



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

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November 20, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice Chairwoman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-305 US Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the Ecological Society of America, the world's largest society of professional ecologists, we commend Congress for crafting the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which prevents harmful cuts to discretionary spending for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017. As you allocate the additional funds made available under the law, **we urge you to make strong investments in federal agencies that conduct ecological research and programs by at least 5.2 percent above FY 2015 levels**—the same level of increase to discretionary spending. Sequestration and the failure of federal research and development funding to keep pace with inflation in recent years jeopardize America's standing as a global leader in scientific research and innovation.

The primary federal funding source for the ecological research community is the National Science Foundation (NSF). We respectfully request that you continue to fund NSF research and related activities without prioritizing certain directorates over others. NSF allocates 90 percent of its research funding through a merit review process as grants or cooperative agreements to individual researchers and groups at colleges, universities, academic consortia, nonprofit institutions, and small business. It is the only federal agency that supports research in all scientific fields.

The US Geological Survey plays a critical role in monitoring and assessing environmental challenges that threaten public safety and the health of our ecosystems. Research conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration promotes habitat restoration efforts for our nation's coasts and wetlands while simultaneously preserving biodiversity and conserving the scenic beauty for some of our nation's most treasured areas. Ecologists at the Agricultural Research Service help food producers address issues related to water quality, erosion, invasive species, and soil conservation.

The Society hopes that Congress can reach a bipartisan appropriations agreement that is free of provisions that would circumvent environmental assessments, impede climate change research or make determinations for endangered species listings that bypass the collaborative process involving researchers, state and local resource managers, and input from the general public. It is important to maintain federal agencies' capacity to provide the best available science to inform policy decisions.

We are grateful for your enduring commitment towards sustained investment in scientific research. The Society anticipates this support will continue through the new fiscal year and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica G. Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monica Turner  
ESA President