

July 11, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers Chairman, House Appropriations H-307, U.S. Capitol Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Norman Dicks Ranking Member, House Appropriations 1016 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers & Ranking Member Dicks,

As representatives of U.S. science, engineering, and higher education organizations, we write to you in strong support for the federal research and development budget of the National Science Foundation (NSF), and its mission—created over 60 years ago—to advance research across a broad spectrum of disciplines, research that has fueled American economic growth for decades.

NSF is unique among federal agencies in that it supports **all** disciplines in a balanced portfolio that uses the scientific peer review system as the foundation for awarding research grants based on merit.

Unfortunately, NSF research is now being threatened by attempts to trivialize specific research grants and to challenge the scientific merit review process. As you prepare to debate the Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012, the undersigned organizations stand in strong opposition to legislative attempts to undermine the peer review process by seeking to defund research grants that have already been awarded after extensive evaluation by independent scientific review panels.

Furthermore, we strongly oppose attempts to eliminate or substantially reduce funding for specific areas of science such as the NSF Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE).

In 2006, Alan Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, testified before the Senate in support of NSF SBE research: "Every major issue facing modern society and every major issue facing our economic competitiveness will ultimately be multidisciplinary in nature...[requiring] the integration of the physical sciences or biological sciences with the social and behavioral sciences."

We would like to highlight some specific examples that demonstrate the interdependence of scientific fields and their contribution to society. The revolution in computer technology and the transformation of analog data into digital records are opening up new opportunities to bridge the biological and social sciences, leading to new partnerships and collaborations that will improve the interpretation of brain imaging. In addition, this country will be investing millions of dollars in new technology over the coming decade, and the technology must be designed with humans in mind (i.e., cognitive limitations, errors in judgment, responses to stress and organizational climate) to avoid wasting limited resources.

Furthermore, social scientists, working with computer scientists, have developed Geographical Information Systems (GIS). As an example of technology transfer, this in turn created a multibillion dollar GIS industry. The research supported in the mid-1980s at the NSF-funded National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) has been applied by states, counties, and localities for many purposes, from urban planning to disaster response, evidenced in New York City during the September 11, 2001, attacks and the creation of thousands of maps to assist in the aftermath. Simply put, we need all scientists and scientific disciplines working — alone and together — to advance our knowledge base.

We recognize the challenge that our nation faces in addressing the deficit and revitalizing our national economy; however, defunding specific grants or eliminating entire sets of disciplines, such as those represented by the SBE program, sets a dangerous precedent that, in the end, will inhibit scientific progress and our international competitiveness. Congress must exercise its oversight responsibilities, but second-guessing the scientific process could have a chilling effect on scientists and young people considering a future in science. The country cannot afford to lose the incredible talent, experience, and energies of its scientists, regardless of their discipline.

The undersigned organizations urge you to protect the integrity of the scientific enterprise by ensuring that the NSF and its independent scientific panels determine where the best scientific opportunities are and how to absorb any potential reductions to its budget. Allocating federal investments competitively through scientific merit review is the very process that has led this country to be the world leader in science. We encourage you to provide Congressional oversight by protecting that process rather than allowing others to threaten a critical contributor to our innovative spirit and knowledge base.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America

American Academy of Environmental Engineers

American Anthropological Association

American Association for Public Opinion Research

American Association for the Advancement of Science

American Association of Anatomists

American Association of Physics Teachers

American Biological Safety Association

American Chemical Society

American Economic Association

American Educational Research Association

American Finance Association

American Historical Association

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Mathematical Society

American Physical Society

American Physiological Society

American Political Science Association

American Psychological Association

American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

American Society for Engineering Education

American Society of Agronomy

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Plumbing Engineers

American Sociological Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

American Statistical Association

APMI International

Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S.

Arizona State University

Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB)

Association for Behavior Analysis International

Association for Psychological Science

Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography

Association for Women in Mathematics

Association for Women in Science (AWIS)

Association of American Geographers

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities

Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI)

Association of Population Centers

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Association of Research Libraries

Behavior Genetics Association

Binghamton University, State University of New York

Biophysical Society

Brown University

Cognitive Science Society

Columbia University

Computing Research Association

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science

Council of Environmental Deans and Directors

Council on Undergraduate Research

Crop Science Society of America

Duke University

Ecological Society of America

Economic History Association

Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Florida State University

Geochemical Society

Geological Society of America

Georgia Institute of Technology

History of Science Society

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Indiana University

Institute of Food Technologists

International Society for Developmental Psychobiology

Law and Society Association

LEARN Coalition

Linguistic Society of America

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Massachusetts Neuropsychological Society

Materials Research Society

Mathematical Association of America

Michigan State University

Midwest Political Science Association

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

National Academy of Neuropsychology

National Center for Women & Informational Technology (NCWIT)

National Communication Association

National Council for Science and the Environment

National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)

National Opinion Research Center (NORC)

Natural Science Collections Alliance

New York University

North American Regional Science Council

North Carolina State University

Northern Illinois University

Oregon State University

Ornithological Council

Penn State University

Population Association of America

Psychonomic Society

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Research!America

Rural Sociological Society

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Social Science History Association

Social Science Research Council

Society for Anthropological Sciences

Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology

Society for Computers in Psychology (SCiP)

Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics

Society for Judgment and Decision Making

Society for Mathematical Psychology

Society for Neuroscience

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Society for Psychophysiological Research (SPR)

Society for Research in Child Development

Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

Society of Experimental Social Psychology

Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology

Soil Science Society of America

SPIE, The International Society for Optics and Photonics

Stanford University

Stony Brook University, State University of New York

The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE)

The Electrochemical Society

The Ohio State University

The Science Coalition

Tulane University

U.S. Public Policy Council of the Association for Computing Machinery (USACM)

UCLA

University at Buffalo

University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

University of California Berkeley

University of California Davis

University of California Irvine

University of California Merced

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 System

University of Chicago

University of Idaho

University of Kansas

University of Michigan

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

University of Oregon

University of Pittsburgh

University of Virginia

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Vanderbilt University

Washington University in St. Louis

Yale University

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