



May 14, 2015

The Honorable Joyce Beatty  
133 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Caroline C. Whitacre, PhD  
Vice President for Research  
Professor of Microbial  
Infection and Immunity  
614-247-8356 Phone

Dear Congresswoman Beatty:

On behalf of the Ohio State University, I would like to commend the House Science Committee for its willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue with the higher education and research communities to make improvements to the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 1806). While this bill is an improvement over the FIRST Act of 2014 (H.R. 4186), serious concerns remain with H.R. 1806 and Ohio State urges you to support amendments to improve the measure when it is considered on the House floor next week.

H.R. 1806 provides suggested authorization funding levels for scientific research programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). However, the legislation arbitrarily and unfairly targets specific areas of vital research at NSF. While recognizing the authority of the U.S. Congress to propose authorization levels for individual directorates at NSF, it is troubling that NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) and Geosciences (GEO) directorates have been singled out for authorization level reductions. Equally concerning are the proposed authorization level reductions to DOE's ARPA-E, Biological and Environmental Research (BER), and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) programs. Reducing federal investments in valuable research within the fields of social science, alternative energy and climate science, could be damaging to the work of faculty, researchers and students at Ohio State and other universities across Ohio, in addition to undermining the research enterprise of the United States.

Though constraints on non-defense discretionary spending imposed by the Budget Control Act make it difficult to provide the necessary federal investments in research to bolster our nation's innovation economy, a robust and comprehensive investment in scientific research must be the vision guiding any COMPETES Act reauthorization bill. This bill falls far short. At a time when U.S. economic competitors are making substantial increases in their scientific research investment portfolios, H.R. 1806 threatens to cause an innovation deficit and puts into question the role of the United States as the world's undisputed champion of innovation.

I strongly urge you to support amendments to H.R. 1806 that would provide equitable treatment to the SBE and GEO directorates, and restore authorization funding levels at NSF. I also encourage you to support amendments to the bill to restore funding levels for DOE's ARPA-E, BER and EERE programs. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of the Ohio State University.

Sincerely,

Caroline C. Whitacre, PHD