

March 12, 2014

The Honorable Larry Bucshon
Chairman
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Bucshon and Smith:

The United States is at a critical juncture in ensuring that a solid foundation of basic science research is built to spur the science and technology developments of the future. The America COMPETES Acts of 2007 and 2010 provided necessary building blocks, and now is the time for Congress to lay the groundwork for the next several years.

The undersigned organizations write to express our serious concerns with H.R. 4186, the *Frontiers in Research, Science, Technology (FIRST) Act of 2014*. In our opinion, the bill, in its present form, would benefit from addressing the following:

- A set of "Guiding Principles" for reauthorization of the nation's science agencies was
 developed by leading representatives of the scientific, business, and higher education
 communities; supported by many scientific societies and universities around the
 country; and shared with Congressional science committees. The Guiding Principles
 were also referenced in CNSF's letter to the Committee on December 19, 2013. In our
 view, these principles provide a necessary framework for advancing basic science in
 federal science agencies, and H.R. 4186 departs from these essential principles.
- Basic science research has seen minimal growth in recent years, especially when inflation is taken into account. Steady and sustained growth over inflation is needed

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of over 120 professional societies, universities, and corporations advocating support for the National Science Foundation.

across all sciences. Congress must recommit to science and innovation, and the House Science Committee should take the lead. H.R. 4186 sets forth funding levels for the National Science Foundation that provide no real growth and stand to further erode our scientific infrastructure.

• The Guiding Principles state that, "to ensure our national competitiveness, we need to maintain a strong foundation of basic research across all scientific disciplines, from the physical, mathematical and life sciences, to engineering, to the social, economic, and behavioral sciences." The Principles also urge Congress to "support funding increases without offsets that would force significant and potentially detrimental tradeoffs between one field of science and another." H.R. 4186 provides low authorization levels for the National Science Foundation, forcing trade-offs that undercut important advances in science, and decimates the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate by authorizing funding at significantly low and unwarranted levels. The basic science discoveries in the social and behavioral sciences are critical to addressing national needs and are worthy of tax-payer support.

We respectfully request that the bill incorporate the Guiding Principles as outlined in the attached. We remain committed to working with the House Science, Space and Technology Committee to pass a reauthorization bill for the nation's science agencies.

Sincerely,

The Following Endorsing Organizations (as of March 12, 2014):

American Anthropological Association

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 Geosciences Institute

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Mathematical Society

American Physiological Society

American Political Science Association

American Psychological Association

American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

American Society for Microbiology

American Society of Agronomy

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Plant Biologists

American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association

Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback

Association for Behavior Analysis International

Association for Psychological Science

Association for Women in Science

Association of American Geographers

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities

Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists

Association of Independent Research Institutes

Association of Population Centers

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Association of Research Libraries

Biophysical Society

Cognitive Science Society

Columbia University

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council on Undergraduate Research

Crop Science Society of America

Duke University

Ecological Society of America

Entomological Society of America

Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Geological Society of America

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology

Linguistic Society of America

Michigan State University

National Association of Marine Laboratories

National Communication Association

National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.

National Ground Water Association

Population Association of America

Research!America

Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics

Society for Neuroscience

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Society for Psychophysiological Research

Society of Experimental Social Psychology

Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology

Soil Science Society of America

SPIE - The International Society for Optics and Photonics

Psychonomic Society

State University of New York

University of California System
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Riverside
University of Maryland
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Vanderbilt University
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

cc: Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology