



March 12, 2014

The Honorable Larry Bucshon
Chairman
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Bucshon and Smith:

The United States is at a critical juncture in ensuring that a solid foundation of basic science research is built to spur the science and technology developments of the future. The America COMPETES Acts of 2007 and 2010 provided necessary building blocks, and now is the time for Congress to lay the groundwork for the next several years.

The undersigned organizations write to express our serious concerns with H.R. 4186, the *Frontiers in Research, Science, Technology (FIRST) Act of 2014*. In our opinion, the bill, in its present form, would benefit from addressing the following:

- A set of “Guiding Principles” for reauthorization of the nation’s science agencies was developed by leading representatives of the scientific, business, and higher education communities; supported by many scientific societies and universities around the country; and shared with Congressional science committees. The Guiding Principles were also referenced in CNSF’s letter to the Committee on December 19, 2013. In our view, these principles provide a necessary framework for advancing basic science in federal science agencies, and H.R. 4186 departs from these essential principles.
- Basic science research has seen minimal growth in recent years, especially when inflation is taken into account. Steady and sustained growth over inflation is needed

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of over 120 professional societies, universities, and corporations advocating support for the National Science Foundation.

across all sciences. Congress must recommit to science and innovation, and the House Science Committee should take the lead. H.R. 4186 sets forth funding levels for the National Science Foundation that provide no real growth and stand to further erode our scientific infrastructure.

- The Guiding Principles state that, “to ensure our national competitiveness, we need to maintain a strong foundation of basic research across all scientific disciplines, from the physical, mathematical and life sciences, to engineering, to the social, economic, and behavioral sciences.” The Principles also urge Congress to “support funding increases without offsets that would force significant and potentially detrimental tradeoffs between one field of science and another.” H.R. 4186 provides low authorization levels for the National Science Foundation, forcing trade-offs that undercut important advances in science, and decimates the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate by authorizing funding at significantly low and unwarranted levels. The basic science discoveries in the social and behavioral sciences are critical to addressing national needs and are worthy of tax-payer support.

We respectfully request that the bill incorporate the Guiding Principles as outlined in the attached. We remain committed to working with the House Science, Space and Technology Committee to pass a reauthorization bill for the nation’s science agencies.

Sincerely,

The Following Endorsing Organizations (as of March 12, 2014):

American Anthropological Association
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geophysical Union
American Geosciences Institute
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Mathematical Society
American Physiological Society
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association
Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback
Association for Behavior Analysis International
Association for Psychological Science
Association for Women in Science
Association of American Geographers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Biophysical Society
Cognitive Science Society
Columbia University
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council on Undergraduate Research
Crop Science Society of America
Duke University
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Geological Society of America
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology
Linguistic Society of America
Michigan State University
National Association of Marine Laboratories
National Communication Association
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.
National Ground Water Association
Population Association of America
Research!America
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Society for Neuroscience
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society for Psychophysiological Research
Society of Experimental Social Psychology
Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology
Soil Science Society of America
SPIE – The International Society for Optics and Photonics
Psychonomic Society
State University of New York

University of California System
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Riverside
University of Maryland
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Vanderbilt University
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

cc: Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology