



Task Force on American Innovation

Securing the future through research in the physical sciences and engineering

September 16, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

The [Task Force on American Innovation](#) (TFAI)—an alliance of industry, scientific societies, and university organizations—commends you and your colleagues for your work thus far in the fiscal year 2020 (FY20) appropriations process. We encourage bicameral and bipartisan support for robust investments in scientific and engineering research and development (R&D) within the Department of Energy’s Office of Science, National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy (ARPA-E), the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Department of Defense. In addition to robust funding for these programs, we strongly encourage you to complete the FY20 appropriations process in a timely manner. While a short-term continuing resolution may be needed to complete negotiations on final funding levels, please avoid any consideration of longer-term continuing resolutions.

In support of our requests, we bring to your attention a recent [Pew Research Center survey](#), conducted in March 2019 among 1,503 adults, that shows strong public support for increased federal funding for science. According to the survey, about half of U.S. adults (52%) say they would increase federal spending for scientific research, up 15 percent since 2013. A similar poll by TFAI member The Science Coalition found that 82 percent of the public approves of investing in research, with strong majorities from both major political parties acknowledging the importance of science and technology to growing the U.S. economy.

In addition, TFAI released a report this year titled, “[Benchmarks 2019: Second Place America? Increasing Challenges to US Scientific Leadership](#).” The report compares the U.S. to other nations in five key areas: R&D investment, knowledge production, education, workforce and high-tech sectors of the economy. It validates the critical need for increased R&D investments to uphold U.S. global leadership and competitive advantage.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support of federally funded research in the physical sciences and engineering. Looking forward, it remains imperative that you commit to stable, continuous and robust funding for these agencies that help strengthen the U.S. economy, grow the U.S. workforce, and maintain U.S. leadership in innovation.

Sincerely,

Task Force on American Innovation