



December 17, 2012

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Chief Executive Officer and
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President Barack Obama
The White House
United States of America

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) we respectfully call to your attention the voices of individual scientists and engineers from academia, laboratories, and businesses who are all urging you and the U.S. Congress to work together to achieve a bipartisan compromise that avoids the fiscal cliff and moves the country on to sound fiscal footing without sacrificing our nation's crucial investments in science and technology. Below is just one of the hundreds of voices we've heard from scientists across our nation

(<http://membercentral.aaas.org/sequestration/voices/videos>):

"I am currently a PhD student at the University of California San Diego. My research is primarily concerned with investigating the basic biology of photosynthetic bacteria for use in the production of green fuels and chemicals. Our lab is completely funded via NSF and NIH funding. In addition, my entire biology graduate program is funded by a number of training grants through NIH. A major loss of government research funding would severely impact most individuals at my university, and would significantly set back the basic scientific research we are doing to help develop alternative fuel sources. This is research on which we can build the foundations of US energy independence, and allowing this much funding to be lost at a critical time will be a tragedy for academic research scientists." S. Diamond, UC San Diego

It is important to recognize that federal research and development (R&D) investments are *not* driving our national deficits. Placing a significant burden on these crucial areas, as sequestration would do, is nothing less than a threat to national competitiveness. The looming sequestration would slash federal investment in research and development by an estimated **\$57 billion between now and 2017**. That is not good for science, but it is also bad for an economy whose growth is driven by advances in science and technology.

Federal nondefense R&D funding has already declined by 5% in the past two years, after remaining flat for the past decade, and continued cuts significantly threaten U.S. leadership in these areas. Our message is that a balanced plan must be one of shared contributions to a sound fiscal future, including strong support for our nation's science and technology enterprise.

We collectively and individually stand ready to help in any way we can as you tackle these vital issues.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner

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