November 25, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman  Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee  House Appropriations Committee
S-128 Capitol Building  H-305 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member  Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee  House Appropriations Committee
S-146A Capitol Building  1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Shelby, and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned organizations of the Energy Sciences Coalition representing universities, business and the scientific community, write to urge that you move quickly to complete the FY 2015 appropriation process. As you do, we urge that you assign a high priority to funding for critical scientific research supported by the Department of Energy’s Office of Science and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E).

Federal investment in research – fundamental and high-risk research that won’t otherwise be supported by industry – is the proper role of government. This is exactly the type of research that is conducted by DOE’s Office of Science and ARPA-E. Providing sustained and predictable funding for these two DOE agencies is vitally important to securing our future national energy security, closing our nation’s innovation deficit and maintaining U.S. leadership in key fields of scientific and engineering research.

The DOE Office of Science is the nation’s primary supporter of basic physical sciences research (including high energy and nuclear physics), providing over 47% of total federal support in this area and is also critical to ensuring U.S. leadership in other scientific fields including the biological sciences, advanced materials, computing and engineering. The DOE Office of Science also supports the operation of the largest collection of major scientific user facilities in the world. These user facilities are the backbone of experimental and computational research in the U.S. and are relied upon by over 25,000 scientists from universities, companies, and Federal agencies to conduct their scientific and engineering research. The DOE Office of Science thus plays a critical role in supporting the nation’s scientific and engineering workforce and in advancing the fundamental knowledge underpinning major energy and other technology-related breakthroughs.

The Energy Sciences Coalition (ESC) is a broad based coalition of organizations representing scientists, engineers and mathematicians in universities, industry and national laboratories who are committed to supporting and advancing the scientific research programs of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and in particular, the DOE Office of Science.
Modeled after the highly successful Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), ARPA-E supports high-risk, high-reward research that private industry will not support, but which has the potential to drastically alter how we generate, store, and use energy. ARPA-E focuses on transformational energy technologies that can be meaningfully advanced with a small investment over a defined period of time. Since 2009, ARPA-E has funded more than 350 projects across 38 states. Of these projects, seventeen projects alone have attracted over $450 million in private sector capital after ARPA-E’s initial investment of approximately $70 million.

While we understand the many complexities involved in reaching final agreement on an FY 2015 appropriations package, we would strongly urge you to move swiftly to complete the process. At the very time that our economic competitors in China, India, South Korea, the European Union, and elsewhere are copying our approach to innovation and increasing their rate of investment in basic and energy-related research, now is not the time to further reduce or further delay providing sustained funding for critical U.S. energy research programs. Short term Continuing Resolutions and further delays in completing the Congressional appropriations process will only harm the U.S. scientific enterprise and give the advantage to our economic competitors. We therefore urge you to act now to complete the FY 2015 appropriations process and to ensure stable and sustained FY 2015 funding levels for both the DOE Office of Science and ARPA-E.

Sincerely,

American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Geosciences Institute
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Plant Biologists
Arizona State University
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Battelle
Binghamton University
Boston University
Case Western Reserve University
Clemson University
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation (CASC)
Columbia University
Computing Research Association
Cornell University
Cray Inc.
Crop Science Society of America

Duke University
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Florida State University
Fusion Power Associates
Geological Society of America
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
IBM
Iowa State University
Jefferson Science Associates, LLC
Krell Institute
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Materials Research Society
Michigan State University
Northern Illinois University
Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)
Pace University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Soil Science Society of America
South Dakota School of Mines
Southeastern Universities Research Association
Stanford University  University of Michigan
SUNY at Binghamton  University of North Texas
Tech-X  University of Southern California
The Ohio State University  University of Texas at Austin
University of California System  University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Colorado Boulder  Vanderbilt University
University of Delaware  Washington University in St. Louis
University of Maryland, College Park  West Virginia University

cc:  The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Chairman, Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Michael Simpson, Chairman, House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member, House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee