

April XX, 2005

The Honorable David Hobson  
Chairman  
Energy and Water Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
2362 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Water Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hobson and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you begin your work on the fiscal year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we write to thank you for your strong support in recent years for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science. We also write to express our strong support for the DOE Office of Science and the world class scientific research that it supports. To this end, we encourage you to significantly increase fiscal year 2006 funding for the DOE Office of Science above the level appropriated in fiscal year 2005.

The DOE Office of Science supports over 40 percent of basic research in the physical sciences – more than any other federal agency – making it the nation's primary supporter of research in physics, chemistry, biological sciences, environmental sciences, mathematics and computing, and engineering. Furthermore, the DOE Office of Science supports a unique system of programs based on teams of scientists focused on national priorities in scientific research, and large-scale, specialized user facilities, which are utilized by 19,000 researchers, nearly half of whom are university faculty and students. This makes the DOE Office of Science unique among, and complementary to, the scientific programs of many other federal science agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

While federally supported medical research like that conducted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has doubled in recent years, funding for research in the physical sciences has experienced little or no growth over the last three decades, and has actually been in a steady decline as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Because its budget, in constant dollars, remains at its 1990 level, the DOE Office of Science funds research proposals at a rate that is one-third that of the NIH and NSF.

As a result, Europe and Asia are threatening America's dominance in the physical sciences as measured by the number of patents won, articles submitted to scientific journals, degrees awarded, Nobel prizes won, or the percentage of GDP dedicated to research and development. Furthermore, test scores show that American youth, as they progress through the education system, fall further and further behind their counterparts in other countries, especially when it comes to math and science.

That is why the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recommended in 2002 that research and development for the physical sciences and engineering should be brought to parity with the life sciences over five budget cycles. More recently, the DOE Office of Science released a twenty-year facilities plan and a strategic plan that prioritize research and facilities across scientific disciplines based on funding levels in the energy bill. The result of lengthy deliberations, a disciplined management approach, and some very tough choices, these plans provide the scientific vision that will enable America to benefit from 21<sup>st</sup> century science.

Even with the generous 4.3 percent increase you provided for the DOE Office of Science in fiscal year 2005, and passage of energy legislation in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress that increased authorized funding for the DOE Office of Science, we have a long way to go to make up for years of inadequate budgets. Unfortunately, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2006 would reduce funding for the DOE Office of Science, curtailing its core research programs, substantially scaling back operating times for its many user facilities, and delaying or canceling the construction of next generation facilities.

Instead, an increase is needed and warranted, even during this time of tight budgets. Economic experts maintain that during the last half-century, science-driven technology has accounted for more than 50 percent of the growth of the U.S. economy. To maintain our national competitiveness and ensure America's economic, energy, homeland, and national security for the next fifty years, we must provide strong support *today* for basic research across the disciplines. That is why we urge you to provide increased funding for the DOE Office of Science, enabling it to attract the best minds, educate the next generation of scientists and engineers, support the construction and operation of modern facilities, and continue to provide the quality of scientific research that has been its trademark for so many years.

Thanks again for your strong support for the DOE Office of Science. We are cognizant of the difficult budget situation under which your subcommittee is working, and we urge you to contact us if we may be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,