

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. President:

When you unveiled your American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) in February of 2006, you stated, "Federal investment in research and development has proved critical to keeping America's economy strong by generating knowledge and tools upon which new technologies are developed." We agreed with you then, we still agree with you, and we were heartened by your remarks during last evening's State of the Union address. We have been strong advocates of the ACI since its inception, and we commend you for your continued commitment to increasing the federal government's investment in the scientific research critical to America's economic growth and competitiveness.

Unfortunately, Congress failed to match your commitment in each of the last two years, providing less than you requested for the science agencies critical to the ACI. The impact of the fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations bill on one such agency, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science, is particularly troubling. Overall, the budget for the DOE Office of Science – excluding \$125 million in earmarked funds in the fiscal year 2008 omnibus – increased at a rate less than inflation. Funding for a number of programs, including High Energy Physics and the U.S. contribution to the international fusion experiment ITER, declined significantly or were cut altogether.

The unfortunate consequences of the severe underfunding in the omnibus are many. It signals to the world that the U.S. is a fickle partner in scientific collaborations. It limits American access to the scientific results of projects like ITER, and jeopardizes international contributions to U.S.-based projects such as the International Linear Collider (ILC). It forced the DOE Office of Science to announce that it will have to furlough or layoff over 550 scientists, engineers, and technical and administrative support staff at our national laboratories, leading to the permanent loss of this expertise. It means the DOE Office of Science will not be able to support 90-100 postdoctoral fellows and graduate students at the labs, and possibly up to 500 postdoctoral fellows at American universities, sending the wrong message to America's youth that studies and careers in science and math are fraught with uncertainty. It leaves the DOE Office of Science with little choice but to shutter a number of unique facilities used by industry, academic, and government scientists, and curtail the operation of other user facilities by 20 to 25 percent, forcing many U.S. companies to conduct their research at overseas facilities with similar capabilities.

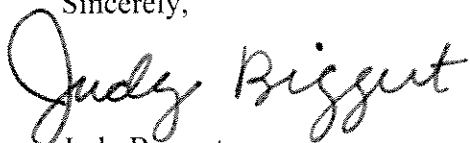
These unfortunate consequences can be reversed. We strongly urge you to include \$300 million in your fiscal year 2008 emergency supplemental appropriations request for the DOE Office of Science and the research, scientists and engineers, unique user facilities, and international collaborations that it supports.

This supplemental funding addresses a real emergency – the permanent loss of key scientific personnel and the degradation of America’s leadership in science. It would avert the layoff of some of the nation’s best scientists and engineers at a time when there is a bipartisan commitment to stimulating the economy and taking the steps necessary to avoid a recession. While the continued employment of these scientists will stimulate the economy in the short-term, their research will contribute greatly to America’s *long-term* economic growth, competitiveness, and job creation.

This supplemental funding also will maximize the run-time of user facilities at our national laboratories, making the most of past U.S. investments in unique, one-of-a-kind facilities that are critical to innovation in industry and academia. It will renew our commitment to international scientific projects like ITER and the ILC, and will help the U.S. retain its leadership in the field of High Energy Physics. Finally, your request of supplemental funding for the DOE Office of Science will send a message to young Americans pursuing – or thinking of pursuing – degrees and careers in science, math, and technology that their President recognizes how invaluable their knowledge and expertise are to the future security and competitiveness of our nation.

Mr. President, including \$300 million for the DOE Office of Science in your fiscal year 2008 emergency supplemental request is consistent with your efforts to stimulate the economy and achieve the goals of your visionary American Competitiveness Initiative. We strongly urge you to make this request, and are prepared to support it as the supplemental appropriations bill makes its way through Congress. Please contact us if we can be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,



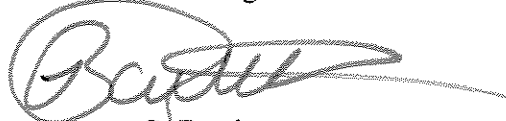
Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



Ralph M. Hall
Member of Congress



Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress



Roscoe G. Bartlett
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Jim Nussle, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Jack Marburger, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
The Honorable Samuel Bodman, Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy
The Honorable Raymond Orbach, Under Secretary of Science, Department of Energy
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable David Hobson, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development