



December 5, 2008

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior and Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior and Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Dicks and Tiahrt:

On behalf of NASULGC, A Public University Association, which represents 216 public research universities, land-grant institutions and state university systems, I write to respectfully request your strong support in the FY2009 appropriations conference negotiations for agencies and programs of great importance not only to public universities but to the nation. Outlined below are our specific requests for programs in your bill.

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science to Achieve Results (STAR) competitive grants program funds important research in many environmental science and engineering disciplines. The program engages the nation's best scientists and engineers in targeted research which complements EPA's laboratory research, as well as research conducted by its partners in other federal agencies. The STAR program has been cut for seven consecutive fiscal years. The EPA Office of Research and Development budget request of \$61 million represents a 2 percent decrease from the level enacted in FY2008, and is substantially less than the \$102 million that was provided in FY2002. Our recommendation of \$100 million would enhance the ability of EPA to draw upon critically needed scientific expertise from the academic community at a time when environmental research, training, and development of new technologies for solving environmental problems has been widely cited as critical to the lasting economic competitiveness of the United States.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides independent research data and assessments which are important to public and private sector decision-makers in the areas of emergency management and hazard mitigation, energy independence, climate change, water quality, emerging diseases, and conservation of biological diversity. Despite the critical outputs generated by the USGS, its budget has remained flat for a decade. Further, the FY2009 budget request is \$38 million below FY2008. We support the \$1.3 billion recommendation made to Congress by the USGS Coalition, which would enable the USGS to restore the science cuts proposed in the budget request, accelerate the timetable for deployment of critical projects, and launch science initiatives that address new challenges.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is currently operating at only one-third of its demonstrated capacity. We support a \$33 million budget increase for the NEH, which would bring the total budget to \$177 million; this funding level would restore reductions that have been made over the past few years. NEH supports scholarship and research that is vital to our nation's ability to understand and utilize the lessons of history, and would provide the information needed to make the critical decisions for tomorrow. The President's budget request for FY2009 proposes a cut to the NEH, which would constrain the agency's support of grants that provide for preservation of and access to cultural resources, education, research, and public programs.

I look forward to working with you through the remainder of the appropriations process to ensure that the nation maintains its ability to compete and innovate at a global level.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter McPherson".

Peter McPherson
President