



Task Force on American Innovation

Securing the future through research in the physical sciences and engineering

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

The [Task Force on American Innovation](#) (TFAI)—an alliance of industry, scientific societies, and university organizations supporting federally-funded scientific and engineering research—appreciates your commitment to finalize and advance the fiscal year 2020 (FY20) Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Defense, and Energy and Water Development appropriations bills. We are encouraged by the proposed increased investments for scientific and engineering research and development (R&D) within the Department of Energy’s Office of Science, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy (ARPA-E), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). We urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Department of Defense Science and Technology programs and fund the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) at the House-approved level.

As another stop-gap spending measure is passed today, we urge you to complete the FY20 appropriations process by the new deadline on December 20, 2019. Additional continuing resolutions will fail to capitalize on Congress’ meaningful work in addressing budget caps while ceding the opportunity to make important funding increases for scientific and engineering research. Continued appropriations delays undermine the advancement of scientific and engineering research, delay the development of new technologies within key agencies, and put our nation at a disadvantage against global competitors.

TFAI released a report this year titled, “[Benchmarks 2019: Second Place America? Increasing Challenges to US Scientific Leadership](#).” The detailed report compares the U.S. to other nations in five key areas: R&D investment, knowledge production, education, workforce and high-tech sectors of the economy. It validates the critical need for increased R&D investments to uphold U.S. global leadership and competitive advantage.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support of federally funded research in the physical sciences and engineering. Moving forward, we urge you commit to sustainable and robust funding for these agencies that strengthen America’s innovation ecosystem and America’s innovation leadership.

Sincerely,

Task Force on American Innovation