



May 23, 2016

Chairman Harold S. Rogers
House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Chairman John Culberson
House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Ranking Member Michael Honda
House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Culberson and Ranking Members Lowey and Honda:

On behalf of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)—an alliance of over 120 professional organizations, universities, and scientific societies—we write to thank you for supporting the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) existing practice of setting priorities in collaboration with the scientific community and remain free of micromanagement, but also to express concern about the reduced funding for the agency overall in the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

We thank you for ensuring that the bill and accompanying report are free of language that would micromanage NSF funding and place certain scientific disciplines above others. We commend your support for world-class research across all scientific disciplines supported through the Foundation’s gold-standard merit review process and ensuring the Foundation retains the flexibility to respond nimbly to emerging areas of scientific interest in and between disciplines. As the Committee moves to marking up the bill and on to the House floor, we stand ready to work with you to ensure these principles are maintained.

While we understand the significant budgetary constraints you currently face, we are concerned that the bill would reduce funding for NSF overall compared to FY 2016. Accounting for inflation, all accounts, including Research & Related Activities, see a reduction in real funding for the only federal agency that funds fundamental science research across all disciplines—research that returns tremendous benefits for our national health, welfare, and security. Other nations are moving aggressively to increase their investments in research and development (R&D). In fact, the most recent OECD reports show China, for example, has more than tripled its R&D spending over the past 17 years and is projected to overtake the US in total R&D funding from all sources in 2019, just three years from now.

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of over 140 professional organizations, universities, and businesses advocating support for the National Science Foundation.

If we are to remain the global innovation leader, now is the time to make investing in fundamental scientific research a national priority. We stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,
Sam Rankin (AMS)
Amy Scott (AAU)
Erin Heath (AAAS)
CNSF Co-Chairs

CC: Members of House Appropriations
The Honorable David E. Price
The Honorable Richard Hanna
The Honorable G. K. Butterfield
The Honorable David McKinley