A Letter from America's Physics Nobel Laureates

May 6, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush President of the United States 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As scientists and Nobel Laureates, we are writing to urge you to reverse the damage done to basic science research in the Fiscal Year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill by requesting emergency supplemental funding for at least \$310 million for the Department of Energy's Office of Science; \$170 million for the National Science Foundation; and \$30 million for the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Since the FY '08 appropriations bill was enacted, hundreds of scientists have been laid off; research grants have been slashed; and facilities operations have been seriously curtailed at national laboratories. In addition, the U.S. is being forced to renege on its \$160 million commitment to the construction of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), damaging our reputation as a reliable partner for international projects.

The FY '08 funding for science sends a terrible message to the next generation of scientists who are weighing whether to make science a career. Instead of following the plan to double the funding for key scientific agencies, as your American Competitive Initiative calls for, the budget even fails to provide for inflation-adjusted operational costs. Instead of providing incentives for budding scientists, the funding plan provides discouragement.

Much is at stake as the nation grapples with increased global competition from countries such as China, India and South Korea. There already has been some damage to science and more damage to science in FY '08 will become permanent if it is not rectified within the next few months.

We applaud your commitment to science through the American Competitiveness Initiative and the proposed FY '09 budget, but we believe that steps must be taken before it makes its way through the legislative process. We strongly urge you to work with Congress in the coming weeks to enact emergency supplemental funding.

Sincerely,

James W. Cronin

University of Chicago 1980 Nobel Prize

Val L. Fitch

Princeton University 1980 Nobel Prize

Jerome Friedman

MIT

1990 Nobel Prize

Sheldon Glashow

Harvard University 1979 Nobel Prize

David J. Gross

UC, Santa Barbara 2004 Nobel Prize

John L. Hall

University of Colorado 2005 Nobel Prize

Wolfgang Ketterle

MIT

2001 Nobel Prize

David M. Lee

Cornell University 1996 Nobel Prize

T.D. Lee

Columbia University 1957 Nobel Prize

John C. Mather

University of Maryland 2006 Nobel Prize

Douglas D. Osheroff

Stanford University 1996 Nobel Prize

Martin L. Perl

Stanford University 1995 Nobel Prize

William D. Phillips

Gaithersburg
1997 Nobel Prize

H. David Politzer

California Institute of Technology 2004 Nobel Prize

George F. Smoot

UC, Berkeley 2006 Nobel Prize

Burton Richter

Stanford University 1976 Nobel Prize

Charles H. Townes

UC, Berkeley
1964 Nobel Prize

Daniel C. Tsui

Princeton University 1998 Nobel Prize

Robert W. Wilson

Harvard University 1978 Nobel Prize

Frank Wilczek

MIT

2004 Nobel Prize