



The Honorable John Thune, Chairman
The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member
The Honorable Gary Peters
The Honorable Cory Gardner
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

1 July 2016

Dear Senators Thune, Nelson, Peters, and Gardner:

On behalf of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), whose mission is to promote discovery in Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity, as well as its 60,000 Earth and space scientist members, I would like to thank you for all of your work in cosponsoring S.3084, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act. By strengthening our nation's STEM pipeline, providing support for our federal science agencies, and setting a foundation for strong science funding, this bill recognizes the vital role that science plays in our nation's economic leadership, national security, and technological advancement.

AGU is appreciative that this bill takes a large step towards further strengthening our nation's STEM education pipeline. From encouraging citizen science to providing our students with abundant opportunities to be involved in research, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act lays the framework for ensuring that our current and future scientists and engineers have the support they need to be world-class thinkers. Quality STEM education in K-12 classrooms and beyond ensures that the global leaders in science continue to come from the United States, and provides a future workforce that will fuel scientific and economic success in America.

Thank you for the bill's overall support for the National Science Foundation (NSF). By recognizing NSF's long-standing gold standard peer review process as well as reducing the administrative burden placed on scientists, this bill strengthens NSF's ability to continue making groundbreaking discoveries. AGU is also thankful that the bill aims to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities within the STEM fields. Our nation's scientific enterprise is strongest when every student interested in science has an opportunity to be supported and encouraged in their field. Additionally, we appreciate the bill's language supporting the value of technical and scientific workshops. Collaboration is

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an essential part of the scientific process and scientific and technical workshops and conferences provide scientists with a valuable opportunity to both understand new developments in their field as well as meet potential collaborators.

Finally, AGU appreciates that the bill seeks to set robust authorization levels for NSF.

Authorization of a four percent increase in funding from FY17 to FY18 will support NSF in continuing to produce world-class research that benefits the economy, national security, and American lives. We also encourage the Senate to consider a longer authorization that can safeguard predictable funding for NSF. Reliable, long term support that will not erode when adjusted for inflation is critical for science that often occurs over several years or even decades.

We strongly support the Committee's efforts to create a bipartisan bill that advances scientific discovery and STEM education in America. Legislation that strengthens our nation's research and development not only maintains America's global leadership in innovation, but also keeps our economy, public health, and national security strong. We greatly appreciate your work in crafting such a strong bill for STEM, and we look forward to continue working with you in ensuring a bright future for our country's scientific enterprise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine W. McEntee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine W. McEntee
Executive Director/CEO
American Geophysical Union