



October 19, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Culberson and Ranking Members Mikulski and Honda:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I thank you and your Congressional colleagues for passing the September short-term continuing resolution, providing a path forward for fiscal year 2017 appropriations action before the end of this year. We urge Congress to complete the FY 2017 appropriations process this fall and to send the President bipartisan funding legislation by the end of the calendar year.

As the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittees work to reconcile your positions on funding for FY 2017, I strongly encourage you to make research and higher education programs a top priority. Our economic competitors are rapidly increasing their investments in research and development, outpacing the U.S. in their growth trajectories. We must continue to provide a strong level of support for the key science agencies funded in the CJS bill to avert an innovation deficit and ensure the U.S. remains the global innovation leader.

Below, I reiterate APLU's funding requests for FY 2017 in the CJS appropriations bill. Also, delineated below is our support of and concerns about various proposals included in the House and Senate funding bills thus far.

APLU strongly encourages you to **appropriate no less than \$8 billion for the National Science Foundation** (NSF) in FY 2017, a \$500 million increase from FY 2016. The NSF funds merit-based research across disciplines and supports science, math, and engineering education throughout the country. NSF-supported research in all fields of science and engineering has yielded breakthroughs which have led to novel technologies, stimulated new industries, enhanced human health and improved national security.

We have concerns that the proposed levels for NSF in the House and Senate appropriations bills would provide essentially flat funding to NSF, further risking a U.S. innovation deficit and our economic position in today's global economy, as our economic competitors continue to increase their investments in science and research. We urge you to provide maximum funding for this critical agency in the final bill.

APLU greatly appreciates that the House and Senate CJS bills maintain NSF's flexibility to allocate resources among all of its directorates in the Research and Related Activities account. APLU also appreciates that the House and Senate reports include language supporting NSF's peer review process, the gold standard for selecting the most promising scientific research and the best means for achieving national science priorities and promoting innovation.

The mission and work of NASA play an essential role in meeting the growing challenges to fully understand our planet and to answer fundamental questions regarding the universe. APLU greatly appreciates that the House bill proposes increased funding from FY 2016 for NASA research and science. However, APLU continues to urge you to **appropriate \$5.908 billion for the NASA Science Mission Directorate and \$796 million for the Space Technology account**. We also ask you to **fund the Aeronautics Research Directorate at \$712 million**, which is the level proposed in the House and to **fund the Space Grant Program at \$40 million**, consistent with both House and Senate bills.

Further, APLU strongly urges you to **fund the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at \$520 million**. We are greatly concerned about the proposed cuts to this account in both the House and Senate CJS bills. The OAR funds crucial oceanic and atmospheric research that provides our decision makers with essential data and services, which enhance the nation's economy, security, and environment.

APLU also encourages you to **fund NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program at no less than \$74 million**, the proposed funding level in the Senate bill. This program works with coastal communities to promote research, education, training, and extension projects to help foster science-based decision about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources. APLU is concerned the proposed funding level in the House bill will put this critical work at risk.

Finally, APLU encourages you to **fund the Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP) at the National Institute of Standards and Technology at \$142 million**. The MEP acts as a catalyst for strengthening American manufacturing by transforming the sector into a more efficient and powerful engine of innovation. We greatly appreciate both the House and Senate's consistent support of the MEP and urge you to make further investments in this program in FY 2017.

Thank you for considering APLU's views and recommendations. Though there are some decisions made in the FY 2017 appropriations bills thus far that we oppose, we strongly believe that the FY 2017 funding process should be completed this year. We urge the 114th Congress to send the President bipartisan appropriations legislation that prioritizes important investments in higher education and research before the end of the year. Please consider APLU a resource as you work to finalize FY 2017 appropriations.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
APLU

cc: Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader Harry Reid
Speaker Paul Ryan
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science, and
Related Agencies
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science, and
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