

# Basic research critical to America's economic recovery

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The Science Coalition (TSC) today urged Congress to move swiftly to pass economic recovery legislation that includes strong funding for key science agencies including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy Office of Science (DOE), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). While the House-passed version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included vital investments for these agencies, those funding levels were decreased in the Senate-passed version.

To prove the link between research and economic stimulus, the group released specific regional examples of how federally funded research supports local economies through job creation, spin-off companies, and supporting industries.

"We recognize that the President and Congress face an enormous challenge in developing an effective, comprehensive and affordable recovery plan," said Science Coalition President Bill Andresen of the University of Pennsylvania. "But, reducing funding for research is not the answer. Basic research is an essential piece of the nation's innovation infrastructure. We can't improve our energy efficiency, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, deploy 21st century technologies or bring down the cost of health care if we don't invest in the research that will drive innovations in these essential areas."

Innovation fueled by basic research, much of it conducted at universities

across the country and supported by the federal government, has been the cornerstone of the U.S. economy for more than the last half-century. It has led to the creation of countless companies, technologies and products. Agencies like the NSF, which invests 94 percent of its budget directly into support for research at universities and colleges in all 50 states, play a critical role in this process. Google is just one of many examples of companies born from NSF-funded, university-based research.

In many areas of the country, research universities also have an immediate and direct impact on the economy. As the attached list illustrates, research universities are often among the largest employers in their regions and the source of significant local economic stimulus. Through incubators and innovative technology development and licensing programs, research universities support the development of hundreds of start-up and spin-off companies each year. Additionally, leading universities and research facilities attract research-intensive industries, leading to further economic development and quality job creation in communities around the country.

"Funding for research grants and science infrastructure fits perfectly with the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," Andresen said. "It immediately creates jobs and stimulates economic activity in communities around the country. And through discovery and innovation, it will help America solve the problems at the root of our economic crisis. We urge Congress to include strong funding for the science agencies in its final legislation."

The Science Coalition is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization representing 48 of the nation's leading public and private research universities.

Source: The Science Coalition

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