August 10, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations Committee  
503 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski,

The undersigned organizations write to express our sincere thanks for highlighting the importance of ensuring that federally employed and contracted scientists and engineers are able to attend mission-relevant scientific and technical conferences during your recent markup of the FY 2016 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act on July 23, 2015.

We greatly appreciate the recognition that existing policies are reducing government scientists’ and engineers’ participation in scientific and technical conferences to the detriment of society as a whole, which benefits from innovations resulting from interactions at these conferences. As highlighted, scientists and engineers at federal agencies, labs, and research institutions currently face significant barriers to attend conferences, which have in turn driven significant increases in the administrative costs of overseeing these activities. Since the implementation of OMB Memo M-12-12, it has become clear through GAO and National Science and Technology Council reporting that existing regulations need to be revisited.

We look forward to working with you further to find a solution that provides OMB the ability to update its guidance and ensures sustained transparency and accountability in federal spending without impacting scientific progress and innovation.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry  
Aerospace Industries Association  
Alliance for Aging Research  
American Anthropological Association  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Immunologists  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Petroleum Geologists  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geophysical Union
American Heart Association
American Helicopter Society
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Neurological Association
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Phytopathological Society
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
American Statistical Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association for Psychological Science
Association of American Universities
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Scientific Society Presidents
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Endocrine Society
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Genetics Society of America
Geological Society of America
Global Health Council
Health Physics Society
HIV Medicine Association
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
IEEE-USA
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Materials Research Society  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Council for Science and the Environment  
National Ground Water Association  
Ornithological Council  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
Society for Research in Child Development  
Soil Science Society of America  
SPIE  
The Optical Society  
The Psychonomic Society  
University of California System  
Weed Science Society of America  

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Richard Shelby  
The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
The Honorable Susan Collins  
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
The Honorable Mark Kirk  
The Honorable Roy Blunt  
The Honorable Jerry Moran  
The Honorable John Hoeven  
The Honorable John Boozman  
The Honorable Shelley Capito  
The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
The Honorable James Lankford  
The Honorable Steve Daines  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Dick Durbin  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Jon Tester  
The Honorable Tom Udall  
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
The Honorable Christopher Coons  
The Honorable Brian Schatz  
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
The Honorable Chris Murphy