



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

October 28, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee  
on Deficit Reduction  
U.S. Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee  
on Deficit Reduction  
U.S. House of Representatives  
129 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction:

We recognize that our nation's deficit poses a serious threat to our economy and our future. The Joint Committee faces a daunting challenge to lower the federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. As you accomplish this difficult task, we urge you to keep in mind that drastic cuts to research investments in the discretionary accounts, both defense and non-defense, would set a dangerous precedent that would inhibit immediate scientific progress and threaten our international competitiveness long into the future. Indeed, the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles Debt Commission last year identified federal research and development (R&D) as an area of U.S. investment too critical to be cut. We urge you to entertain a similar conclusion.

Since World War II the partnerships and collaborations between science and society, the federal government and universities, the national laboratories, and industry have yielded new knowledge, new innovations, new products, new businesses, new jobs, and improved human well-being. Examples can be seen throughout our nation. An often-cited statistic is that approximately 50 percent of U.S. economic growth since World War II has come from advances in science and technology.

The benefits of research are clear. For example, over 250 companies have been created through the ingenuity and risk taking of researchers from the University of Washington alone. The legacy of investments made by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (precursor to NASA) can be seen today in companies such as Boeing. Quantum theory and solid-state theory, fields once considered to be basic physics research, were applied by Jack Kilby at Texas Instruments and Robert Noyce at Fairchild Industries to invent the integrated circuit, the "chip" that is the brainpower behind every electronic device built today, including computers, smart phones, medical devices, and unmanned drones.

Mapping and sequencing the human genome, championed by the National Institutes of Health, has yielded new knowledge on immune disorders, kidney disease, birth defects, mental illness, obesity and much more. The National Science Foundation is helping to sequence the genome of the wheat stem rust fungus, a scourge in Asia, Africa and the Middle East that, if not understood and brought under control, may threaten North American crops. Department of Energy research

has led to the development of new composite materials for lighter weight motor vehicles and electric vehicle technologies such as the lithium-ion battery.

As representatives of U.S. science, engineering, and higher education organizations, we urge you to strongly support the federal research budget and its mission to advance a balanced portfolio of scientific and technological discovery and innovation that has fueled American economic growth and rising standards of living for decades.

Science and discovery are important aspects of the American national character. American ingenuity is still the best reason for long-term optimism about the U.S. economy and the well-being of its people. An effective path out of the current difficulties should include investments in R&D. They can fuel our future growth and prosperity.

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 Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Institute of Physics  
American Mathematical Society  
American Physical Society  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Engineering Education  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Society of Primatologists  
Associated Universities, Inc. (AUI)  
Association for Behavior Analysis International  
Association for Psychological Sciences  
Association for Women in Mathematics  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists  
Association of Independent Research Institutes  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)  
Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy  
Biophysical Society  
Cognitive Science Society  
Consortium for Ocean Leadership  
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)

Council of Energy Research and Education Leaders  
Council of Environmental Deans and Directors  
Crop Science Society of America  
Earthquake Engineering Research Institute  
Ecological Society of America  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Geological Society of America  
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology  
International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE)  
Linguistic Society of America  
Massachusetts Neuropsychological Society  
Materials Research Society  
Mathematical Association of America  
National Academy of Neuropsychology  
National Association of Marine Laboratories  
National Council for Science and the Environment  
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.  
National Postdoctoral Association  
New York University  
Psychonomics Society  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Research!America  
Seismological Society of America  
Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology  
Society for Computers in Psychology  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM)  
Society for Judgment and Decision Making  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for Text and Discourse  
Society of Experimental Social Psychology  
Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology (SMEP)  
Society of Personality and Social Psychology  
Soil Science Society of America  
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