



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Diane Grob Schmidt, Ph.D.
President-Elect, 2014
President, 2015
Immediate Past President, 2016

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June 25, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chair
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee
U.S. Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee
U.S. Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

As you know, the original America COMPETES Act established a broad consensus for increasing U.S. investments in groundbreaking research in the physical sciences and engineering fields at the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The enacted legislation also significantly increased the focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education at the Department of Education and NSF.

We would like to offer a few initial thoughts as you consider the COMPETES reauthorization:

The original America COMPETES Act was a shining example of successful bipartisanship and one of the most broadly supported pieces of major legislation passed by Congress in recent memory. Among the benefits of the original COMPETES legislation was making sure that the goals of boosting American competitiveness were broadly adopted by both parties. Indeed, these principles endured political changes in control of both Congress and the White House. Ensuring a robust research and development environment, world class science facilities, and top STEM talent must continue to be top priorities going forward.

The United States must continue to make predictable and sustained investments in our nation's federal science agencies and foster innovation through research and development, as well as in education programs that encourage young minds to pursue careers in STEM fields. These investments help fuel our economy by enabling our scientific workforce to continue improving lives in this country and around the world.

We do however; remain primarily concerned that excessive fluctuations in year-to-year agency research budgets can negatively impact many aspects of scientific research. We encourage you to reestablish a long-term research funding blueprint between Congress and the White House. To this end, we support Congress enacting a five-year authorization for federal science agencies.

Within the context of strong federal support for basic research, ensure that federal science agencies, guided by their scientific advisory committees and boards, continue to set priorities for funding within and among the full range of science disciplines.

We have long valued our Society's strong relationship with the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, and we pledge to work with you if you move forward on a COMPETES reauthorization process.

If we can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Grob Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane Grob Schmidt, Ph.D.
2015 President
American Chemical Society

cc: The Honorable Corey Gardner