



March 12, 2014

The Honorable Larry Bucshon  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Research and Technology  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
1005 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Bucshon and Smith:

The United States is at a critical juncture in ensuring that a solid foundation of basic science research is built to spur the science and technology developments of the future. The America COMPETES Acts of 2007 and 2010 provided necessary building blocks, and now is the time for Congress to lay the groundwork for the next several years.

The undersigned organizations write to express our serious concerns with H.R. 4186, the *Frontiers in Research, Science, Technology (FIRST) Act of 2014*. In our opinion, the bill, in its present form, would benefit from addressing the following:

- A set of “Guiding Principles” for reauthorization of the nation’s science agencies was developed by leading representatives of the scientific, business, and higher education communities; supported by many scientific societies and universities around the country; and shared with Congressional science committees. The Guiding Principles were also referenced in CNSF’s letter to the Committee on December 19, 2013. In our view, these principles provide a necessary framework for advancing basic science in federal science agencies, and H.R. 4186 departs from these essential principles.
- Basic science research has seen minimal growth in recent years, especially when inflation is taken into account. Steady and sustained growth over inflation is needed

*The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is an alliance of over 120 professional societies, universities, and corporations advocating support for the National Science Foundation.*

across all sciences. Congress must recommit to science and innovation, and the House Science Committee should take the lead. H.R. 4186 sets forth funding levels for the National Science Foundation that provide no real growth and stand to further erode our scientific infrastructure.

- The Guiding Principles state that, “to ensure our national competitiveness, we need to maintain a strong foundation of basic research across all scientific disciplines, from the physical, mathematical and life sciences, to engineering, to the social, economic, and behavioral sciences.” The Principles also urge Congress to “support funding increases without offsets that would force significant and potentially detrimental tradeoffs between one field of science and another.” H.R. 4186 provides low authorization levels for the National Science Foundation, forcing trade-offs that undercut important advances in science, and decimates the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate by authorizing funding at significantly low and unwarranted levels. The basic science discoveries in the social and behavioral sciences are critical to addressing national needs and are worthy of tax-payer support.

We respectfully request that the bill incorporate the Guiding Principles as outlined in the attached. We remain committed to working with the House Science, Space and Technology Committee to pass a reauthorization bill for the nation’s science agencies.

Sincerely,

The Following Endorsing Organizations (as of March 12, 2014):

American Anthropological Association  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Astronomical Society  
American Chemical Society  
American Educational Research Association  
American Geophysical Union  
American Geosciences Institute  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Mathematical Society  
American Physiological Society  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association  
Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback  
Association for Behavior Analysis International  
Association for Psychological Science  
Association for Women in Science  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists  
Association of Independent Research Institutes  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of Research Libraries  
Biophysical Society  
Cognitive Science Society  
Columbia University  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council on Undergraduate Research  
Crop Science Society of America  
Duke University  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Geological Society of America  
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society  
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology  
Linguistic Society of America  
Michigan State University  
National Association of Marine Laboratories  
National Communication Association  
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.  
National Ground Water Association  
Population Association of America  
Research!America  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
Society for Psychophysiological Research  
Society of Experimental Social Psychology  
Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology  
Soil Science Society of America  
SPIE – The International Society for Optics and Photonics  
Psychonomic Society  
State University of New York

University of California System  
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research  
University of California, Davis  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Riverside  
University of Maryland  
University of New Mexico  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
Vanderbilt University  
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

cc: Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology