

August 21, 2015

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gardner and Peters,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the scientific community's priorities for the reauthorization for the America COMPETES Act.

Scientific research is an important engine that powers our nation's economic growth. The National Science Foundation (NSF) is the federal agency that supports the fundamental scientific research that is the foundation upon which we build knowledge and inspire innovation. Through competitive, peer-reviewed research grants, the NSF funds discoveries that will help to solve the most challenging problems facing society. NSF research, education, and training programs lead to new patents, prepare a highly skilled workforce, and stimulate the creation of new jobs. Many of the groundbreaking ideas that have enhanced the nation's economic competitiveness or improved the quality of our lives have grown from NSF-funded research.

These efforts, however, require a sustained federal investment. Unpredictable annual swings in federal funding disrupt research programs, create uncertainty in the research community, and stall the development of the next great idea. Funding for basic research has been stagnant in recent years, particularly when adjusted for inflation. Given the importance of research and development to our economic growth and global competitiveness, Congress should make new, multi-year investments in NSF.

We encourage the Committee to pursue a reauthorization bill that builds on the following principles:

- NSF should maintain its focus on fundamental discovery. The agency's mission should not be driven towards commercial outcomes.
- Reauthorization of the NSF should outline a path for new investments. Sustained growth in funding is needed for programs that support basic research and science education.
- Congress should recognize the unique role of NSF as the only agency supporting the full breadth of scientific research and education.

- Congress should not pick winners and losers among NSF research programs. The National Science Board and leadership of the NSF must retain the authority and nimbleness to allocate funding among the disciplines.
- Legislation should support the existing merit review system. NSF's peer review system has a proven track record of supporting high quality research that advances our knowledge and leads to solutions for the challenges facing modern society.

Again, we thank you for your leadership on this issue and hope that this and other science-related legislation might move through the Senate in a bipartisan way.

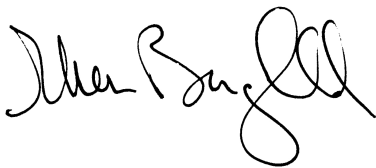
Sincerely,



Robert Gropp, Ph.D.  
Interim Co-Executive Director  
American Institute of Biological Sciences



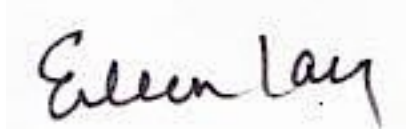
Scott M. Lanyon, Ph.D.  
President  
American Ornithologists' Union



Ellen Bergfeld, Ph.D.  
CEO  
American Society of Agronomy



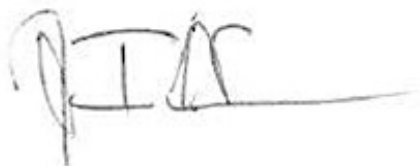
Larry G. Allen, Ph.D.  
President  
American Society of Ichthyologists  
and Herpetologists



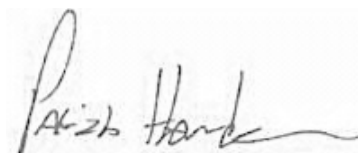
Eileen A. Lacey, Ph.D.  
President  
American Society of Mammalogists



Mark Siddall, Ph.D.  
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American Society of Parasitologists



Julian I. Schroeder, Ph.D.  
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American Society of Plant Biologists



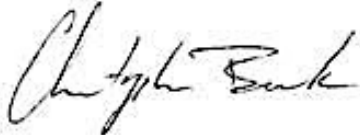
Patrick Herendeen, Ph.D.  
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Olin E. Rhodes, Jr., Ph.D.  
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Christopher Beck, Ph.D.  
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Association for the Sciences of  
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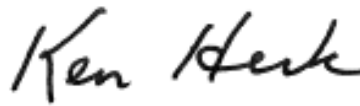
Robin L. Chazdon, Ph.D.  
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Association for Tropical Biology  
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Leonard Krishtalka, Ph.D.  
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Biodiversity Institute  
The University of Kansas



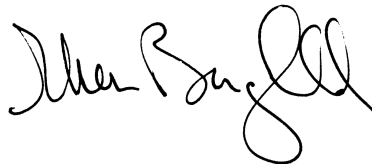
Richard Olmstead, Ph.D.  
President  
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Kenneth L. Heck, Jr., Ph.D.  
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Coastal and Estuarine Research  
Federation



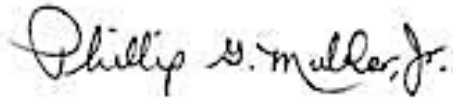
Martin G. Raphael, Ph.D.  
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Monica G. Turner, Ph.D.  
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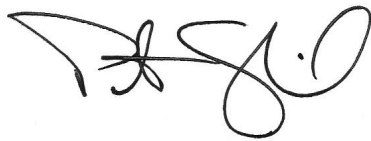
Phillip G. Mulder, Jr., Ph.D.  
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James Hanken, Ph.D.  
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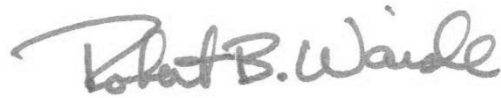
Peter English, Ph.D.  
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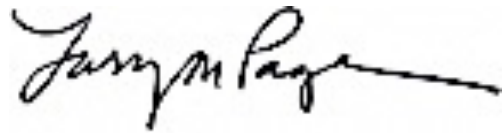
Joseph A. Cook, Ph.D.  
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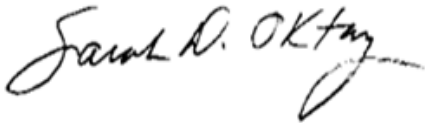
Georgiana May, Ph.D.  
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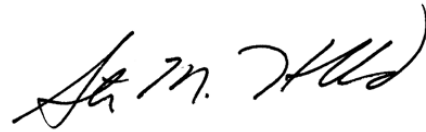
Nancy Rabalais, Ph.D.  
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Natural Science Collections  
Alliance



Sarah D. Oktay, Ph.D.  
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Steven M. Holland, Ph.D.  
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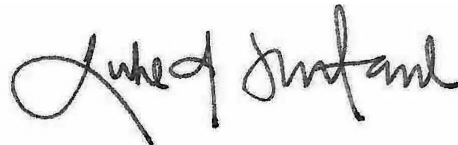
Frederick W. Zechman, Ph.D.  
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Michael Mares, Ph.D.  
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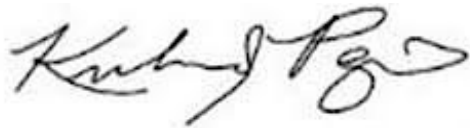


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Executive Director  
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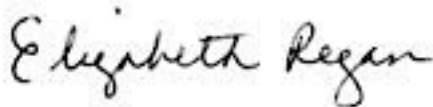


Byron Adams, Ph.D.  
President  
Society of Nematologists


John A. Long, Ph.D.  
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Society of Vertebrate Paleontology



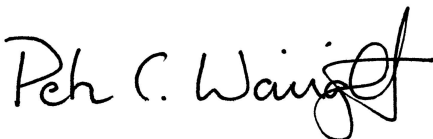
Kimberli Ponzio  
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Elizabeth Adkins-Regan, Ph.D.  
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Cassandra L. Quave, Ph.D.  
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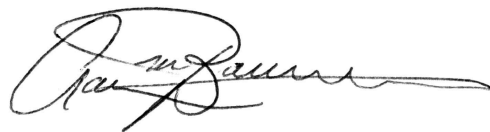
Peter Wainwright, Ph.D.  
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Santiago Schnell, Ph.D.  
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Society for Mathematical Biology



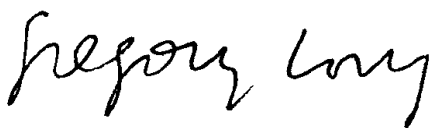
Andrew Bentley, Ph.D.  
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Ellen Bergfeld, Ph.D.  
CEO  
Soil Science Society of America



Gregory Long  
Chief Executive Officer  
The New York Botanical Garden

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Franklin", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Janet Franklin, Ph.D.  
President  
US Regional Association of the International  
Association for Landscape Ecology