

University Fusion Association

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Fusion Energy Science Research: Burning Plasma Experiment ITER in FY2007 Budget

We strongly support the decision by the President and the Secretary of Energy to proceed with ITER in collaboration with international partners as the critical next-step towards the development of fusion energy as a major new source of non-carbon based energy for our nation and the world. The proposal to spend \$60 million for ITER by the President for FY 2007 is an important part of the national American Competitiveness Initiative, and provides full funding for the U.S. share of the ITER construction project.

However, **the Administration's proposed budget for FY2007 would make broad cuts in university research programs seriously damaging U.S. capabilities to benefit from ITER.** Through smaller scale innovative confinement experiments and theory programs, university-based fusion science researchers provide strong contributions to the U.S. fusion program. The proposed broad-based cuts of nearly 10% to these seminal programs and the cancellation of 3 to 4 university theory programs not only erode the creative base of U.S. fusion research, but will impair the U.S. universities' critical role of recruiting and training new personnel needed for ITER and beyond. If young people are not brought into the U.S. fusion program and trained during the eight-year ITER construction period, the U.S. will not have the workforce needed to take advantage of ITER during its 20 year research program.

This critical need to "...develop, recruit, and retain the best and the brightest students, scientists, and engineers..." is essential not only for research in fusion energy but has been highlighted in the recent National Academy of Sciences report **Rising Above the Gathering Storm** as essential for the nation. The report also urges the federal government to "Increase the number of US citizens pursuing graduate study in 'areas of national need'..."

These proposed FY07 budget increases for fusion energy science research, along with the planned 10-year doubling of physical sciences research budgets, are critical for maintaining America's long-term competitiveness. The University Fusion Association looks forward to working with DOE and Congress to craft plans to participate fully in ITER, and to address the vital issue of maintaining a strong and broadly based University component of fusion research to position the nation to be competitive in the international development and deployment of fusion power.

*University Researchers in Pursuit of Fusion Energy
Non-profit Association Established in 1979*