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January 23, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-218 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the nation's largest general scientific organization, I thank you for your consistent leadership and your recognition of the critical importance of science and technology to the nation's economic health, as illustrated in the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Half the nation's economic growth since World War II has been related to science and technology advances. Sustainable increases in science funding are needed in all fields and through all science-funding agencies if we are to continue along this path. All the sciences are profoundly interdependent, and it is impossible to predict where the next, critically important advances will occur. We also must tackle the problem of improving science and technology education, both to ensure the United States has a well educated, modern labor force and to recruit and train the next generation of scientists and engineers.

Thus, we are pleased that the economic stimulus plan provides investments in science and technology research, infrastructure and education across a range of agencies including the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, the National Institutes of Health, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) laboratories among others. These investments are a critical step toward restoring our economy's health and will lay a firm foundation for future growth.

Again, thank you on behalf of the science and engineering community. We recognize that Congress faces many competing priorities as it addresses our nation's economic crisis, and applaud your recognition of the importance of investing in science and technology. We look forward to working with you as the budget process continues.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner