

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



For Immediate Release
April 22, 2015

Media Contacts: Laura Crist, Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Markup of *The America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015* (H.R. 1806)

Chairman Smith: H.R. 1806, the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015, is a pro-science, fiscally responsible bill. It reauthorizes civilian research programs in the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

This bill prioritizes basic research with targeted investments while staying within the cap set in law by the Budget Control Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

Since January, the House Science Committee has held numerous hearings that have provided input into this bill. This includes budget hearings with the NSF Director, the Acting NIST Director, the Secretary of Energy, and the Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. (This is in addition to the numerous hearings this Committee held last year on the topics addressed by this bill.)

The bill reauthorizes NSF at \$7.6 billion for two years, providing more than a 4 percent increase of \$253 million for research and related activities. The bill prioritizes funding for the directorates of Biological Sciences, Engineering, Computer and Informational Science, and Mathematical and Physical Sciences.

The bill also ensures accountability by restoring the original intent of the 1950 NSF enabling legislation, which requires the Foundation to recognize and adhere to scientific merit and a “national interest” certification for each grant.

Additionally, H.R. 1806 includes auditing and accounting measures to ensure that major multi-user research facilities projects are built and operated at the lowest necessary cost. (The bill also ensures that taxpayer dollars are not spent on unallowable expenses such as liquor and lobbyists.)

This bill recognizes this Committee’s bipartisan support for enhancing STEM Education programs. A healthy and viable STEM workforce, literate in all STEM subjects including computer science, is critical to American industry. A well-educated and trained STEM workforce contributes to our future economic prosperity.

The bill adds computer science to the federal definition of STEM education. It requires NSF to review its education programs for duplication and outcome-oriented effectiveness and encourages informal STEM education outside of the classroom.

Title III of the bill reauthorizes the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) at \$4.5 million for two years. This title also includes three bipartisan bills the Committee approved

unanimously in a mark-up last month. Those bills, H.R. 1119, the Research and Development Efficiency Act introduced by Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairwoman Comstock and Full Committee Ranking Member Johnson, H.R. 1156, the International Science and Technology Cooperation Act introduced by Research and Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Lipinski and Subcommittee Vice Chair Moolenaar, and H.R. 1162 the Science Prize Competitions Act introduced by Oversight Subcommittee Ranking Member Beyer and Subcommittee Vice Chair Bill Johnson, all passed the Committee by voice vote.

Additionally, this title requires the presidentially appointed U.S. Chief Technology Officer to be one of the OSTP Associate Directors. This will result in that individual being Senate-confirmed and responsive to the Committee.

Title IV authorizes just over \$933 million dollars for NIST in Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017. This level supports the important standards and technology work taking place at the NIST laboratories, the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, and the recently authorized National Network for Manufacturing Innovation program. Additionally, the bill prioritizes the fundamental technical development activities at NIST, providing an 8 percent increase over FY15.

Title V reauthorizes the DOE Office of Science at \$5.3 billion for two years, a more than 5 percent increase over FY15. It prioritizes basic research and enables researchers in all 50 states to have access to world-class user facilities, including super computers and high intensity light sources. It includes H.R. 874, the American Super Computing Leadership Act by Committee members Hultgren, Swalwell, Lipinski, Bonamici, and Esty and that was approved by this Committee on a voice vote.

Title VI reauthorizes the DOE applied R&D programs for FY16 and FY17, which includes \$1.2 billion for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), \$605 million for fossil energy R&D, \$504 million for nuclear energy R&D, \$140 million for the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and \$113 million for the Office of Electricity.

Over the last decade there has been unjustified growth in spending on late stage commercialization efforts within EERE. This bill refocuses DOE's work on basic R&D efforts, not subsidies. Despite this common-sense reduction, total funding authorized for EERE R&D will still be at a level greater than the budgets of Nuclear, Fossil and Electricity R&D combined.

The bill also requires DOE to identify key areas for collaboration across science and applied research programs. DOE must seek opportunities to reduce duplication and leverage existing programs and activities that could be better undertaken by states, institutions of higher education, or the private sector, and areas of sub-par performance within the Department.

Finally the bill includes H.R. 1158, the DOE Laboratory Modernization and Technology Transfer Act. This is a bipartisan bill by Mr. Hultgren and Mr. Perlmutter that passed the Committee and that cuts red tape and bureaucracy in the DOE technology transfer process.

In sum, the reprioritization of basic research and fundamental scientific discovery in the physical sciences and biology and the accompanying reforms of federal science policy in H.R. 1806 will help

ensure future U.S. economic competitiveness and security. And it will spur private sector technological innovation.

I am joined by Committee Vice Chairman Lucas and all five Subcommittee Chairmen in offering this fiscally responsible, pro-science legislation that sets the right priorities for federal civilian research.

###