September 5, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer, and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

As members of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) - a broad-based group of professional organizations, universities, businesses, and scientific societies that advocate for sustained, robust federal support for science – we are writing to stress our support for the passage of a bipartisan budget agreement that increases the spending caps for discretionary programs. Our country needs a bipartisan budget agreement to maintain robust federal investments in America’s science and innovation enterprise.

For the 140 member groups of CNSF, robust and sustainable funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) is a high priority, especially if the United States is to remain globally competitive in science, technology, and innovation. NSF funds research in important fields – including the physical sciences, biology, mathematics, computer science, geoscience, social and behavioral science, engineering, and education. NSF is also instrumental in preparing the next generation’s STEM workforce through the funding of traineeships and research fellowships, as well as investments in K-12 STEM education both in and out of school.

We recognize and appreciate the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for funding NSF at a higher level than the Administration’s FY 2018 budget request; however, the mark of $7.3 billion is significantly lower than the appropriation the agency received in FY 2017. At this level, fewer research grants will be awarded, fewer students will receive traineeships and fellowships, critical infrastructure construction will be delayed, and there will be less investment in STEM education. To enable the nation’s primary fundamental research agency to receive necessary funding, we strongly encourage the 115th Congress to craft and pass a bipartisan budget agreement that would raise the spending caps. If there is a bipartisan budget agreement, CNSF encourages Congress to appropriate at least $7.8 billion for NSF, which is a five percent increase over the FY 2017 enacted level, as considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee. This level of funding is commensurate with Innovation: An American Imperative. This call-to-action—supported by over 500 organizations from American industry, higher education, and scientific societies—urges Congress to enact policies and investments to ensure that the United States remains a global innovation leader.
The re-emergence of spending caps in FY 2018 would have a detrimental impact on federally-funded scientific research. We believe that a balanced bipartisan budget agreement that raises the 2018 spending caps and makes prudent, adequate investments in scientific research and innovation would prevent budget gridlock and help grow the economy. In the last few weeks, several Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have called for an agreement to raise the caps for FY 2018. Their call for bipartisan action was recently echoed in a [letter from CNSF and 15 other coalitions](https://www.cnsf.us) to the House and Senate leadership, in which we underscored the importance of robust investment in federally-funded research at NSF and other federal research agencies. Federally funded research has proven to be vital to our economy, national security, and global competitiveness in science, technology, and innovation. Now is not the time to back away from or decrease our investment in important scientific research, technology development and innovation through the National Science Foundation.

Again, we strongly encourage Members of the 115th Congress to enact a bipartisan budget agreement that would increase spending caps for discretionary programs in FY 2018, and to ensure funding of **at least $7.8 billion for NSF** in FY 2018.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)

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Cc: Senate Committee on Appropriations
    House Committee on Appropriations

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