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INNOVATION TASK FORCE CALLS ON HOUSE AND PRESIDENT TO APPROVE SENATE-PASSED SCIENCE FUNDING IN FY08 SUPPLEMENTAL

Following is a statement by the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation on the Senate’s inclusion of funding for basic research at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science in the FY08 supplemental appropriations bill approved today.

As representatives of America’s business, academic, and scientific communities, the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation thanks the Senate for including in the FY08 supplemental appropriations bill critical funding for science. We strongly urge the House and then the President to approve these funds.

Specifically, we support the $200 million for the National Science Foundation and $100 million for science at the Department of Energy’s Office of Science contained in the bill.

This bipartisan action in the Senate was essential following the failure by Congress and the President last December to fund critical investments in science in the current fiscal year. If the House and the President do not follow suit, hundreds of jobs will be lost at America’s national laboratories and universities and basic scientific research critical to developing sustainable energy alternatives and maintaining U.S. economic competitiveness will be forgone.

Moreover, while the funds in this bill will help avert some of these immediate impacts, they do not address the longer term flat-funding of federally supported basic research.

America’s global leadership in science and technology is at risk, and our national leaders have repeatedly promised to address the problem. This supplemental funding is essential in the short run, and we are grateful for the support of the Senate. In the long run, the President and Congressional leaders of both parties have pledged support for substantial new investments that would be modest in the context of the overall budget. It is time for them to turn their words into deeds.

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The Task Force on the Future of American Innovation, a coalition of businesses and business organizations, scientific societies, and higher education associations, was founded in 2004 to advocate greater federal investments for basic research in the physical sciences and engineering. The group focuses on the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, the Department of Defense research budget, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology labs at the Department of Commerce.