April 7, 2022

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt,

As the Subcommittee begins deliberations on the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) writes to respectfully urge that the National Science Foundation (NSF) receive an appropriation of at least $11 billion in FY23.

CNSF is an alliance of over 140 professional organizations, universities, and businesses, who are united by a commitment to the future vitality of the national science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise of the United States.

NSF needs critical resources in FY23 for the U.S. to support a thriving science and technology ecosystem and address major priorities such as technology innovation, climate change, and diversifying the future STEM workforce. Bipartisan majorities in Congress have noted the incredible importance of NSF to our nation’s competitiveness and national security and called for major growth to NSF funding. NSF needs a substantial increase in its budget to achieve the goals envisioned in the America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology, and Economic Strength (COMPETES) Act and the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), including the recently established Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships, which is designed to address the foremost challenges that society and the economy face today.

We ask Congress to make bold investments in the NSF this year, setting the agency on a course to advance domestic innovation and to keep pace with investments other countries are making in research and development. According to the National Science Board’s (NSB) 2022 Science and Engineering Indicators, “the annual increase of China’s R&D, averaging 10.6 percent annually from 2010 to 2019, continues to greatly exceed that of the United States, with an annual average of 5.4 percent from 2010 to 2019. Consequently, the share of global R&D performed by the United States declined from 29 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2019, whereas the share by
China increased from 15 percent to 22 percent.”¹ Strong support for NSF in FY23 will provide crucial resources and attention to advancements in rapidly evolving technologies and is an indispensable element of the federal government’s strategy to improve competitiveness and support national security.

NSF is well prepared to take on the enhanced competitiveness mission envisioned in Congressional innovation legislation and ramp up its investments in critical science and technology areas should it be given the resources to do so. Every year, NSF declines thousands of research ideas, and in fiscal year 2020, almost $4 billion worth of those proposals were rated very good but declined due to inadequate resources. As the National Science Board (NSB) notes, “…these declined proposals represent a rich portfolio of unfunded opportunities – proposals that, if funded, may have produced substantial research and education benefits.”²

Funding of at least $11 billion in FY23 would allow NSF to:

- Expand the **geography of innovation** and build research capacity at emerging research institutions to ensure NSF funding and research benefits regions, from rural to urban, across the country;
- Increase **diversity, equity, and inclusion** in the sciences and engineering through programs to attract and retain historically underrepresented groups in academia and knowledge- and technology- intensive industries, including support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions. According to the 2022 Science and Engineering Indicators³, Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians or Alaska Natives remain underrepresented among S&E degree recipients in almost all fields and degree levels relative to their representation in the general population;
- Empower tomorrow’s **STEM workforce**, through NSF’s K-12 STEM education, undergraduate and graduate education and training, education research, broadening participation, and informal education programs. These programs are the most powerful tool to build our domestic talent base and ensure our competitive edge while other nations are increasing investing in developing their own STEM workforces;
- Continue recovering from and **fighting against the coronavirus**. NSF investments – made over decades – in numerous technologies continue to be deployed to fight the coronavirus. For example, advances in artificial intelligence and big data allow researchers to map the spread of the coronavirus and share data with healthcare professionals, state and local leaders, and the public. NSF-supported research in molecular biology and microscopy contributed to the development of COVID vaccines. NSF engineering, social and behavioral science work underpins our vaccine delivery

technology and public understanding of risk. NSF is playing a key role in rebuilding our economy after the pandemic and ensure that we are better prepared for the next public health crisis; and

- Ensure that NSF’s support for scientific facilities and research infrastructure continue to provide cutting edge equipment to train the workforce our country needs to innovate, educate, and manufacture. NSF-supported facilities are the bedrock of many scientific disciplines, including the construction of groundbreaking telescopes, delivering the future of high-performance computing infrastructure, and pioneering fundamental physics experiments. NSF could also play a significant role, as it did in previous economic recovery periods, in investing in academic research facilities modernization.

We urge your support to ensure that the National Science Foundation receives at least $11 billion for FY2023. Thank you for considering our views. Please do not hesitate to let us know how CNSF can be a resource as you move forward with the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for National Science Funding

Identical letter to: Chair Shaheen and Ranking Member Moran