



Ecological Society of America
1990 M Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

April 21, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
House Science, Space and Technology
Committee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member
House Science, Space and Technology
Committee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the Ecological Society of America, the nation's largest professional society of ecologists with 10,000 members, I write to express concerns with of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 1806) introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on April 15, 2015.

Unfortunately, in Title I, pertaining to the National Science Foundation (NSF), H.R. 1806 includes specific budget authorization levels for each of the individual directorates at NSF. We are concerned about this approach and also the committee's decision to significantly reduce funding levels for two specific directorates: Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences and Geosciences. NSF's research agenda is informed by decadal reports, convening expert workshops, and input from the scientific community. Setting authorization levels by directorate jeopardizes the flexibility that NSF needs to take advantage of unanticipated scientific discoveries and insight.

Other research prioritization that the Society finds problematic is the budget cut for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science's Biological and Environmental Research program. H.R. 1806 would prohibit DOE research from being "used for regulatory assessments or determinations by Federal regulatory authorities." This would hinder the capacity of federal agencies to use scientific research that informs policy decisions.

The Society is also concerned that the legislation does not include specific language to broaden participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) among women and underrepresented minorities. Promoting job creation in science fields is necessary to spur economic growth and sustain our nation's competitiveness. It is vital to utilize every available avenue that would increase participation in STEM fields among American citizens.

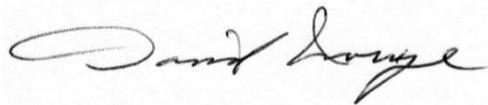
The U.S. system of scientific research has been tremendously successful throughout the years because it has remained insulated from political pressures. Key scientific focus areas have been

determined by federal agencies and guided by the scientific community through a strong system of merit review and advisory committees with research results widely distributed and accessible.

We request that congressional leaders work together in a bipartisan manner to construct an America COMPETES reauthorization bill that allows the United States to innovate and remain globally competitive in the twenty-first century.

On behalf of the nation's ecological science community, thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Inouye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Inouye" clearly legible.

Dr. David W. Inouye
ESA President