



Task Force on American Innovation

Securing the future through research in the physical sciences and engineering

July 25, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
Science and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen:

The Task Force on American Innovation—an alliance of industry, scientific societies, and university organizations—strongly urges the Senate to support strong funding for vital scientific research initiatives contained in the FY18 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The House CJS appropriations bill, which funds the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), is constrained by sequestration-level spending caps. We realize the caps are tight; unfortunately, however, the House bill provides less funding in FY18 than in FY17. More specifically, the bill provides flat overall funding for NSF for the second consecutive year, and reduces investment in NIST's Core Research Labs by more than 4 percent. It cuts funding by \$30M for the Manufacturing Extension Program and limits the Manufacturing USA program to \$5M, \$20M below FY17 levels. These two programs are vital for technology transfer efforts and support the domestic supply chain by making innovative technology and processes available to U.S.-based small- and medium-sized manufacturers.

As the Senate takes up its FY18 funding bill, we urge you to support strong funding for these key programs. The United States is a world leader in scientific research which enables American companies to produce the extraordinary innovations that have changed society the world over. From GPS to MRI to smartphone touch screens, federal research investment underpins American

innovation. With other countries increasing their levels of research investment, now is not the time for the United States to reduce its investment in research.

The FY18 appropriations process has made clear again the need for Congress and the President to reach a budget agreement that removes the sequestration-level budget caps. We urge you to take such action. Your strong leadership can ensure sustainable funding for America's research enterprise.

Sincerely,

Task Force on American Innovation

David Isaacs

VP, Semiconductor Industry Association

Co-Chair

Kathleen Kingscott

VP, IBM Research

Co-Chair