

February 15, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leaders McConnell, Pelosi and Schumer, Chairman Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned are writing to thank you for the pivotal role you and your staff members played in securing a budget agreement to raise the spending caps for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. We recognize the challenges entailed in negotiating and securing passage of this agreement, and are grateful for your commitment to succeeding in this effort on behalf of the American people.

As you determine 302(b) allocations for the appropriations subcommittees, we urge you to empower robust funding increases for the federal agencies that fuel and conduct research and development (R&D). Whether the objective is to stoke the engine of our economy, confront threats to the health and safety of Americans, or forge a path to long-term fiscal stability, strengthening investments in R&D will generate crucial returns to our nation.

The National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of the Interior (DOI), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Defense (DOD), National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and our nation's other science departments and agencies support the research necessary to fuel innovation, monitor threats, respond to and overcome disease, and advance other crucial American priorities. Failing to fund the precommercial and noncommercial investment that has been foundational to our nation's security and prosperity places our nation at a growing disadvantage in the global arena, a hazardous path that we can and must avoid.

Over the past decade, America's global leadership in science and innovation has steadily slipped. In 2000, the U.S. ranked 4th in percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) invested into R&D. In 2014, the U.S. ranking fell to 41st, with countries like China, Russia and Korea ramping up investments into R&D and surpassing the U.S. This and other key indicators sounds an alarm that our nation must heed. As esteemed leaders of the House, Senate and Appropriations Committees, you will be instrumental in determining whether, going forward, our nation leverages R&D or sidelines it. We believe the latter path spirals downward; please put U.S. R&D to work for the betterment of our nation and global community.

Thank you for considering our views, and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely,

Stefano Bertuzzi, Chief Executive Officer, The American Society for Microbiology

Allyson K. Anderson Book, Executive Director, American Geosciences Institute

Sarah Brookhart, Executive Director, Association for Psychological Science

Thomas Connelly Jr., Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer, American Chemical Society

Christopher Fox, Executive Director, American Association for Dental Research

Martin Frank, Executive Director, The American Physiological Society

Thomas Grumbly, President, Supporters of Agricultural Research Foundation

Rush Holt, Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Nancy Kidd, Executive Director, American Sociological Association

Kate Kirby, Chief Executive Officer, American Physical Society

Felice Levine, Executive Director, American Educational Research Association

Walter T. Marlowe, Executive Director, American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS)

Kevin Marvel, Executive Director, American Astronomical Society (AAS)

Christine McEntee, Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer, American Geophysical Union

Alan C. Mix, Chief Executive Officer, The Oceanography Society

Richard Pouyat, President, Ecological Society of America

Elizabeth Rogan, Chief Executive Officer, OSA-The Optical Society

Iris Rush, Executive Director, The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)

Marty Saggese, Executive Director, Society for Neuroscience

Paula Skedsvold, Executive Director, Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Crispin B. Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, American Society of Plant Biologists

Jamie Vernon, Executive Director, Sigma Xi

Caroline Weinberg, Interim Executive Director, March for Science

Jonathan W. White, President and CEO, Consortium for Ocean Leadership

Mary Woolley, President and CEO, Research!America