



June 1, 2015

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives,

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific society, I write to express our concerns with report language included with the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill up for consideration on the House floor.

In particular, I want to draw your attention to the language stating that 70 percent of the National Science Foundation's Research and Related Activities funding should go to four specific research directorates, leaving out the important work taking place in the Geosciences and Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorates. This would slice 16 percent from the combined GEO and SBE budgets. AAAS is on record opposing the approach of, in effect, placing certain directorates over others. NSF is unique among federal agencies in that it supports a balanced portfolio of basic research in all disciplines, using the scientific peer review system as the foundation for awarding research grants based on merit.

To point to just one example of important geoscience and social science research, I would like to highlight the AAAS Geospatial Technologies Project, which analyzes data using geographic technologies such as remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS), and global positioning systems (GPS). These data can provide critical information on the impact of remote, isolated conflicts on civilians; a host of human rights violations; damage to sites of cultural heritage; environmental and social justice issues; cross-border conflicts; and indigenous rights.

We can't predict the next game-changing research project. To ensure our national competitiveness, we need to maintain a strong foundation of fundamental research across **all** scientific disciplines. AAAS stands ready to work with you as you consider appropriations for NSF and other critical research agencies.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Fink  
Chair, AAAS Board of Directors  
Herman and Margaret Sokol Professor  
Whitehead Institute/Massachusetts Institute of Technology