



March 5, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) urges the 114th Congress to appropriate \$7.7 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF) in fiscal year 2016 (FY16). This would be a 5.2 percent increase over the FY15 appropriated level for NSF. As the only federal research agency “charged with the promotion of scientific progress across all scientific and engineering disciplines,” the research supported by NSF is absolutely vital to the nation’s economic health and global competitiveness.

As discussions on the FY16 appropriations process begin, we encourage members of Congress to make federal funding of NSF a high priority. As many familiar with the agency already know, NSF research and education programs produce the new knowledge and the trained scientists and engineers indispensable to our economic vitality and national security. The agency supports research in important fields such as the physical sciences, biology, mathematics, computer science, geoscience, social and behavioral science, and engineering. In addition, the agency serves a critical role in supporting STEM education across all levels of education -- from pre-kindergarten to graduate education. Simply put, the contributions made by NSF-supported research to the nation’s scientific and technological enterprise cannot be overstated. It is for these reasons that CNSF strongly urges Congress to maintain its longstanding commitment to NSF, by appropriating \$7.7 billion for the agency.

It is important to note that many of our global competitors are increasing their financial support for science and engineering research, while the rate of growth for research in the U.S. has been flat. In fact, in constant 2014 dollars, NSF has lost 5.8 percent of its budget from FY10 to FY14. This stagnant pace of funding is creating an innovation deficit in the United States. The innovation deficit is the widening gap between the actual level of federal government funding for research and higher education and what the investment needs to be if the United States is to remain the world’s innovation leader.

To remain competitive, the U.S. must maintain its leadership position in high level scientific research across all fields of science and engineering, building knowledge, training the next generation of scientists and engineers, and improving science literacy in the process. NSF is critical to this endeavor. Even under tight budget constraints, it is imperative to have robust annual budget levels for NSF. Dependable, annual funding increases will enable the agency and the science and engineering communities to plan, develop infrastructure, maintain a steady pipeline of graduate and postdoctoral students, and facilitate a continuous stream of high level research and researchers that in turn will support the level of technological development needed for economic growth.

Again, CNSF urges members of the 114th Congress to appropriate \$7.7 billion for NSF in FY16.

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of over 140 professional organizations, universities, and businesses advocating support for the National Science Foundation.