

April 29, 2020

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
Office of the Speaker H-232  
US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi:

America's scientific research enterprise – both public and private – is the most robust in the world and a national asset for economic growth and national security. However, at a time when Congress, the Administration, and state and local leaders are relying on this national asset to find solutions to end this crisis, our nation's research enterprise is in peril.

The COVID-19 crisis has severely impacted nearly every part of America's scientific enterprise, from the private sector to our colleges, universities and medical schools to our federally supported research facilities and national laboratories. While it is impossible to determine the full ramifications of the pandemic at this time, it has already resulted in a dramatic reduction of non-COVID-19 related research activity across the country, stymied our ability to retain and train our STEM workforce, and slowed down or stopped research projects of national importance. Many of these concerns are also captured in an April 7 [research relief letter](#) to Congress from several higher education associations.

Congress must take decisive actions to address the short- and long-term impacts of this nationwide ramp-down and shuttering of labs. As the leaders of XX coalitions – representing more than YY organizations committed to ensuring the vitality of the U.S. innovation ecosystem – we want to offer to work together to develop the legislative packages necessary to safely restart and strengthen America's R&D engine.

With this in mind, we offer a set of recommendations concerning our research enterprise broadly for any future legislative packages aimed at addressing, mitigating and recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, we believe the

following three areas should be addressed by Congress in future coronavirus response or economic stimulus supplementals:

**Significantly Increase Scientific Research Funding Across Federal Science**

**Agencies:** An essential part of any economic stimulus must be to strengthen the nation's commitment to the broad, critical scientific research that will enable our effective responses to COVID-19, prevent future health pandemics, and restore our vibrant economy. The scientific research enterprise's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is this era's Manhattan project and requires collaboration across all scientific disciplines – from supercomputing to identifying novel treatments, to advanced photonics to characterize the virus—all scientific disciplines are needed, and both the public and private sectors must continue to collaborate on research.

Congress should provide federal science agencies increased support for direct research programs broadly, in addition to the funding already provided by the CARES Act to specific programs dedicated to fighting and ultimately curing COVID-19. This increase would enable federal agencies to award the supplemental funding necessary to restart labs and experiments and also award current grantees full or partial cost extensions, as necessary. Many researchers will need ramp-up funding to restart their research once their labs reopen and additional funding to complete their grants' original scopes of work due to time lost and resources spent during the crisis.

**Maintain and Grow our STEM Workforce:** Our coalitions are particularly concerned about the acute economic impacts of the pandemic on students, scholars and early career researchers, as well as the pipeline of this STEM talent to the US private sector. As scientists enter an increasingly hamstrung economy and uncertain job market, the expansion of traineeship, fellowship and internship opportunities will be integral to support the human capital at the core of the American research enterprise. By investing in and extending the length of eligibility for key programs – as well as backfilling and bridging existing support – Congress can help patch leaks in the STEM talent pipeline.

**Invest in Essential Infrastructure:** Congress should invest in our nation's aging research infrastructure – the large-scale research facilities, dedicated laboratory buildings and advanced scientific equipment that enable scientific breakthroughs and discoveries central to our global competitiveness and national security. Investing in our research infrastructure would immediately spur our economy,

creating jobs across the construction and manufacturing sectors. Such investments would also enable new discoveries and innovations with associated economic benefits, paying dividends for decades to come.

Thank you for your leadership at this time of great national crisis. Your bipartisan efforts to swiftly pass three major bills in response to the health and economic challenges facing our country clearly demonstrate that we all stand united in the fight against COVID-19. This fight will be an ongoing challenge, and the federal government will need to continue making the investments necessary to jumpstart and strengthen our economy and prevent future pandemics.

We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to increase our national commitment to the U.S. research enterprise and ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in science, technology and innovation.

Sincerely,