



October 24, 2019

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

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

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee Commerce, Justice,
Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Commerce, Justice
Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Shaheen, Chairman Serrano, and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As president of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I write to thank you for your ongoing work on the FY2020 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill and urge support for APLU's priorities as you reconcile differences between House and Senate measures.

I further note how crucial it is for Congress to complete the appropriations process. Additional continuing resolutions will fail to capitalize on Congress' meaningful work in addressing budget caps while ceding the opportunity to make important increases to key investments in scientific research. Understanding that the House marked up their bills under a higher total funding level than what was passed through the bipartisan budget agreement in July, APLU respectfully urges that the strongest possible funding levels for important research programs prevail in the final bill.

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. Annually, APLU's 197 U.S. member campuses enroll 4.1 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$42.4 billion in university-based research.

Our members conduct a majority of university-based research in partnership with the federal government. APLU is very appreciative of the robust funding included in both the House and Senate bills for research programs that our universities rely on to make discoveries that advance the public good. As you begin to reconcile your differences on this legislation, we respectfully submit our revised appropriations requests below.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

As the only federal agency that invests mainly in fundamental, basic research, we strongly urge Congress to provide maximum funding for this critical agency in the final bill. 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 – stimulating new industries and enhancing human health and national security.

We greatly appreciate both chambers' rejection of the President's FY2020 recommendation to cut the NSF's budget and instead recommend increases to NSF. We request Congress provide at least the House's level of **\$8.636 billion for the NSF**. APLU is grateful for Congress' attention to this vital program and we urge members to consider a further increase to this account, past what is recommended in each chamber. In March, APLU recommended \$9 billion for this agency for FY2020. At a time when competitor nations are investing heavily in research and development¹, we must boost our funding to ensure U.S. leadership. Funding basic research is crucial to spur new technologies that will ignite new industries that strengthen our economy and keep the U.S. safe, healthy, and prosperous.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

The mission and work of NASA plays an essential role in meeting the growing challenges to fully understand our planet and to answer fundamental questions regarding the universe. APLU urges Congress to appropriate at least **\$7.161 billion for the NASA Science Mission Directorate** and **\$1.292 billion for the Space Technology** account, which are consistent with the House levels. The scientific knowledge gained from the Space Technology Directorate has led to advancements that improve the lives of all Americans, such as the development of cutting-edge medical devices including pacemakers and Lasik eye surgery, increased agricultural production, and development of improved military protective armor.

We also ask that you fund the **Aeronautics Research Directorate at \$784 million**, consistent with the Senate's level. Increased investment in aeronautics research such as hypersonics, new methods of propulsion, and material science are crucial to furthering our nation's space program. Lastly, we recommend that Congress fund the **Space Grant Program** at no less than **\$48 million**, which is the House's level. This important program brings universities together to support and expand science and engineering education related to aerospace.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

APLU strongly urges members to fund the **Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) at NOAA at no less than \$595 million**, the House's funding level. The OAR funds crucial oceanic and atmospheric research that provides our decisionmakers with essential data and services, which enhance the nation's economy, security, and environment.

¹ An Innovation Challenge for the United States. Aspen Security Group. October 1, 2019.
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/an-innovation-challenge-for-the-united-states/>

We also encourage members to fund NOAA's **National Sea Grant College Program** at **no less than \$88 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 decisions about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources.

National Institute for Standards and Technology

APLU encourages members to fund the **Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP)** at the National Institute of Standards and Technology at **\$154 million**, consistent with the House's level. The MEP acts as a catalyst for strengthening American manufacturing by transforming the sector into a more efficient and powerful engine of innovation.

Additionally, we urge members to increase the **National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI)** to no less than the Senate's recommendation of **\$16 million**. NNMI, also known as Manufacturing USA, is a network of 14 manufacturing institutes where industry, universities, and government partners collaborate to develop and accelerate the commercialization of innovative manufacturing technologies.

Economic Development Administration

Lastly, APLU commends members of Congress for rejecting the President's proposal to close the EDA. This important agency plays a vital role in helping promote economic resiliency and competitiveness in regions across the country. Within the EDA, we urge members to fund the **Regional Innovation (RI) Program** at no less than **\$31 million**, consistent with the Senate's level. The RI Program helps build capacity to turn new technologies and innovations into jobs through proof-of-concept and commercialization assistance and through early-stage risk capital for investors and entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration of APLU's requests as you work to reconcile differences and advance a final FY2020 appropriations measure.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President, APLU

cc:

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby
House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger
Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies