March 22, 2016

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Active Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Honda:

We write to respectfully request that the National Science Foundation (NSF) receive at least $8 billion in funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The NSF is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science, secure the national defense; and to advance the nation’s health, prosperity, and welfare. Ensuring the NSF has robust resources to carry out its important mission has never been more essential. More than 20 percent of jobs in our country require training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields which are projected to experience the highest growth in coming years. At the same time the United States lags behind other nations in STEM training; our nation ranks 27th in mathematics and 20th in science performance. Nearly one-third of our country’s adults have less than basic mathematics skills. To compete globally and avoid falling behind other countries, we must invest in the NSF as it is the only federal agency specifically responsible for supporting essential education and research across all science and engineering fields.

According to the Center on Education and the Workforce, there will be a shortage of five million STEM professionals by 2020. To meet our nation’s workforce needs and facilitate research and development to compete in the world economy, it is vital that we fully fund the NSF. One out of every four basic research projects at higher learning institutions across the U.S. is supported by the NSF. Full funding of the NSF will enable 377,170 researchers, including teachers and students across the country, to address some of our society’s most pressing concerns through 10,100 individual NSF awards.

NSF research has led to scientific and technological breakthroughs that have generated positive change in society and long-term economic benefits. Many of those discoveries have been expanded upon and applied commercially by domestic companies, benefiting the private sector and our nation’s economy. Advanced rechargeable batteries, facial recognition software that can read emotions, and more protective sunscreens are examples of commercial products that have roots with the NSF, have created jobs, and have helped businesses grow. Each day NSF-supported inventions like those that detect chemical and biological weapons and models and
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management strategies for storms and disaster situations make our lives better and safer. Other breakthroughs have assisted our military through stealth camouflage and helped veterans transition home through advanced trauma research.

The NSF helps support our nation’s brightest minds in their endeavors to address our most challenging problems. Included in this year’s NSF budget are resources for the cancer “moonshot” and to investigate the transmission of the Zika virus. The budget also makes investments at all education levels to develop a modern and resourceful workforce that will enable our country to remain competitive in emerging industries.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your support to ensure that the National Science Foundation receive at least $8 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This amount is the minimum level of funding needed to ensure future generations of Americans are prepared to help our nation remain a world economic leader.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Glenn “GT” Thompson
Member of Congress

Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress
Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Dennis A. Ross  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Peter King  
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Steve King  
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress

Gwen Graham  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz  
Member of Congress
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

Patrick Murphy  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Tim Walz
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver II
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress