



June 28, 2016

The Honorable John Thune
Committee on Commerce, Science, &
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
Committee on Commerce, Science, &
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Committee on Commerce, Science, &
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Committee on Commerce, Science, &
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Senator Gardner, and Senator Peters:

On behalf of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) – an alliance of more than 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, and the open and inclusive process by which it was drafted. We also appreciate that recommendations and suggestions made by the CNSF membership are reflected in the final bill.

During tomorrow's mark-up of the bill, we encourage the Committee to pass the amendment in the nature of a substitute, which authorizes funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). As an agency that supports world-class research 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), 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 you 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

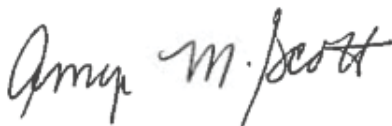
positive provision directs the Office of Management and Budget to revise current policies on government officials attending scientific and technical workshops. It is important for members of the scientific and research community to have the opportunity to engage and share information with representatives from federal research agencies.

Again, as this bill progresses through Committee, we encourage the approval of the amendment to authorize a four percent increase in funding for NSF from FY 2017 to 2018. We would also urge that the Senate entertain extending the length of the authorization granted in the bill beyond two years. We look forward to working with the Senate to ensure that NSF can robustly support world-class science and researchers across all disciplines and from all backgrounds and strengthen the agency's vital role in our nation's innovation ecosystem.

Sincerely,



Sam Rankin
American Mathematical Society
Co-Chair, CNSF



Amy M. Scott
Association of American Universities
Co-Chair, CNSF



Erin Heath
American Association
for the Advancement of Science
Co-Chair, CNSF

CC: Full Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation