

May 23, 2017

Dear Members of Congress,

As leading scientific organizations in the biological sciences, we urge you to make strong investments in scientific research and education in fiscal year 2018, and to reject the deep cuts to federal research programs proposed in the President's budget request.

Research is an important engine that powers our economy. Over the past 50 years, roughly half of our nation's private sector economic growth has resulted from research and development.

Analysis of the return on the federal government's \$12 billion investment in the Human Genome Project found that it generated an estimated \$800 billion in economic return. Other economic analyses of investments in agricultural research have estimated a \$10 return on every \$1 the federal government invests. These are just some examples and others may be found in a recent report from the American Institute of Biological Sciences (see https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/AIBS_Biological_Innovation_Report.pdf). In short, taxpayer support of scientific research pays dividends.

The federal government provides more than half of the funding for basic research in the United States. Indeed, industry counts on the federal government to support fundamental discovery so that the private sector may target its resources to new product development. For example, 80,000 patents awarded over a 10-year period were based on research initially funded by the National Science Foundation.

Although the United States has long been a global leader in science, our leadership is waning. Foreign countries are allocating growing shares of their Gross Domestic Product to research and development. New investments in federal research programs must be a priority if we are to remain a global scientific power.

The budget cuts outlined by the Administration for 2018 would set back American innovation for years. Funding rates for programs that support foundational biological research are already extremely low, with roughly four out of five research proposals rejected by the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The proposed budget would slash these funding rates even further for researchers at universities, colleges, marine labs, field stations, biological collections, and other non-profit research centers. Research conducted at federal labs would be harmed by likely staff reductions and cuts to research budgets.

Congress has shown bipartisan leadership by advancing science and thus stimulating American innovation and entrepreneurship. Please continue to demonstrate this bipartisan national leadership as Congress makes fiscal year 2018 appropriations.

Sincerely,

American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Arachnological Society
American Ornithological Society
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists
American Society of Mammalogists
American Society of Naturalists
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Society of Primatologists
Animal Behavior Society
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers
Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences, University of South Carolina
BioQUEST
Botanical Research Institute of Texas
Botanical Society of America
Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation
Delaware Museum of Natural History
Entomological Collections Network
Entomological Society of America
Florida Atlantic University
Human Anatomy and Physiology Society
National Tropical Botanical Garden
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Organization of Biological Field Stations
Paleontological Society
Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History
San Diego Natural History Museum
Sitka Sound Science Center
Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology
Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology
Society for Mathematical Biology
Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles
Society for the Study of Evolution
Society of Systematic Biologists
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
Society of Wetland Scientists
Southern Appalachian Botanical Society
Southwestern Association of Naturalists
The Coleopterists Society
US Chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology
Weed Science Society of America
Willi Hennig Society