



May 28, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United State Senate
455 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
United States Senate
127A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Alexander and Coons:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), thank you for your introduction of S. 1398, a bill to reauthorize the energy programs included in the America COMPETES Act. This legislation would move us in the right direction toward closing the innovation deficit – the widening gap between the actual level of federal funding for research and higher education and where we need to be if the United States is to remain the world’s innovation leader.

The support for science and research in this legislation is fundamental to maintaining our country’s leadership in key fields of science, enhancing our nation’s energy security, and supporting the next generation of scientists. This bipartisan legislation would provide necessary, stable and sustained funding increases for basic energy research at the Department of Energy (DOE) and for high-risk, high-reward research that occurs at the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E). Our nation relies on robust support of these programs to advance our knowledge and understanding, which leads to major technological breakthroughs in energy and other fields. As other countries ramp up their investments in energy research, it is critical that the United States strengthens investments in this area, as set out in S. 1398.

We are also grateful for your efforts to ensure the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act is crafted in the same bipartisan nature as the original 2007 authorization, which had 70 Senate bipartisan cosponsors, and the 2010 reauthorization, which passed the Senate with unanimous approval. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support passage and enactment of this legislation.

Again, and on behalf of APLU’s members – public research universities in every state across the country – we appreciate your leadership on this issue. Please consider APLU a resource as you work to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

M. Peter McPherson
President, APLU