



March 3, 2011

The Honorable Harry M. Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Reid and McConnell:

Most of the undersigned organizations signed a November 5, 2010 letter to you in support of the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. We applaud the Senate for engaging in the hard work that was necessary to achieve a bipartisan majority to enact that legislation in the previous Congress.

Today, we write to urge you to continue to support the goals of the COMPETES legislation. As the Senate considers legislation to complete Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations, we ask that you and your colleagues reject the cuts adopted by the House that would significantly reduce funding for the key research agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs contained in that law.

While we recognize that Congress faces a major challenge to reduce federal budget deficits and bring the national debt under control, it is critical that these cuts be implemented strategically, with an eye toward the future economic health of the U.S. As many of us wrote to you last year, continued strong funding of basic scientific research and STEM education programs would help ensure the economic growth needed to restore long-term fiscal strength and national prosperity. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, headed by Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, said it well:

“Cut and invest to promote economic growth and keep America competitive. We should cut red tape and unproductive government spending that hinders job creation and growth. At the same time, we must invest in education, infrastructure, and high-value research and development to help our economy grow, keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs.”

Despite this recommendation, the House has passed a continuing resolution for FY2011 (H.R. 1) that takes the opposite approach to research and STEM education. It would make deep cuts to the NSF, DOE Office of Science, NIST core programs, and other science agencies which would have a devastating impact, magnified by being crowded into the less than seven months remaining in the fiscal year.

For example, reducing funding for the DOE Office of Science by \$886 million, or 18 percent below fiscal year 2010, during the last seven months of the fiscal year - an effective 31-percent reduction over the seven-month period - would adversely impact world-class scientific facilities, basic research of national importance, and some of the nation's best scientific and engineering talent. Virtually all DOE national laboratory user facilities -- which the federal government built at tremendous expense -- would cease operations, affecting some 26,000 scientists and engineers from universities, industry, and government who rely on these unique, complex facilities to conduct their research. The DOE national laboratories would also be forced to furlough or layoff thousands of workers, including highly-skilled research staff and blue-collar workers. Finally, the H.R. 1 reduction would slow or bring to a halt the ongoing construction of a number of advanced research facilities aimed at keeping the United States at the technological forefront and American industry from moving research and development activities abroad, leading to the layoff of thousands of construction workers and ultimately increasing construction costs.

At NSF, the 5.2-percent overall cut (an effective 8.9 percent over the last 7 months) would mean that 10,000 fewer university researchers would receive support for critical research and education. The 16.4 percent cut to vital STEM education programs embedded in the 5.2 percent overall NSF cut would in reality amount to a 28.1 percent reduction during the last 7 months of the fiscal year. A reduction of 53.3% in funding for major construction projects focused on developing advanced sensor networks of ocean and terrestrial observatories would likely lead to schedule delays and cost increases in future years, and severely jeopardize the jobs of roughly 200-300 scientists, engineers, and technical personnel. At a time when our nation desperately needs to enhance its technological workforce, these reductions are seriously counterproductive.

The proposed cut to NIST would require the agency to cut support for contractors by 25% since savings from layoffs could not be achieved in the current year. Contractors at NIST play a critical role in many areas, including cybersecurity research efforts, development of standards for the Smart Grid, and the upgrade, maintenance, and construction of NIST facilities. The cut to the Technology Innovation Program would mean no new awards in the current fiscal year; these would be concentrated in areas of national need such as advanced solutions to repairing, inspecting, and monitoring the nation's infrastructure system and efforts to remove critical bottlenecks in current manufacturing processes that impede U.S. competitiveness.

Congress took a very important step for our nation's future by reauthorizing the America COMPETES Act in 2010, reaffirming its commitment to the science and innovation essential to long-term economic growth. We urge you now to continue implementation

funding and to reject the cuts to research and STEM education adopted by the House in H.R. 1.

Sincerely,

The Task Force on American Innovation

cc: United States Senate

Acoustical Society of America
American Anthropological Association
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE)
American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, Inc. (AIME)
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE)
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Statistical Association
American Vacuum Society
Applied Materials, Inc.
Arizona State University
Associated Universities, Inc. (AUI)
Association for Computing Machinery US Public Policy Council
Association for Women in Mathematics
Association for Women in Science (AWIS)
Association of American Universities
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America

Battelle
Binghamton University, State University of New York
Brown University
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Center for Innovation in Engineering & Science Education at Stevens Institute of Technology
Center for Inquiry
Clemson University
Columbia University
Computing Research Association
Cornell University
Council for Chemical Research
Council of Energy Research and Education Leaders
Council of Environmental Deans and Directors
Council of Graduate Schools
Cray Inc.
Crop Science Society of America
CSTEM Teacher and Student Services, Inc.
Duke University
Ecological Society of America
Emory University
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Geological Society of America (GSA)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Hands On Science Partnership
Harvard University
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
IEEE-USA
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology
Indiana University
Intel Corporation
Jefferson Science Associates, LLC
Johns Hopkins University Center for Educational Outreach
KDSL - Know.Do.Serve.Learn
Krell Institute
Maryland Academy of Sciences at the Maryland Science Center
Maryland MESA
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Materials Research Society
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Muses3, LLC
National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT)
National Council for Science and the Environment
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.

National Girls Collaborative Project
National Postdoctoral Association
National Science Center
National Science Education Leadership Association (NSELA)
National Science Teachers Association
National Society of Professional Engineers
New Mexico State University
New York University
North Carolina State University
Northeastern University
Oregon State University
PBS
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Research!America
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
SACNAS
School Science and Mathematics Association
Semiconductor Industry Association
Semiconductor Research Corporation
Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration
Society for Neuroscience
Soil Science Society of America
Southeastern Universities Research Association
Southern Illinois University System
SPIE, the International Society for Optics & Photonics
Stanford University
STEM Education Center University of Minnesota
Stony Brook University, State University of New York
Syracuse University
TechAmerica
Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University
The Association of American Medical Colleges
The Business-Higher Education Forum
The Campaign for Environmental Literacy
The Electrochemical Society
The Florida State University
The Johns Hopkins University
The National Center for Manufacturing Sciences
The Ohio State University
The Optical Society
The Science Coalition
The University of Arizona

The University of Georgia
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Tulane University
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Universities Research Association, Inc.
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR)
University of California System
University of California Berkeley
University of California Davis
University of California Irvine
University of California Los Angeles
University of California Riverside
University of California San Diego
University of California San Francisco
University of California Santa Barbara
University of California Santa Cruz
University of California Merced
University of Central Florida
University of Chicago
University of Cincinnati
University of Hawaii System
University of Illinois
University of Kansas
University of Maryland
University of Massachusetts System
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska
University of New Hampshire
University of New Mexico
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee
University of the District of Columbia
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vanderbilt University
Vernier Software & Technology
Washington University in St. Louis
Wayne State University
West Virginia University
Yale University