

14 December 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
United States of America

Dear Mr. President:

Our country faces a monumental challenge to reach an agreement on how to reduce the deficit. When and how that agreement is made will affect whether sequestration is implemented or not. As an organization of over 61,000 Earth and space scientists, the American Geophysical Union strongly encourages you to support a bipartisan effort to address the fiscal cliff and prevent sequestration from taking effect, which will further reduce funding for essential science, technology, and research programs.

The benefits of non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs stretch far and wide. These programs provide essential jobs and services such as monitoring and predicting severe weather, securing our energy and water resources for the future, and preparing a skilled workforce to keep us economically and globally competitive. Investments in NDD research have developed technologies to support our defense and national security including GPS and laser-driven tools and applications. Sequestration would substantially cut these vital programs and reduce scientists' ability to provide information to decision makers on complex, nationally significant issues.

NDD programs represent a small and shrinking share of the federal budget and of our overall economy. Sequestration would cause approximately 8.2% in cuts in 2013 to federal agencies and programs. These across-the-board cuts would be indiscriminate and affect the essential missions of agencies. For example, the National Science Foundation would see \$586 million in cuts compared to fiscal year 2012, which would mean funding approximately 1,600 fewer research and education grants, and supporting approximately 19,300 fewer researchers, students, and technical support personnel.

Research is a long-term investment in our future. Deep cuts today deprive the innovators of tomorrow of the tools and knowledge they will need to keep the U.S. competitive in the global economy. Over history, science research and development has seen broad bipartisan support in Congress and across the country. Therefore I implore you to support science and the scientific community, which are vital to the economic and public safety of Americans and should not be jeopardized by inaction to stop sequestration. Please work together to find an approach to deficit reduction that does not make further cuts to these vital NDD programs.

Sincerely,



Christine W. McEntee  
Executive Director/CEO  
American Geophysical Union