

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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President-Elect, 2019
President, 2020
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April 13, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-226, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-255, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American Chemical Society, I write to express our utmost appreciation for your efforts thus far to address the vast and urgent threat to our country, its citizens, and our economy presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Congressionally chartered professional society representing over 150,000 chemists, chemistry educators, and chemical engineers, we hope that you will consider our recommendations for future stimulus packages outlined below.

No segment of the economy has been spared from this pandemic, including the U.S. scientific research enterprise responsible for basic and applied research, job creation, economic growth, and our global leadership. Recovery in this mission critical enterprise, in which chemistry plays a lead role, may take years to realize without additional federal investment.

Vast swaths of the chemical sciences have ground to a halt as research labs, excepting those devoted to vital COVID-19 vaccine related research, have been shuttered putting years of work and potential scientific breakthroughs at risk. Furthermore, our pipeline of future innovators is threatened as students and teachers in K-12 and higher education must grapple with a host of challenges to ensure that quality teaching is delivered and learning standards are met now and in the future.

We have outlined six areas of critical importance to the chemistry enterprise and our nation that we respectfully request be considered in upcoming COVID-19 stimulus legislation:

- We request the recent guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget, [“Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) due to Loss of Operations,”](#) be codified by Congress as part of any future Coronavirus-related legislation. The Society believes explicit legislation is necessary to ensure predictability as researchers continue their work remotely and begin planning to return to their labs.

- We strongly encourage you to boost investment in research grants at a broad range of agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, and National Institutes of Standards and Technology and others. [The ACS supports our community partners in higher education in their request for immediate supplemental funding of \\$26 billion to support the research enterprise.](#) This is vital to ensure research that was previously funded and started will be completed, providing training for researchers and enabling discoveries to fuel future innovations.
- We urge Congress to prioritize support for students and teachers as they adapt to online and distance learning, which has already been extended through the end of the current school year in many districts. Our members urgently need additional professional development assistance and funding support for student enrichment activities to address these immediate concerns. Enhanced support for programs authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for teacher professional development and retention, as well as for student enrichment activities must be scaled up significantly to account for the dramatic shifts in methods of teaching and learning. Congress must ensure that resources are equitably distributed to traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities, now more than ever, in the face of this crisis.
- We support a further expansion and funding of the Small Business Loan (SBA) program as passed in the CARES Act. Many businesses in the chemistry enterprise have fewer than 500 employees. These innovative companies are on the front lines of medicine, food science, consumer products, energy, and transportation. These companies also supply career opportunities for the current and future workforce. Without a lifeline to survive the current economic stoppage, many will fail, exacerbating the deepening employment and economic crisis. Any legislation should ensure continued viability of the SBA program.
- We request that Congress pass a long-term extension of the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS). We were relieved the standards were extended to July in the prior COVID-19 package. However, ensuring the safety of chemical workers and local communities during these difficult times is a priority. Additionally, the chemistry enterprise, as an essential industry, requires as much regulatory certainty as possible while operating under pandemic conditions. Extending CFATS for at least one year will ensure our communities and critical infrastructure are protected.
- We urge the Congress to pass The Sustainable Chemistry Research and Development Act. This legislation, which has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, will create a taskforce to coordinate federal agency chemistry research and ensure today's investments protect current and future generations. It is essential that funding agencies, companies, labs, and researchers are thinking long term about sustainability and ultimate fate of chemicals and chemical processes, both as a driver of new products and jobs, and to avoid the environmental and health impacts of the past.

The ACS recognizes and appreciates your hard work and sacrifice during this challenging time. As we continue to navigate uncharted waters, we stand ready to assist America's policy makers and the chemistry enterprise. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Pitagno (a_pitagno@acs.org).

Sincerely,



Luis Echegoyen, Ph.D.
2020 President
American Chemical Society