



TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INNOVATION

1634 I Street, NW • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.626.4385 • www.futureofinnovation.org

February 26, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Madam Speaker and Mr. Boehner:

America's business and higher education leaders remain committed to an agenda that keeps the United States competitive by strengthening our capacity to innovate. Support for such an agenda was pledged in both the Democratic Innovation Agenda and the American Competitiveness Initiative. We urge Congress and the Administration to restore Fiscal Year 2008 funding for this priority as part of supplemental funding legislation.

Keeping this commitment would have immediate impacts. It would preserve threatened jobs and create new ones; prevent the closure of critical research labs; and ensure that the U.S. lives up to its international science obligations.

Our organizations cheered as Congress passed the "America COMPETES Act" with overwhelming margins in both the House and the Senate. The Act, which authorizes substantial federal investments in physical science research and in math and science education, was an important first step toward ensuring U.S. innovation leadership. It demonstrated bipartisan support by Congress and the Administration to address the anxiety millions of Americans feel with regard to their economic future and the educational attainment of their children.

However, our organizations are dismayed and deeply disappointed that Congress and the Administration failed to provide the funds needed to fulfill the promise of the America COMPETES Act. Instead of advancing America's competitive abilities in a global knowledge economy, our elected officials have undercut the students, teachers and scientists needed to lead the charge. America cannot lead with fewer scholarships, fewer qualified math and science teachers, and closures or layoffs at national laboratories and university research facilities.

At a minimum, devoting \$300 million to the Department of Energy Office of Science and \$200 million to the National Science Foundation would address the most acute short term losses in jobs, facility closures and America's international standing. This \$500 million equals less than 0.1 percent of the \$555 billion FY08 Consolidated Appropriations Act and roughly 0.3 percent of the recently enacted stimulus package costing \$168 billion. It is an affordable and critical way to stimulate the economy in the short run by preserving many of our most strategic jobs and it would help lay the groundwork for our future economy.

Agilent • ASTRA, the Alliance for Science and Technology in America • American Chemical Society • AeA (American Electronics Association) • American Mathematical Society • American Physical Society • Association of American Universities • Association for Computing Machinery • Computing Research Association • Electronic Industries Alliance • Electric Power Institute • Hewlett Packard • IBM • IEEE USA • Intel Corporation • Microsoft • NASULGC (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges) • National Association of Manufacturers • Northrup Grumman • Semiconductor Industry Association • Telecommunication Industry Association • The Science Coalition

Sustained attention to physical science research and math and science education becomes even more important as America faces the prospect of slowing economic growth. Investing in U.S. innovation leads to higher productivity growth; creates high-wage jobs and new industries; and raises incomes for Americans. Nurturing innovation is the best way to drive economic growth without inflation. It is what put the United States on top in the global economy and it is the surest path to secure continued American prosperity.

Sincerely,

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American Chemical Society
American Electronics Association
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Society for Engineering Education
Applied Materials, Inc.
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
Association for Computing Machinery
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Texas Instruments
The Federation of American Societies
The Science Coalition