Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2008

Physical Sciences Research
Critical to American Innovation and Competitiveness

Support Funding for the DOE Office of Science in Fiscal Year 2009

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in supporting increased funding for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science by signing the attached letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee.

There is broad, bipartisan agreement that investing in research and development is critical to innovation and our national competitiveness. Report after report – from the National Academy of Sciences and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology to the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation and the Council on Competitiveness – has called on Congress and the President to invest in U.S. research capabilities.

That's why Congressional Democrats, Republicans, and President Bush have all proposed to double federal funding for basic research in the physical sciences over five to ten years. Providing over 40 percent of total federal funding for basic physical sciences research – more than any other federal agency – the DOE Office of Science is the nation's primary supporter of research in the physical sciences.

Unfortunately, Congress failed to fulfill this commitment in the Fiscal Year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill. Excluding earmarks, funding for the DOE Office of Science increased at a rate less than inflation. As a result, hundreds of scientists were furloughed or laid off, operations were reduced by 20 to 25 percent at scientific facilities that serve industry, academic, and government researchers, and U.S. participation in certain international research projects was suspended.

To renew our commitment to achieving the shared, bipartisan goal to double funding for basic physical sciences research, we invite you to sign the attached letter. We also ask that all cosigners to the letter include the DOE Office of Science among the programmatic requests they submit to the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee. We will provide you with the information necessary to make this request.

If you would like to sign this letter or if you have any questions, please contact Paul Doucette with Rep. Biggert (5-3515), Simon Limage with Rep. Tauscher (5-1880), Andrea Burgess with Rep. Holt (5-5801), or Eleen Trang with Rep. Lofgren (5-3072). **Our deadline for signatures is Tuesday, March 18, 2008.**

Sincerely,

Judy Biggert
Member of Congress

Ellen Tauscher
Member of Congress

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Signatories to FY08 Letter: Abercrombie; Allen; Altmire; Baca; Baldwin; Bean; Becerra; Berman; Biggert; Bishop; Blumenauer; Boswell; Boyda; Burgess; Capps; Capuano; Christensen; Cleaver; Cohen; Courtney; Davis (IL); Davis (TN); Davis (CA); Delahunt; DeLauro; Dent; Dicks; Dingell; Doggett; Donnelly; Doyle; Duncan; Ehlers; Ellison; Engel; Eshoo; Etheridge; Filner; Forbes; Fortenberry; Frank; Gerlach; Giffords; Gillibrand; Gonzalez; Green; Gutierrez; Hare; Harman; Hastings; Hastings; Herseth-Sandlin; Hinchey; Hinojosa; Hodes; Holden; Holt; Honda; Hooley; Inslee; Jackson- Lee; Johnson (TX); Johnson (IL); Kagen; Kennedy; Kildee; Kind; Klein; Lampson; Lantos; Larsen; Levin; Lewis; Lipinski; Loebsack; Lofgren; Mahoney; Maloney; Markey; Matsui; McCarthy; McCaul; McDermott; McGovern; McMorris-Rodgers; McNerney; McNulty; Michaud; Miller (NC); Miller (CA); Mitchell; Moore; Nadler; Norton; Oberstar; Pascrell; Paul; Payne; Perlmutter; Porter; Price; Roskam; Rush; Sarbanes; Saxton; Schakowsky; Schwartz; Scott; Shays; Shea-Porter; Shimkus; Snyder; Sutton; Tauscher; Tierney; VanHollen; Velazquez; Walz; Wamp; Wilson; Wu; Wynn

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chairman
Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
2362 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Hobson
Ranking Member
Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Hobson:

As you begin your work on the Fiscal Year 2009 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science, and urge you to include $4.7 billion in the bill for the research and facilities it supports. This funding is consistent with the level authorized in the America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) and equals the level requested by the President in his fiscal year 2009 budget proposal.

As part of their innovation and competitiveness initiatives, Congressional Democrats, Republicans, and President Bush have proposed doubling federal funding for basic research in the physical sciences over five to ten years. Unfortunately, the fiscal year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill did not fulfill this commitment. Excluding earmarks, funding for the DOE Office of Science, which supports over 40 percent of total federal funding for basic physical sciences research – more than any other federal agency – increased at a rate less than inflation. As a result, hundreds of scientists were furloughed or laid off, operations were reduced by 20 to 25 percent at scientific facilities that serve industry, academic, and government researchers, and U.S. participation in certain international research projects was suspended. Providing $4.7 billion for the DOE Office of Science in fiscal year 2009 is critical if we are to renew our commitment to achieving our shared, bipartisan goal.

We face a world in which our economic competitors in Asia and Europe are making significant new investments in their own research capabilities. These investments are beginning to pay off, as Asian and European countries challenge U.S. leadership in the sciences no matter how it is measured – by number of patents won, articles submitted to scientific journals, degrees awarded, Nobel prizes won, or the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dedicated to research and development.

Report after report – from the National Academy of Sciences and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology to the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation and the Council on Competitiveness – has called on Congress and the President to invest in U.S. research capabilities. The benefits of such an investment to the U.S. economy and U.S. competitiveness are well known. Economic experts have concluded that science-driven technology has accounted for more than 50 percent of the growth of the U.S. economy during the last half-century.

Even as we face greater international competition, these are exciting times for science in the United States. There are many great opportunities for scientific discovery, and with adequate funding, the DOE Office of Science will ensure the U.S. retains its dominance in such key scientific fields as biotechnology, nanotechnology, materials science, and supercomputing well into the next century. Leadership in these areas will benefit our health, our environment, our economy, and our national security. And through critical new investments in biofuels research and basic energy science, the DOE Office of Science will continue to play a vital role in developing the knowledge and the technologies essential to ensuring the nation's future energy security.

U.S. scientists are as bright as any in the world, but they traditionally have had better tools than everyone else. The DOE Office of Science has led the way in creating a unique system of large-scale, specialized user facilities for scientific discovery. This collection of cutting-edge – often one-of-a-kind – tools makes the DOE Office of Science a unique and critical component of the federal science portfolio. Other federal science agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), greatly depend upon these DOE Office of Science facilities in carrying out their own research activities. Under the President's budget, 21,500 researchers would have access to these DOE facilities. Nearly half of those users will be university faculty and students – many whose research is being supported by other federal agencies – and a significant number will be from U.S. industry.

For these many reasons, we urge you to appropriate at least $4.7 billion – an increase of almost $750 million over fiscal year 2008 funding – for the DOE Office of Science and the physical sciences research it supports. Furthermore, we urge you to focus this funding on mission-related activities and facilities, and to avoid using core DOE research program budgets to fund extraneous projects. With this funding, the DOE Office of Science will attract the best minds, educate the next generation of scientists and engineers, support the construction and operation of modern facilities, and conduct even more of the quality scientific research that will ensure the U.S. retains its competitive edge for many years to come.

Thanks for your consideration. We are cognizant of the difficult budget situation under which your subcommittee is working, and we urge you to contact us if we may be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,