

February 24, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We are writing on behalf of the Science & Technology Action Committee, a group of non-profit, academic, foundation, and corporate leaders who have come together to advocate for a [plan](#) that would dramatically boost and strategically leverage our nation's investment and commitment to science and technology (S&T). We deeply appreciate the bold actions you have already taken in this regard, in particular the elevation of the Science Adviser to the Cabinet-level.

Consistent with those actions, we request that you incorporate a funding increase of at least **\$35 billion** across our nation's S&T agencies to support R&D activities, as part of your Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget, and couple that investment with **\$1 billion** in mandatory funding for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

Incorporating discretionary spending growth of \$35 billion for R&D in FY22 would serve as the first critical installment of an historic five-year doubling in federal investment as a percentage of GDP. This request is in-line with your campaign pledge to dramatically boost our nation's investment in R&D. In addition, providing \$1 billion in mandatory funding for OSTP would empower highly coordinated, cross-agency, cross-sector partnerships aimed at formidable threats to the health, security, and wellbeing of the American people and populations across the globe.

If there is any enduring good to come from COVID-19, it will derive from the wisdom we gain and manifest in how we apply that wisdom. Will we emerge from this pandemic as a nation that boldly confronts, or continues to passively abide, the existential threats in our sightline?

Your actions to date, Mr. President, place our nation on the path to leveraging science & technology as never before to out-innovate such formidable challenges to our nation and the global community as:

- Public health threats ranging from the uncertain path of COVID-19 to pandemics to the erosion of our antibiotics supply and the ever-growing death toll from threats like cancer, Alzheimer's, suicide, opioid addiction, sickle cell anemia and on, and on. Imbedded in racial and ethnic disparities in health and healthcare is the grim reality that the scientific progress we have achieved is not reaching everyone, engendering needless suffering and deaths. S&T is part of that solution, too
- Environmental and natural resource threats ranging from the manifestations of climate change and disruption to water, food and energy security
- National threats ranging from extreme breaches in social justice and ever more acute disparities in economic opportunity that flout our national identity and self-limit our

innovative capacity, to faltering global economic competitiveness that jeopardizes American prosperity and the strength of our voice in the global arena

- Racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and gender-based inequities that disrupt the cohesion of our democracy and self-limit our nation's legacy of success built on diversity
- Domestic shortfalls in critical technologies vital for national security

Further, our nation's leadership and even our basic competitiveness in the global economic arena can no longer be taken for granted. In recent decades we have slipped to 10th in R&D as a share of GDP, and 14th in publicly supported R&D. Other nations are working methodically to bolster their science and technology capacity and talent, utilizing those strengths to create and capture new export markets, attract outside investment, grow jobs and manufacturing, fuel prosperity, and increase their international influence. In fact, China recently overtook the U.S. to become the #1 destination for foreign investment. We must invest in ourselves, and set our sights on assuring the U.S. and our planet not only survive, but thrive in the years ahead.

We believe that two bold actions, in addition to those you have already executed, will best position the U.S. to foresee, preempt, and defeat threats to our nation and world.

Double the percentage of GDP invested in Science and Technology Now is the moment to grow our investment in R&D such that it reaches at least **1.4%** of GDP annually by 2026, investing at least **\$35 billion** in FY22. As you know, other nations have witnessed the role S&T has played in our nation's progressive path, and many are not only methodically growing their S&T investments, but building out their pipeline of scientists and engineers and actively working to attract foreign S&T investment and businesses. Under your leadership, our nation can re-ignite S&T as the fuel for a better future.

\$1 billion in mandatory funding to OSTP The Office of Science and Technology is ideally positioned to coordinate and leverage the individual efforts of S&T agencies across the federal government and establish partnerships with the private sector to target individual threats in a strategic, efficient manner. The \$1 billion in resources, similar to the "common fund" at the National Institutes of Health, would enable OSTP to seed these strategic partnerships.

These new funds could be leveraged by the existing National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), which operates under the auspices of OSTP. We propose that the NSTC would employ four coordinators, each charged with oversight of one of four National Initiatives: 1) Public Health and Healthcare 2) Environment and Climate Change 3) Food and Water Security and 4) Energy Storage, Production, and Utilization. Each would receive sufficient mandatory funding (initially, we suggest \$250M each, totaling \$1B, which is less than 0.7% of the federal R&D allocation) to incentivize, integrate and enhance cooperative mechanisms and programs across S&T-relevant department and agency boundaries as well as STEM education, and additionally to attract participation from the private sector.

If the U.S. prioritizes and elevates science and technology in these pivotal ways, we can bring about a future that seems a world away from today's reality. We could be well-prepared for future pandemics, potentially heading off the next infectious scourge. We could reverse the decline in life expectancy, a decline that began even before COVID-19 arrived. Alzheimer's could become history. Sustainable farming and crop production would serve people and the

environment. Cleaner energy production could begin to meet the scale of need. The nation's innovators could harness new research infrastructure to drive advanced industries for U.S. competitiveness. Science is the U.S. government's best ally. Renewed investment, coupled with proactive efforts to innovate new solutions, can empower our nation to overcome threats to Americans and people across the globe.

Please call on any [member of the committee](#) if we can answer questions or be of assistance as you consider this request. Thank you, Mr. President, for your vision, leadership, and public service during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Sudip Parikh, Co-Chair
CEO, AAAS



Mary Woolley, Co-Chair
President & CEO,
Research!America



Keith R. Yamamoto, Co-Chair
Vice Chancellor for Science
Policy & Strategy, UCSF