



January 9, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, I write to encourage you to include questions about the conduct and use of science and technology as the Senate vets the nominees for the highest ranking positions in the Trump Administration.

The incoming Administration will confront a broad range of issues at the intersection of science and society. The government's response to challenges – from protecting national and energy security, to ensuring U.S. economic competitiveness, curing diseases, and responding to natural disasters – will all benefit from a strong foundation in scientific knowledge and technological expertise.

Further, many of the departments and agencies these individuals are nominated to lead have significant research and development enterprises as core aspects of their missions. As such, we believe it is crucial that they be asked how they plan to use scientific understanding in implementing agency policies and how they will set policies that govern the conduct of federally funded research.

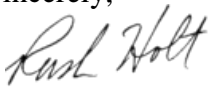
Here are several questions we believe all candidates for Cabinet-level positions should respond to as they seek to lead federal departments and agencies:

- How would you foster a culture of scientific transparency and accountability at your department or agency, while protecting scientists and engineers from political interference in their work?
- Science is essential to many of the laws and policies that keep Americans safe and secure. How would science inform your department or agency's decisions to add, modify, or remove federal regulations or policies? What mechanisms would you use to gather relevant scientific evidence and what weight would that evidence be given in the policymaking process at your department or agency?
- Given existing budgetary constraints that place a burden on discretionary spending, what would be your science and engineering research priorities, and how would you balance short-term versus long-term funding?
- In an age dominated by complex science and technology, the federal workforce needs to have adequate STEM literacy and skills to remain competitive and operate efficiently. How would your department or agency work to attract the best and brightest to serve our nation and address the particular challenges your department or agency will face?

Each federal department or agency will face its own unique challenges where science plays a role as well, from what support the Department of Energy will give to research in low-carbon energy sources, to how the Department of Health and Human Services will use peer-reviewed sociological evidence in dealing with the opioid epidemic, to whether the Department of Justice will use only scientifically validated forensic evidence in its work. We and other scientific organizations would be happy to offer help in preparing questions for individual hearings.

Thank you for considering this request. Please do not hesitate to contact the AAAS Director of Government Relations, Joanne Carney (jcarney@aaas.org), to discuss these and other matters anytime.

Sincerely,



Rush D. Holt, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science
Executive Publisher, *Science* Family of Journals

CC: The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable John McCain, Chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Armed Services
The Honorable Michael Crapo, Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
The Honorable Sherrod Brown, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
The Honorable Michael Enzi, Chairman, Senate Committee on Budget
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Budget
The Honorable John Thune, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
The Honorable Thomas Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance

The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance
The Honorable Bob Corker, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
The Honorable Ben Cardin, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
The Honorable Ron Johnson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
The Honorable Claire McCaskill, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Richard M. Burr, Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
The Honorable Mark Warner, Ranking Member, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
The Honorable Jim Risch, Chairman, Senate Committee on Small Business and
Entrepreneurship
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship
The Honorable Johnny Isakson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
The Honorable Jon Tester, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs