

September 10, 2008

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Assistant Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) is writing to express concern that an extended Continuing Resolution (CR) for the FY 2009 appropriations will hamper the National Science Foundation's (NSF) ability to carry out programmatic plans and will create hardships and uncertainty for students and researchers.

We urge you to provide the NSF with a total FY 2009 budget of \$6.854 billion in any extended CR.

CNSF is grateful to you and the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate for providing the National Science Foundation with an FY 2009 budget of \$6.854 billion, the same level as the Administration's budget request. We also thank you for providing funds for NSF in the recent Supplemental Appropriations Act. CNSF appreciates this acknowledgment of the importance of NSF to technological progress and U.S. competitiveness through its support of science, mathematics and engineering research and education.

During the FY 2008 appropriations process, the House and Senate initially provided NSF with a ten percent boost over FY 2007. Unfortunately, in the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act this increase shrank to 2.5 percent. As a result of the unanticipated reduction in the NSF budget increase, the agency had to make the following significant cutbacks and changes in program plans during FY 2008: 1,000 fewer grants to researchers; 230 fewer graduate fellowships; delay major program solicitations; reduce support for facilities; and reduce support of both the Faculty Early Career Development and Research Experiences for Undergraduates programs. Even though the NSF received \$62.5 million in the recent FY 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, these funds were, for the most part, designated to specific programs and therefore do not alleviate the serious cutbacks listed above.

A CR that does not contain a total budget of \$6.854 billion for NSF will further contribute to the erosion of the agency's ability to fund programs that are necessary to maintain the nation's technological leadership and competitiveness. At a time when many have acknowledged how important it is that the

United States extend its competitive edge and prepare more students for scientific professions, we cannot afford continuing instability in the availability of funding for researchers, undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral science, mathematics and engineering students. Eventually this year-over-year unevenness in funding will cause students and experienced professionals to consider other careers.

We know that you understand the value of NSF to science, mathematics and engineering research and education. You have demonstrated this often and it is for this reason that we ask for your support for this request.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you to help NSF remain the premier basic research and science education agency in the world.

Sincerely,

American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geological Institute
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Arctic Research Consortium
ASME
Association for Psychological Science
Association of Population Centers
Association of Research Libraries
Association of Science-Technology Centers
Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy
ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America
Ball State University

Belle W Baruch Institute for Marine & Coastal Sciences
Biophysical Society
California Institute of Technology
Center for Inquiry
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation
Colgate University
Computing Research Association
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science Inc.
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado
Council of Environmental Deans and Directors
Council on Undergraduate Research
Crop Science Society of America
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Cornell University
Department of Earth Sciences, Millersville University
DOSECC Inc.
Earthquake Engineering Research Institute
Ecological Society of America
EDUCAUSE
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences
Florida Atlantic University
Florida State University
Geological Society of America

*Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute
Institute of Electrical and Electronics
Engineers (IEEE)
Institute of Food Technologists
Linguistic Society of America
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium
Materials Research Society
Mathematical Association of America
Michigan State University
Mote Marine Laboratory, Inc.
Museum of Science, Boston
National Association of Marine Laboratories
National Center for Technological Literacy
National Council for Science and the
Environment
National Science Teachers Association
National Society of Professional Engineers
Natural Science Collections Alliance
North Carolina State University
Oceanic Institute
Optical Society of America
Oregon State University
Population Association of America
Shoals Marine Laboratory
Skidaway Institute for Oceanography
Smith College
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Society for Neuroscience
Society for Research in Child Development
Soil Science Society of America*

*South Dakota School of Mines & Technology --
Department of Atmospheric Sciences
State University of New York at Binghamton
Texas A&M University
The Weather Coalition
University Corporation for Atmospheric
Research
University of Cincinnati
University of Connecticut Marine Programs
University of Delaware
University of Hawaii
University of Idaho
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign --
Department of Atmospheric Sciences
University of Miami - Rosenstiel School of
Marine and Atmospheric Science
University of Minnesota Duluth- Large Lakes
Observatory
University of Missouri - Department of Soil,
Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences
University of New England Marine Science
Center
University of Oklahoma
University of Texas Marine Science Institute
University of Toledo
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Great
Lakes WATER Institute
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution*