



Ecological Society of America
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May 10, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chair
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Lucas, Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
2405 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Haley Stevens, Chair
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
1510 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Waltz, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
213 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, Chairwoman Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz:

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) appreciates the opportunity to endorse the bipartisan H. R. 2225, National Science Foundation for the Future Act. ESA is the nation's largest society of professional ecologists, representing over 9,000 members across the country. Established in 1950, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is an essential pillar of America's scientific enterprise and is the only federal agency with the mission of supporting all the scientific disciplines. The NSF for the Future Act will increase NSF resources to support research vital to the public interest.

The H.R. 2225 bill recognizes that NSF must evolve to meet the changing needs of society. ESA supports the establishment of a Directorate for Science and Engineering Solutions (SES) that will fund use-inspired research. We note that the SES role in developing programs for artificial intelligence (AI) spans scientific disciplinary boundaries with many applications for ecological and social-ecological research. In fact, close collaboration with the Directorate for Biological Sciences, and most other NSF Directorates, is essential for AI and SES applications to be robust.

Supporting critical research areas and collaboration that will enhance interdisciplinary research of complex issues and support solution science is essential for the U.S. to respond to environmental change and other pressing problems for the benefit of society. America's innovation infrastructure, with close collaboration across scientific disciplines, federal agencies, industry and academia will underpin the groundbreaking research that keeps the U.S. globally competitive.

ESA strongly supports the bill's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) provisions to broaden access to research opportunities in underserved communities and to expand the Graduate Research Fellowship Program.

Additionally, we urge the Committee to include these DEI bipartisan bills in the NSF authorization process:

- H.R. 2695, The Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act, which addresses sexual harassment at federal agencies and across the research community.
- H.R. 204, The STEM Opportunities Act, which provides guidance, data collection and grants for groups historically underrepresented in STEM at institutions of higher education and at federal science agencies.
- H.R. 2027, The MSI STEM Achievement Act, which directs NSF to research the barriers to increasing participation in STEM education at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and to increase these institutions' awareness, capacity and participation to compete for federal research funds.
- H.R. 210, The Rural STEM Education Research Act, which supports research on the challenges of teaching and learning STEM in rural communities and develops programming to expand access to STEM education programs.

The Ecological Society of America thanks you for writing the bipartisan NSF authorizing legislation that will strengthen the scientific enterprise as well as position the U.S. to lead and innovate in the 21st century. If you have further questions, Alison Mize (alison@esa.org), ESA's director of public affairs, will be happy to assist you. Please know that ESA stands ready to work with the Committee to advance this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen C. Weathers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathleen C. Weathers, PhD
President, Ecological Society of America