



October 19, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Murkowski and Calvert and Ranking Members Udall and McCollum:

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 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies (Interior) Appropriations 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. These investments continue to demonstrate a significant return, growing our economy and improving the health and well-being of our society. Below, I reiterate APLU's funding priorities for FY 2017 in the Interior appropriations bill.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is a vital source of funds for individuals and entities whose wide-ranging work helps citizens and policy-makers alike better understand and address the social, economic, political and cultural challenges facing our nation and world today. Regardless of whether the supported activities are research on historical documents, documentaries that cover important periods of our national history, or programs designed to help veterans adjust to higher education, the NEH seeks to address many of the societal questions that impact all of us. APLU strongly encourages you to **fund the NEH at no less than \$150 million**, which is the funding level included in the House appropriations bill. This would represent a modest increase of just over \$2 million from FY 2016.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) plays a critical role in promoting research and education throughout the country. USGS's Water Resources Research Institutes (WRRIs) are essential to solving state, regional and inter-jurisdictional water resources problems with federal funding serving as the driving force of collaboration in water research and education. WRRIs contribute significantly in emergency planning and hurricane recovery, protecting groundwater aquifers from sea water intrusion and reducing water treatment costs. Recipients of the modest funds from the program are able to leverage the federal support to tackle the unique problems faced by various localities, states, and regions. APLU urges you to **fund the WRRIs at \$9 million**, an increase of \$2.5 million over FY 2016.

Further, APLU strongly encourages you to **fund the USGS's Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Units (CRUs) at \$20 million**, which amounts to an increase of \$2.6 million over FY 2016. The CRUs consist of 40 Units in 38 states and are true federal-state-university-private partnerships. The Units target the interface of science and management and are crucial to successfully addressing natural resource management challenges of the nation.

Finally, APLU strongly encourages the House and Senate to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Science and Technology. The EPA's Office of Science and Technology is a critical funder of grants to increase understanding of various environmental risks to human health and ecosystems, and to develop innovative solutions to these problems. We ask you to **fund Science and Technology at no less than the FY 2016 funding level of \$735 million**.

Thank you for your consideration of our 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
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Barbara Mikulski
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies