July 6, 2016

Dear Members of the United States Senate:

On behalf of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) – an alliance of 130 professional organizations, scientific societies, national associations, and universities – we would like to express our appreciation for the introduction of S. 3084, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act. Recently, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation passed the bill and an amendment in the nature of a substitute, which authorizes funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). As an agency that supports world-class research, research training, and research infrastructure across all scientific disciplines, it is essential that NSF receive steady and sustainable funding. While we appreciate the four-percent increase in funding (not counting inflation) for fiscal year 2018, we would also welcome a longer authorization bill that sets aspirational funding targets to inform appropriators of the resources the agency needs to accomplish its important mission and to adequately support the new programs included in the bill. As this bill moves through the legislative process, we would encourage your support for extending the length of this authorization bill.

As you may know, NSF research plays a unique and vital role in the nation's innovation and scientific enterprise. This bill contains important provisions that underscore the value of NSF-supported research. For example, the bill reaffirms NSF's merit-based peer review process, which is viewed as the international "gold standard" for evaluating scientific research proposals. The bill also addresses the importance of broadening participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the STEM disciplines. Additionally, the bill addresses regulatory burden, by calling for more time to be spent on the conduct of federally-funded research and less on overly-burdensome administrative work. Another positive provision directs the Office of Management and Budget to revise current policies on government officials attending scientific and technical workshops. It is important for members of the scientific and research community to have the opportunity to engage and share information with representatives from federal research agencies.

Again, as this bill moves to the floor for consideration, we encourage the Senate to reaffirm its support for NSF by extending the length of the authorization beyond two years. CNSF looks forward to working with the Senate to ensure that NSF can robustly support world-class science and researchers across all disciplines and strengthen the agency's vital role in our nation's innovation ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Coalition for National Science Funding

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of 130 professional organizations, scientific societies, associations, and universities advocating for the National Science Foundation.

CNSF Membership:
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