March 22, 2016

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Active Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Honda:

We write to respectfully request that the National Science Foundation (NSF) receive at least $8 billion in funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The NSF is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science, secure the national defense; and to advance the nation’s health, prosperity, and welfare. Ensuring the NSF has robust resources to carry out its important mission has never been more essential. More than 20 percent of jobs in our country require training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields which are projected to experience the highest growth in coming years. At the same time the United States lags behind other nations in STEM training; our nation ranks 27th in mathematics and 20th in science performance. Nearly one-third of our country’s adults have less than basic mathematics skills. To compete globally and avoid falling behind other countries, we must invest in the NSF as it is the only federal agency specifically responsible for supporting essential education and research across all science and engineering fields.

According to the Center on Education and the Workforce, there will be a shortage of five million STEM professionals by 2020. To meet our nation’s workforce needs and facilitate research and development to compete in the world economy, it is vital that we fully fund the NSF. One out of every four basic research projects at higher learning institutions across the U.S. is supported by the NSF. Full funding of the NSF will enable 377,170 researchers, including teachers and students across the country, to address some of our society’s most pressing concerns through 10,100 individual NSF awards.

NSF research has led to scientific and technological breakthroughs that have generated positive change in society and long-term economic benefits. Many of those discoveries have been expanded upon and applied commercially by domestic companies, benefiting the private sector and our nation’s economy. Advanced rechargeable batteries, facial recognition software that can read emotions, and more protective sunscreens are examples of commercial products that have roots with the NSF, have created jobs, and have helped businesses grow. Each day NSF-supported inventions like those that detect chemical and biological weapons and models and
Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Honda  
March 22, 2016  
Page 2

management strategies for storms and disaster situations make our lives better and safer. Other breakthroughs have assisted our military through stealth camouflage and helped veterans transition home through advanced trauma research.

The NSF helps support our nation’s brightest minds in their endeavors to address our most challenging problems. Included in this year’s NSF budget are resources for the cancer “moonshot” and to investigate the transmission of the Zika virus. The budget also makes investments at all education levels to develop a modern and resourceful workforce that will enable our country to remain competitive in emerging industries.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your support to ensure that the National Science Foundation receive at least $8 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This amount is the minimum level of funding needed to ensure future generations of Americans are prepared to help our nation remain a world economic leader.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,


G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

Glenn “GT” Thompson  
Member of Congress

Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello  
Member of Congress
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

John Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

David E. Price  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

David Loebsack  
Member of Congress

Tim Walz  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver II  
Member of Congress