



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

May 20, 2015

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Johnson:

I am writing regarding H.R. 1806, the America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2015. We understand that this legislation is scheduled for floor consideration today.

H.R. 1806 is a two-year reauthorization of research, engineering, and education programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Department of Energy (DoE). These programs are important areas of funding for scientific research and innovation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2013-14, over thirty percent of the \$573 million in federal research awards the University received came from these programs to support our robust and diverse research enterprise.

In light of the challenges of discretionary spending caps set by the Budget Control Act, we appreciate the overall increase in funding authorized for the Office of Science, Advanced Scientific Computing Research, High Energy Physics, Nuclear Physics, and Fusion Energy within the DoE for FY16. The bill, however, includes significant reductions for ARPA-E, the Office of Biological and Environment Research (BER) and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. As you may know, housed on our campus is the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center, a \$25 million per year grant established by BER which supports nearly 400 researchers, students and staff spanning a wide array of disciplines, from microbiology to economics to plant biology and engineering. Cuts to BER could negatively impact the innovations that are being born of the unique collaborations happening at the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center and other DoE Bioenergy Research Centers around the country to create sustainable biofuels technologies that will help meet the nation's growing energy needs.

We are also concerned that the bill authorizes the National Science Foundation funding at the directorate level and includes large cuts for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate and the Geosciences Directorate. NSF is the second largest source of federal funding for the University's research enterprise, providing \$98.9 million in federal research awards in 2013-14. Setting authorization levels according to directorate will reduce the flexibility NSF requires to take advantage of unanticipated discoveries and insights, which are coming more rapidly everyday in the modern age. As a University with a vast interdisciplinary research

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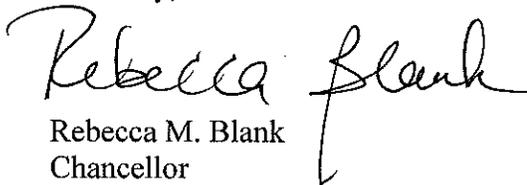
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portfolio, we believe it is essential that Congress continue to provide NSF with the ability to fund grant proposals that advance knowledge in promising scientific areas, whether within or across fields, from physical to social and behavioral, or engineering and computer sciences.

Lastly, it is concerning that the Manufacturing and Extension Partnership Program within the National Institute of Standards and Technology would be authorized for FY 2016 and FY 2017 at \$5 million below the FY 2015 enacted level. This, along with the other proposed reductions I have mentioned would not only negatively impact our campus, but the nation as a whole. The history of broad-based support for these research, engineering, and education programs has driven American pre-eminence in innovation for decades and, if maintained, will service us well into the future. It is essential for Congress to invest in these programs in order to keep the United States globally competitive.

Thank you for your national leadership on science and technology issues which are so critical to the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sincerely,



Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor