



April 21, 2015

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman, Senate Homeland Security and  
Government Affairs Committee  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper  
Ranking Member, Senate Homeland Security  
and Government Affairs Committee  
513 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper,

The undersigned organizations write to express deep concerns about the impact of Administration regulations and legislative initiatives related to government travel on the science and engineering enterprise and the pace of innovation. Collectively, our organizations and institutions represent and support millions of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians—including many who work for the federal government directly or as contractors—across a broad spectrum of disciplines.

A recent [GAO report](#) on the impact of federal conference and travel policies on science and technology—and [subsequent reports](#) in *The Washington Post*—has highlighted the stark reduction in government employee participation in conferences; the risks to U.S. leadership in science and engineering; and the increased administrative burden of these policies. We urge you to work with federal agencies and the scientific community to ensure that any further legislative action does not place additional red tape and administrative burdens on the U.S. science and engineering enterprise.

Current policies are reducing government scientists' and engineers' participation in scientific and technical conferences while the administrative cost of overseeing these activities has *increased* significantly. In particular, government scientists and engineers often wait many months to receive approval to participate in conferences, sometimes obtaining it just days before a conference. The bureaucratic delays prevent many government scientists and engineers from accepting key speaking roles and lead to increased travel costs associated with last-minute bookings. Further, the reductions in participation threaten the quality of research at federal labs, the stature of U.S. science on the global stage, and agencies' abilities to recruit and retain the best and brightest researchers in their fields.

The formal and informal interactions that take place at scientific and technical conferences are a crucial part of the innovation process and help to maximize the return on taxpayer investment in scientific research. Whether providing rapid pathways for bringing scientific advances to bear on societal needs, spurring new collaborations that promote exciting interdisciplinary investigations, or simply providing cost-effective venues for scientific program management and oversight, scientific conferences are crucial to the efficient functioning of our innovation ecosystem and maximizing the return on federal investments in science.

We stand ready to work with you and officials throughout the government to find a solution that ensures transparency and accountability in federal spending without impacting scientific progress and innovation.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
Academy of General Dentistry  
Academy of Radiology Research  
AcademyHealth  
Acoustical Society of America  
Alliance for Aging Research  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Anthropological Association  
American Association for Dental Research  
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 Dairy Science Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Geophysical Union  
American Heart Association  
American Helicopter Society  
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Institute of Physics  
American Mathematical Society  
American Neurological Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Physical Society  
American Physiological Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Society for Civil Engineers  
The American Society of Dermatopathology  
American Society for Engineering Education  
American Society for Investigative Pathology

**American Association for the Advancement of Science**  
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American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
American Thoracic Society  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Aquatic Plant Management Society  
ASME  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association for Computing Machinery  
Association of Independent Research Institutes  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association for Molecular Pathology  
Association for Psychological Science  
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities  
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography  
AVS: Science and Technology of Materials, Interfaces, and Processing  
Battelle  
Biophysical Society  
Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies  
Cognitive Science Society  
Computing Research Association  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Consortium for Ocean Leadership  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Consortium of Universities for Global Health  
Council of Scientific Society Presidents  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Crop Science Society of America  
Ecological Society of America  
Endocrine Society  
Entomological Society of America  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Federation of Animal Science Societies  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences  
Friends of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research  
Genetics Society of America  
Geological Society of America  
Global Health Council  
Health Physics Society

HIV Medicine Association  
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society  
IEEE-USA  
Industrial Research Institute  
Infectious Diseases Society of America Center for Global Health Policy  
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium  
IPC – Association Connecting Electronics Industries  
Materials Research Society  
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Council for Science and the Environment  
National Disease Research Interchange  
National Ground Water Association  
North Central Weed Science Society  
Northeastern Weed Science Society  
The Optical Society  
Ornithological Council  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Poultry Science Association  
The Psychonomic Society  
Research!America  
Semiconductor Research Corporation  
Society for Conservation Biology  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Research in Child Development  
Society for Women’s Health Research  
Soil Science Society of America  
Southern Weed Science Society  
SPIE  
University of California System  
University of Missouri System  
University of Oregon  
Weed Science Society of America  
Western Society of Weed Science  
The Wildlife Society  
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

CC: The Honorable John McCain  
The Honorable Rob Portman  
The Honorable Rand Paul  
The Honorable James Lankford  
The Honorable Mike Enzi

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The Honorable Kelly Ayotte  
The Honorable Joni Ernst  
The Honorable Benjamin Sasse  
The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
The Honorable Jon Tester  
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp  
The Honorable Cory Booker  
The Honorable Gary Peters