

April 22, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member
394 Ford House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the non-profit research institute community, we strongly endorse Section 724 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015, which provides universities and non-profit institutes a six-year DOE cost share waiver.

Research and development is at the heart of what has made the United States the global leader in science, technology, security, and innovation. As much as 85% of U.S. GDP growth is attributed to advancements in science and technology. Our nation's non-profit research institutes excel at crossing the so-called "valley of death" for R&D, ensuring that our Government's investments in R&D are well spent. While fewer in number than research universities and corporate research groups, non-profit research institutes have an enormous impact on our nation: from protecting the lives of warfighters, to making energy more efficient, computers more secure, and preventing and treating disease. We believe this legislation will help ensure that the research community will provide the taxpayers a strong return on their investments.

Non-profit research institutes also support revising the DOE R&D program to provide a cost-share waiver, for six years, for non-profit research institutions, including universities, at the applied research level. The current policy requiring a 20% private match for funds in effect skews the portfolio of funded research projects and participating research institutions. Non-profit research institutions lack the financial capacity to provide a 20% match for very early stage research that, while promising, does not yet have a clear commercial path. The current 20% funding match policy results in DOE missing opportunities to support the most innovative and forward-looking research initiatives.

Therefore, while we do have concerns with other parts of the legislation, we proudly endorse Section 724 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

Desert Research Institute
Southern Research Institute
Southwest Research Institute
SRI International