does not consent to repair or replacement of the Collateral, Lender shall retain a sufficient amount of the proceeds to pay all of the Indebtedness, and shall pay the balance to Grantor. Any proceeds which have not been disbursed within six (6) months after their receipt and which Grantor has not committed to the repair or restoration of the Collateral shall be used to prepay the Indebtedness.

Insurance Reserves. Lender may require Grantor to maintain with Lender reserves for payment of insurance premiums, which reserves shall be created by monthly payments from Grantor of a sum estimated by Lender to be sufficient to produce, at least fifteen (15) days before the premium due date, amounts at least equal to the insurance premiums to be paid. If fifteen (15) days before payment is due, the reserve funds are insufficient, Grantor shall upon demand pay any deficiency to Lender. The reserve funds shall be held by Lender as a general deposit and shall constitute a non-interest-bearing account which Lender may satisfy by payment of the insurance premiums required to be paid by Grantor as they become due. Lender does not hold the reserve funds in trust for Grantor, and Lender is not the agent of Grantor for payment of the insurance premiums required to be paid by Grantor. The responsibility for the payment of premiums shall remain Grantor's sole responsibility.

Insurance Reports. Grantor, upon request of Lender, shall furnish to Lender reports on each existing policy of insurance showing such information as Lender may reasonably request including the following: (1) the name of the insurer; (2) the risks insured; (3) the amount of the policy; (4) the property insured; (5) the then current value on the basis of which insurance has been obtained and the manner of determining that value; and (6) the expiration date of the policy. In addition, Grantor shall upon request by Lender (however not more often than annually) have an independent appraiser satisfactory to Lender determine, as applicable, the cash value or replacement cost of the Collateral.

Financing Statements. Grantor authorizes Lender to file a UCC financing statement, or alternatively, a copy of this Agreement to perfect Lender's security interest. At Lender's request, Grantor additionally agrees to sign all other documents that are necessary to perfect, protect, and continue Lender's security interest in the Property. Grantor will pay all filing fees, title transfer fees, and other fees and costs involved unless prohibited by law or unless Lender is required by law to pay such fees and costs. Grantor irrevocably appoints Lender to execute documents necessary to transfer title if there is a default. Lender may file a copy of this Agreement as a financing statement.

GRANTOR'S RIGHT TO POSSESSION AND TO COLLECT ACCOUNTS. Until default and except as otherwise provided below with respect to accounts, Grantor may have possession of the tangible personal property and beneficial use of all the Collateral and may use it in any lawful manner not inconsistent with this Agreement or the Related Documents, provided that Grantor's right to possession and beneficial use shall not apply to any Collateral where possession of the Collateral by Lender is required by law to perfect Lender's security interest in such Collateral. Until otherwise notified by Lender, Grantor may collect any of the Collateral consisting of accounts. At any time and even though no Event of Default exists, Lender may exercise its rights to collect the accounts and to notify account debtors to make payments directly to Lender for application to the Indebtedness. If Lender at any time has possession of any Collateral, whether before or after an Event of Default, Lender shall be deemed to have exercised reasonable care in the custody and preservation of the Collateral if Lender takes such action for that purpose as Grantor shall request or as Lender, in Lender's sole discretion, shall deem appropriate under the circumstances, but failure to honor any request by Grantor shall not of itself be deemed to be a failure to exercise reasonable care. Lender shall not be required to take any steps necessary to preserve any rights in the Collateral against prior parties, nor to protect, preserve or maintain any security interest given to secure the Indebtedness.

LENDER'S EXPENDITURES. If any action or proceeding is commenced that would materially affect Lender's interest in the Collateral or if Grantor fails to comply with any provision of this Agreement or any Related Documents, including but not limited to Grantor's failure to discharge or pay when due any amounts Grantor is required to discharge or pay under this Agreement or any Related Documents, Lender on Grantor's behalf may (but shall not be obligated to) take any action that Lender deems appropriate, including but not limited to discharging or paying all taxes, liens, security interests, encumbrances and other claims, at any time levied or placed on the Collateral and paying all costs for insuring, maintaining and preserving the Collateral. All such expenditures incurred or paid by Lender for such purposes will then bear interest at the rate charged under the Note from the date incurred or paid by Lender to the date of repayment by Grantor. All such expenses will become a part of the Indebtedness and, at Lender's option, will (A) be payable on demand; (B) be added to the balance of the Note and be apportioned among and be payable with any installment payments to become due during either (1) the term of any applicable insurance policy; or (2) the remaining term of the Note; or (C) be treated as a balloon payment which will be due and payable at the Note's maturity. The Agreement also will secure payment of these amounts. Such right shall be in addition to all other rights and remedies to which Lender may be entitled upon Default.

DEFAULT. Each of the following shall constitute an Event of Default under this Agreement:

Payment Default. Grantor fails to make any payment when due under the Indebtedness.

Other Defaults. Grantor fails to comply with or to perform any other term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in this Agreement or in any of the Related Documents or to comply with or to perform any term, obligation, covenant or condition contained in any other agreement between Lender and Grantor.

Default in Favor of Third Parties. Grantor defaults under any loan, extension of credit, security agreement, purchase or sales agreement, or any other agreement, in favor of any other creditor or person that may materially affect any of Grantor's property or ability to perform Grantor's obligations under this Agreement or any of the Related Documents.

False Statements. Any warranty, representation or statement made or furnished to Lender by Grantor or on Grantor's behalf under this Agreement or the Related Documents is false or misleading in any material respect, either now or at the time made or furnished or becomes false or misleading at any time thereafter.

Defective Collateralization. This Agreement or any of the Related Documents ceases to be in full force and effect (including failure of any collateral document to create a valid and perfected security interest or lien) at any time and for any reason.

Insolvency. The dissolution or termination of Grantor's existence as a going business, the insolvency of Grantor, the appointment of a receiver for any part of Grantor's property, any assignment for the benefit of creditors, any type of creditor workout, or the commencement of any proceeding under any bankruptcy or insolvency laws by or against Grantor.

Creditor or Forfeiture Proceedings. Commencement of foreclosure or forfeiture proceedings, whether by judicial proceeding, self-help, repossession or any other method, by any creditor of Grantor or by any governmental agency against any collateral securing the Indebtedness. This includes a garnishment of any of Grantor's accounts, including deposit accounts, with Lender. However, this Event of Default shall not apply if there is a good faith dispute by Grantor as to the validity or reasonableness of the claim which is the basis of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and if Grantor gives Lender written notice of the creditor or forfeiture proceeding and deposits with Lender monies or a surety bond for the creditor or forfeiture proceeding, in an amount determined by Lender, in its sole discretion, as being an adequate reserve or bond for the dispute.

Events Affecting Guarantor. Any of the preceding events occurs with respect to any guarantor, endorser, surety, or accommodation party of any of the Indebtedness or guarantor, endorser, surety, or accommodation party dies or becomes incompetent or revokes or disputes the validity of, or liability under, any Guaranty of the Indebtedness.

Adverse Change. A material adverse change occurs in Grantor's financial condition, or Lender believes the prospect of payment or performance of the Indebtedness is impaired.

Insecurity. Lender in good faith believes itself insecure.

Cure Provisions. If any default, other than a default in payment, is curable and if Grantor has not been given a notice of a breach of the same provision of this Agreement within the preceding twelve (12) months, it may be cured if Grantor, after Lender sends written notice to Grantor demanding cure of such default: (1) cures the default within fifteen (15) days; or (2) if the cure requires more than fifteen (15) days, immediately initiates steps which Lender deems in Lender's sole discretion to be sufficient to cure the default and thereafter continues and completes all reasonable and necessary steps sufficient to produce compliance as soon as reasonably practical.

RIGHTS AND REMEDIES ON DEFAULT. If an Event of Default occurs under this Agreement, at any time thereafter, Lender shall have all the rights of a secured party under the Delaware Uniform Commercial Code. In addition and without limitation, Lender may exercise any one or more of the following rights and remedies:

Accelerate Indebtedness. Lender may declare the entire Indebtedness, including any prepayment penalty which Grantor would be required to pay, immediately due and payable, without notice of any kind to Grantor.

Assemble Collateral. Lender may require Grantor to deliver to Lender all or any portion of the Collateral and any and all certificates of title and other documents relating to the Collateral. Lender may require Grantor to assemble the Collateral and make it available to Lender at a place to be designated by Lender. Lender also shall have full power to enter upon the property of Grantor to take possession of and remove the Collateral. If the Collateral contains other goods not covered by this Agreement at the time of repossession, Grantor agrees Lender may take such other goods, provided that Lender makes reasonable efforts to return them to Grantor after repossession.

Sell the Collateral. Lender shall have full power to sell, lease, transfer, or otherwise deal with the Collateral or proceeds thereof in Lender's own name or that of Grantor. Lender may sell the Collateral at public auction or private sale. Unless the Collateral threatens to decline speedily in value or is of a type customarily sold on a recognized market, Lender will give Grantor, and other persons as required by law, reasonable notice of the time and place of any public sale, or the time after which any private sale or any other disposition of the Collateral is to be made. However, no notice need be provided to any person who, after Event of Default occurs, enters into and authenticates an agreement waiving that person's right to notification of sale. The requirements of reasonable notice shall be met if such notice is given at least ten (10) days before the time of the sale or disposition. All expenses relating to the disposition of the Collateral, including without limitation the expenses of retaking, holding, insuring, preparing for sale and selling the Collateral, shall become a part of the Indebtedness secured by this Agreement and shall be payable on demand, with interest at the Note rate from date of expenditure until repaid.

Appoint Receiver. Lender shall have the right to have a receiver appointed to take possession of all or any part of the Collateral, with the power to protect and preserve the Collateral, to operate the Collateral preceding foreclosure or sale, and to collect the rents from the Collateral and apply the proceeds, over and above the cost of the receivership, against the Indebtedness. The receiver may serve without bond if permitted by law. Lender's right to the appointment of a receiver shall exist whether or not the apparent value of the Collateral exceeds the Indebtedness by a substantial amount. Employment by Lender shall not disqualify a person from serving as a receiver.

Collect Revenues, Apply Accounts. Lender, either itself or through a receiver, may collect the payments, rents, income, and revenues from the Collateral. Lender may at any time in Lender's discretion transfer any Collateral into Lender's own name or that of Lender's nominee and receive the payments, rents, income, and revenues therefrom and hold the same as security for the Indebtedness or apply it to payment of the Indebtedness in such order of preference as Lender may determine. Insofar as the Collateral consists of accounts, general intangibles, insurance policies, instruments, chattel paper, choses in action, or similar property, Lender may demand, collect, receipt for, settle, compromise, adjust, sue for, foreclose, or realize on the Collateral as Lender may determine, whether or not Indebtedness or Collateral is then due. For these purposes, Lender may, on behalf of and in the name of Grantor, receive, open and dispose of mail addressed to Grantor; change any address to which mail and payments are to be sent; and endorse notes, checks, drafts, money orders, documents of title, instruments and items pertaining to payment, shipment, or storage of any Collateral. To facilitate collection, Lender may notify account debtors and obligors on any Collateral to make payments directly to Lender.

Obtain Deficiency. If Lender chooses to sell any or all of the Collateral, Lender may obtain a judgment against Grantor for any deficiency remaining on the Indebtedness due to Lender after application of all amounts received from the exercise of the rights provided in this Agreement. Grantor shall be liable for a deficiency even if the transaction described in this subsection is a sale of accounts or chattel paper.

Other Rights and Remedies. Lender shall have all the rights and remedies of a secured creditor under the provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code, as may be amended from time to time. In addition, Lender shall have and may exercise any or all other rights and remedies it may have available at law, in equity, or otherwise.

Election of Remedies. Except as may be prohibited by applicable law, all of Lender's rights and remedies, whether evidenced by this Agreement, the Related Documents, or by any other writing, shall be cumulative and may be exercised singularly or concurrently. Election by Lender to pursue any remedy shall not exclude pursuit of any other remedy, and an election to make expenditures or to take action to perform an obligation of Grantor under this Agreement, after Grantor's failure to perform, shall not affect Lender's right to declare a default and exercise its remedies.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS. The following miscellaneous provisions are a part of this Agreement:

Amendments. This Agreement, together with any Related Documents, constitutes the entire understanding and agreement of the parties as to the matters set forth in this Agreement. No alteration of or amendment to this Agreement shall be effective unless given in writing and signed by the party or parties sought to be charged or bound by the alteration or amendment.

Attorneys' Fees; Expenses. Grantor agrees to pay upon demand all of Lender's costs and expenses, including Lender's reasonable attorneys' fees and Lender's legal expenses, incurred in connection with the enforcement of this Agreement. Lender may hire or pay someone else to help enforce this Agreement, and Grantor shall pay the costs and expenses of such enforcement. Costs and expenses include Lender's reasonable attorneys' fees and legal expenses whether or not there is a lawsuit, including reasonable attorneys' fees and legal expenses for bankruptcy proceedings (including efforts to modify or vacate any automatic stay or injunction), appeals, and any anticipated post-judgment collection services. Lender may also recover from Grantor all court, alternative dispute resolution or other collection costs (including, without limitation, fees and charges of collection agencies) actually incurred by Lender.

Caption Headings. Caption headings in this Agreement are for convenience purposes only and are not to be used to interpret or define the provisions of this Agreement.

Governing Law. With respect to procedural matters related to the perfection and enforcement of Lender's rights against the Collateral, this Agreement will be governed by federal law applicable to Lender and to the extent not preempted by federal law, the laws of the State of Delaware. In all other respects, this Agreement will be governed by federal law applicable to Lender and, to the extent not preempted by federal law, the laws of the State of Illinois without regard to its conflicts of law provisions. However, if there ever is a question about whether any provision of this Agreement is valid or enforceable, the provision that is questioned will be governed by whichever state or federal law would find the provision to be valid and enforceable. The loan transaction that is evidenced by the Note and this Agreement has been applied for, considered, approved and made, and all necessary loan documents have been accepted by Lender in the State of Illinois.

No Waiver by Lender. Lender shall not be deemed to have waived any rights under this Agreement unless such waiver is given in writing and signed by Lender. No delay or omission on the part of Lender in exercising any right shall operate as a waiver of such right or any other right. A waiver by Lender of a provision of this Agreement shall not prejudice or constitute a waiver of Lender's right otherwise to demand strict compliance with that provision or any other provision of this Agreement. No prior waiver by Lender, nor any course of dealing between Lender and Grantor, shall constitute a waiver of any of Lender's rights or of any of Grantor's obligations as to any future transactions. Whenever the consent of Lender is required under this Agreement, the granting of such consent by Lender in any instance shall not constitute continuing consent to subsequent instances where such consent is required and in all cases such consent may be granted or withheld in the sole discretion of Lender.

Notices. Any notice required to be given under this Agreement shall be given in writing, and shall be effective when actually delivered, when actually received by telefacsimile (unless otherwise required by law), when deposited with a nationally recognized overnight courier, or, if mailed, when deposited in the United States mail, as first class, certified or registered mail postage prepaid, directed to the addresses shown near the beginning of this Agreement. Any party may change its address for notices under this Agreement by giving formal written notice to the other parties, specifying that the purpose of the notice is to change the party's address. For notice purposes, Grantor agrees to keep Lender informed at all times of Grantor's current address. Unless otherwise provided or required by law, if there is more than one Grantor, any notice given by Lender to any Grantor is deemed to be notice given to all Grantors.

Power of Attorney. Grantor hereby appoints Lender as Grantor's irrevocable attorney-in-fact for the purpose of executing any documents necessary to perfect, amend, or to continue the security interest granted in this Agreement or to demand termination of filings of other secured parties. Lender may at any time, and without further authorization from Grantor, file a carbon, photographic or other reproduction of any financing statement or of this Agreement for use as a financing statement. Grantor will reimburse Lender for all expenses for the perfection and the continuation of the perfection of Lender's security interest in the Collateral.

Severability. If a court of competent jurisdiction finds any provision of this Agreement to be illegal, invalid, or unenforceable as to any circumstance, that finding shall not make the offending provision illegal, invalid, or unenforceable as to any other circumstance. If feasible, the offending provision shall be considered modified so that it becomes legal, valid and enforceable. If the offending provision cannot be so modified, it shall be considered deleted from this Agreement. Unless otherwise required by law, the illegality, invalidity, or unenforceability of any provision of this Agreement shall not affect the legality, validity or enforceability of any other provision of this Agreement.

Successors and Assigns. Subject to any limitations stated in this Agreement on transfer of Grantor's interest, this Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties, their successors and assigns. If ownership of the Collateral becomes vested in a person other than Grantor, Lender, without notice to Grantor, may deal with Grantor's successors with reference to this Agreement and the Indebtedness by way of forbearance or extension without releasing Grantor from the obligations of this Agreement or liability under the Indebtedness.

Survival of Representations and Warranties. All representations, warranties, and agreements made by Grantor in this Agreement shall survive the execution and delivery of this Agreement, shall be continuing in nature, and shall remain in full force and effect until such time as Grantor's Indebtedness shall be paid in full.

Time is of the Essence. Time is of the essence in the performance of this Agreement.

Waive Jury. All parties to this Agreement hereby waive the right to any jury trial in any action, proceeding, or counterclaim brought by any party against any other party.

DEFINITIONS. The following capitalized words and terms shall have the following meanings when used in this Agreement. Unless specifically stated to the contrary, all references to dollar amounts shall mean amounts in lawful money of the United States of America. Words and terms used in the singular shall include the plural, and the plural shall include the singular, as the context may require. Words and terms not otherwise defined in this Agreement shall have the meanings attributed to such terms in the Uniform Commercial Code:

Agreement. The word "Agreement" means this Commercial Security Agreement, as this Commercial Security Agreement may be amended or modified from time to time, together with all exhibits and schedules attached to this Commercial Security Agreement from time to time.

Borrower. The word "Borrower" means Nanophase Technologies Corporation and includes all co-signers and co-makers signing the Note and all their successors and assigns.

Collateral. The word "Collateral" means all of Grantor's right, title and interest in and to all the Collateral as described in the Collateral Description section of this Agreement.

Default. The word "Default" means the Default set forth in this Agreement in the section titled "Default".

Environmental Laws. The words "Environmental Laws" mean any and all state, federal and local statutes, regulations and ordinances relating to the protection of human health or the environment, including without limitation the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 9601, et seq. ("CERCLA"), the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-499 ("SARA"), the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, 49 U.S.C. Section 1801, et seq., the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 6901, et seq., or other applicable state or federal laws, rules, or regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

Event of Default. The words "Event of Default" mean any of the events of default set forth in this Agreement in the default section of this Agreement.

Grantor. The word "Grantor" means Nanophase Technologies Corporation.

Guaranty. The word "Guaranty" means the guaranty from guarantor, endorser, surety, or accommodation party to Lender, including without limitation a guaranty of all or part of the Note.

Hazardous Substances. The words "Hazardous Substances" mean materials that, because of their quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may cause or pose a present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly used, treated, stored, disposed of, generated, manufactured, transported or otherwise handled. The words "Hazardous Substances" are used in their very broadest sense and include without limitation any and all hazardous or toxic substances, materials or waste as defined by or listed under the Environmental Laws. The term "Hazardous Substances" also includes, without limitation, petroleum and petroleum by-products or any fraction thereof and asbestos.

Indebtedness. The word “Indebtedness” means the indebtedness evidenced by the Note or Related Documents, including all principal and interest together with all other indebtedness and costs and expenses for which Grantor is responsible under this Agreement or under any of the Related Documents. Specifically, without limitation, Indebtedness includes the future advances set forth in the Future Advances provision, together with all interest thereon and all amounts that may be indirectly secured by the Cross-Collateralization provision of this Agreement.

Lender. The word “Lender” means Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, its successors and assigns.

Note. The word “Note” means the Note dated March 4, 2018 and executed by Nanophase Technologies Corporation in the principal amount of \$500,000.00, together with all renewals of, extensions of, modifications of, refinancings of, consolidations of, and substitutions for the note or credit agreement.

Property. The word “Property” means all of Grantor’s right, title and interest in and to all the Property as described in the “Collateral Description” section of this Agreement.

Related Documents. The words “Related Documents” mean all promissory notes, credit agreements, loan agreements, environmental agreements, guaranties, security agreements, mortgages, deeds of trust, security deeds, collateral mortgages, and all other instruments, agreements and documents, whether now or hereafter existing, executed in connection with the Indebtedness.

GRANTOR HAS READ AND UNDERSTOOD ALL THE PROVISIONS OF THIS COMMERCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT AND AGREES TO ITS TERMS. THIS AGREEMENT IS DATED MARCH 4, 2018.

THIS AGREEMENT IS DELIVERED UNDER SEAL AND IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS AGREEMENT IS AND SHALL CONSTITUTE AND HAVE THE EFFECT OF A SEALED INSTRUMENT ACCORDING TO LAW.

GRANTOR:

NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

By: /s/ Jess Jankowski (Seal)
Jess Jankowski, President of Nanophase Technologies Corporation

SUBSIDIARY OF NANOPHASE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION
(as of December 31, 2017)

Name	Jurisdiction of Formation
Solésence, LLC	Delaware

CONSENT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM

We consent to the incorporation by reference in the Registration Statements (No.'s 333-53445, No. 333-74170, No. 333-119466, No. 333-150765 and No. 333-187649) on Form S-8 and Registration Statements (No. 333-90326, No. 333-116224, No. 333-140461 and No. 333-163363) on Form S-3 of Nanophase Technologies Corporation of our report dated March 30, 2018, relating to the financial statements of Nanophase Technologies Corporation, appearing in this Annual Report on Form 10-K of Nanophase Technologies Corporation for the year ended December 31, 2017.

/s/ RSM US LLP

Schaumburg, Illinois
March 30, 2018

Certification of the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Financial Officer
Pursuant to
Rules 13a-14(a) and 15d-14(a) under the Exchange Act

I, Jess A. Jankowski, certify that:

1. I have reviewed this annual report on Form 10-K of Nanophase Technologies Corporation;
2. Based on my knowledge, this report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading with respect to the period covered by this report;
3. Based on my knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in this report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows of the registrant as of, and for, the periods presented in this report;
4. The registrant's other certifying officer(s) and I are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e)) and internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(f) and 15(d)-15(f)) for the registrant and have:
 - (a) Designed such disclosure controls and procedures, or caused such disclosure controls and procedures to be designed under our supervision, to ensure that material information relating to the registrant, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is made known to us by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which this report is being prepared;
 - (b) Designed such internal control over financial reporting, or caused such internal control over financial reporting to be designed under our supervision, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
 - (c) Evaluated the effectiveness of the registrant's disclosure controls and procedures and presented in this report our conclusions about the effectiveness of the disclosure controls and procedures, as of the end of the period covered by this report based on such evaluation; and
 - (d) Disclosed in this report any change in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting that occurred during the registrant's most recent fiscal quarter (the registrant's fourth fiscal quarter in the case of an annual report) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the registrant's internal control over financial reporting; and
5. The registrant's other certifying officer(s) and I have disclosed, based on our most recent evaluation of internal control over financial reporting, to the registrant's auditors and the audit committee of registrant's board of directors (or persons performing the equivalent function):
 - (a) All significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting which are reasonably likely to adversely affect the registrant's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial information; and
 - (b) Any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting.

Date: March 30, 2018

/s/ JESS A. JANKOWSKI
Jess A. Jankowski
President and Chief Executive Officer
(Principal Executive Officer and Principal Financial Officer)

Certification Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. Section 1350

(as adopted pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002)

In connection with this annual report of Nanophase Technologies Corporation (the “Company”) on Form 10-K for the year ending December 31, 2017 as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on the date hereof (the “Report”), I, Jess A. Jankowski, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Company, certify, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1350, as adopted pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, that, to my knowledge:

1. The Report fully complies with the requirements of section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and
2. The information contained in the Report fairly presents, in all material respects, the financial condition and result of operations of the Company.

Date: March 30, 2018

/s/ JESS A. JANKOWSKI
Jess A. Jankowski
President and Chief Executive Officer
(Principal Executive Officer and Principal Financial Officer)
