



November 13, 2015

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

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 Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, providing a path forward for FY2016 federal appropriations. As the House and Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittees work to reconcile your positions on funding for FY2016, I urge you to make research and higher education programs a priority. These investments continue to demonstrate a significant return, growing our economy and improving the health and wellbeing of our society. Below, I reiterate APLU's funding priorities for FY2016 in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill and urge that you include the programs highlighted below within your increased allocation.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is a vital source of funds for scholars and researchers whose work helps citizens and policy-makers alike better understand and address the social, economic, political and cultural challenges facing our nation and world today. APLU strongly encourages you to fund the NEH at \$155 million, including increased support for the competitive core programs. This would represent an increase of \$9 million over FY2015.

Much like the NEH, 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. APLU urges you to fund WRRIs at \$8.8 million, an increase of \$2.3 million over FY2015.

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 FY2015. 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 the natural resource management challenges of the nation.

Finally, APLU strongly encourages the funding of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Science and Technology at \$769 million, a 4.6 percent increase over FY2015. 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. Within the Office of Science, APLU strongly supports the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program, which competitively funds research grants and graduate fellowships in environmental science and engineering disciplines.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and recommendations. Please consider APLU a resource as you continue your work on FY2016 appropriations.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
APLU

cc: 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