



May 11, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

CC: Members of USICA/COMPETES Conference Committee

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Members of the USICA/COMPETES Conference Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), we urge you to work judiciously and in a bipartisan fashion to bridge the gaps between your chambers' respective competitiveness bills, the United States Innovation and Competition Act (S. 1260) and the America COMPETES Act of 2022 (H.R. 4521), while considering the feedback provided from the nation's public research universities, a critical partner in accomplishing the bill's goals. As conferees work on a final measure, we urge you to add \$10 billion in supplemental funding for the vast array of new science and technology programs authorized in the legislation to ensure the legislation does not just authorize programs, but rather provides the critical funding need to compete. This funding is a critical down payment on promised investments, allowing agencies to jumpstart new efforts to promote U.S. competitiveness.

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. Annually, its 201 U.S. member campuses enroll 4.2 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct about \$50 billion in university-based research.

Multiple reports over the last several years have shown that while the U.S. is still a global leader in science and technology, our competitors are catching up. This increasingly competitive global landscape demands greater U.S. investment in science and technology and policy that fosters an environment for innovation and appropriate global collaborations. Both the House and Senate bills already contain \$52 billion in supplemental funding for domestic semiconductor industry investments to address the immediate need to restore U.S. leadership in this vital sector, which we strongly support. Unfortunately, there is no other funding provided for the other new programs authorized at National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, or the National Institute of Standards and Technology in equally important areas of research such as quantum information science, artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, biotechnology, advanced communications technologies.

To fulfill the vision of the COMPETES Act, Congress must do more now. We support adding **\$10 billion** in supplemental appropriations funding to the final USICA/COMPETES Conference Agreement. These investments are critical for U.S. economic and national security. Without funding to implement the authorization bill, the U.S. will not come close to matching the efforts of competitor nations, like China, in these important technology areas. A strong authorization bill is no substitute for providing the funding to advance critical areas of research. Congress must do both to achieve the aim of boosting our nation's scientific competitiveness. Unfortunately, history has demonstrated that even the best-intentioned authorization efforts often fail to accomplish stated goals of boosting funding. Congress should accomplish both with this measure.

APLU has made this legislation a priority and written two previous letters to congressional leadership in [August](#) of last year and in [February](#) outlining our priorities for a final agreement.

APLU is pleased to offer a summary of our key recommendations as you work to reach a conference agreement. Fuller details are available in our previous letters.

Key Recommendations

- Include robust reauthorizations for the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. (H.R. 4521)
- Include aspects of both S. 1260 and H.R. 4521 in the creation of a new National Science Foundation Directorate focused on use-inspired research designed to solve practical problems.
- Include the “Capacity Building for Developing Universities” provision to support research capacity building at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Serving Institutions. (Similar provision in S. 1260 and H.R. 4521)
- Include the authorization of the NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science (INCLUDES) program (H.R. 4521).
- Include provisions found in both bills that recognize the contributions of Cooperative Extension in rural STEM Education and commercial development (S. 1260 and H.R. 4521)
- Provide the highest authorized levels of support for graduate students in STEM fields through improved scholarships, fellowships, and traineeships (S. 1260 or H.R. 4521)
- Increase support for needed scientific infrastructure investments at U.S. universities and National Labs through programs such as the NSF Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure program (H.R. 4521).
- Support directed investment in university technology commercialization efforts (S.1260).
- Include the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR), and pilot extensions for 5 years (H.R. 4521)
- Recognize the substantial, long-running actions the executive branch is taking on research security and ensure any additional legislative action reflects is consistent, narrowly-tailored, well-targeted, and streamlined provisions that safeguard U.S. taxpayer supported research without stigmatizing legitimate international scientific collaborations.
 - If Congress expands Higher Education Act Section 117 reporting or adds a new Section 124, adopt the more refined approach passed by the House (H.R. 4521).
 - Reject proposals to add costly and burdensome review of university research agreements by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) (Sec 3138 of S. 1260).

- Include the College Transparency Act to strengthen higher education outcomes data empowering students and families, policymakers, and colleges and universities with evidence-based information. (H.R. 4521)
- Include exemption for doctoral STEM graduates from numerical green card limits and expand the list of eligible STEM programs to include the DHS STEM CIP Code list. (H.R. 4521). Expand eligible institutions to all publics and nonprofits.
- Include reauthorization for Title VI International Education Programs of the Higher Education Act (S. 1260)

APLU urges you to reach a bipartisan compromise, with the needed funding and supporting policy, that the nation's public research universities can support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McPherson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities