

7 October 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith, Chairman  
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

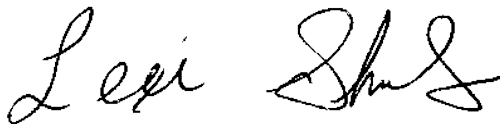
On behalf of the American Geophysical Union's (AGU) more than 60,000 members - Earth and space scientists striving to advance scientific research for the benefit of humanity - I would like to express our concerns regarding the *Scientific Research in the National Interest Act* (H.R. 3293). We encourage you and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee to take additional time to evaluate the unintended consequences of this bill before passing it out of committee.

In 2014, NSF updated its Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide to require that NSF's merit review process examine "both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission 'to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes.'"<sup>1</sup> To enhance transparency and accountability, NSF requires award abstracts to include a public justification that articulates the value of the research to the national interest.

Given the steps NSF has taken to ensure that the Foundation's grant funding is awarded to research that furthers the national interest, we're concerned that H.R. 3293 is merely an additional administrative burden on NSF and scientist recipients with no additional assurances of government accountability. The NSF merit review process has remained the gold standard for scientific peer review and has driven American excellence in science and innovation for decades.

We look forward to continuing to work with you in strengthening the American scientific enterprise.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Shultz  
Director, Public Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> Proposal and Awards Policies and Procedures Guide, December 2014, NSF,  
[http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf15001/nsf15\\_1.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf15001/nsf15_1.pdf).