



TASK FORCE ON AMERICAN INNOVATION

October 16, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
722 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye:

The members of the Task Force on American Innovation, a coalition of companies, universities and scientific societies committed to increasing the federal investment in scientific research, urge your strong support for scientific research in the final FY 2010 Defense Appropriations bill (H.R. 3326). Specifically, we would ask that you provide funding for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the National Defense Education Program (NDEP), and basic (6.1) research at least at the levels included in the House-passed bill. The House levels would bring these programs up to, or closer to, the levels requested by the Administration.

As you know, DARPA has served as the central research arm of the Department of Defense (DOD) for over 50 years, driving innovation that has strengthened America's strategic advantage, powered our economy, and improved our quality of life. DARPA supported the basic research underpinning the development of the Internet, modern computing, GPS, semiconductor manufacturing, and stealth technologies -- and is working now across the disciplines to perfect prosthetics, revolutionize manufacturing, and develop entirely new tools to communicate, as well as a host of other technologies to serve the warfighter and benefit society.

The members of the Task Force on American Innovation are concerned about the depth of proposed cuts made to DARPA by the Senate bill. We recognize that DARPA has not fully executed the funds that it has been provided by Congress in recent years. We would note, however, that DARPA's new leadership has committed itself to significant changes in how DARPA is managed and how DARPA funds are utilized. In fact, we have already begun to see changes in DARPA operations that we believe will address the concerns of both Congress and the research community.

We are especially concerned that the Senate-proposed funding reductions could impede DARPA's ability to execute new start programs. Given the change in DARPA's leadership, we believe Congress should provide DARPA with the ability it has had in the past to fund new starts. We respect Congress' important oversight role, and we hope that you can substitute an alternative means of ensuring accountability in the final version of the legislation.

We also urge support for the \$20 million increase over FY 2009 requested by the Administration and approved by the House for the NDEP. The increase would bring overall funding for this program to \$90 million.

NDEP's Science, Mathematics, and Research Transformation (SMART) scholarship for service program has been significantly oversubscribed by undergraduate and graduate students. Therefore, each year the Department is unable to support many qualified applicants who are willing to pursue academic fields critical to national security and, at the same time, make a commitment to work for DOD upon completion of their degrees. The requested funding would help DOD to meet this demand and support other important NDEP programs.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this important matter and thank you for your past support of the important basic scientific research sponsored by the DOD.

Sincerely,

The Task Force on American Innovation

Agilent Technologies

ASTRA

American Chemical Society

American Institute of Physics

American Mathematical Society

American Physical Society

American Society for Engineering Education

American Statistical Association

Applied Materials, Inc

ASME

Association of American Universities

Association for Computing Machinery

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Battelle

Business Roundtable

CompTIA

Computing Research Association

Council on Competitiveness

Google

IBM

IEEE-USA

Intel

Luna Innovations

Materials Research Society

Microsoft

National Association of Manufacturers

National Center for Women & Information Technology

National User Facility Organization

Northrop Grumman Corporation

Procter & Gamble

The Science Coalition

Semiconductor Industry Association

Semiconductor Research Corporation

Southeastern Universities Research Association

TechAmerica

Telecommunications Industry Association

Texas Instruments, Inc