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2019 MRS President

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January 18, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-224
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

On behalf of the Materials Research Society (MRS), I write to urge Congress to expeditiously reach a bipartisan agreement that will immediately end the partial government shutdown. Based in Warrendale, Pennsylvania, MRS is a scientific society of more than 14,500 researchers from academia, industry and government, and is a recognized leader in the advancement of interdisciplinary materials research. MRS members are at the forefront of research and teaching in the fields of materials science, physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and engineering. The federal government shutdown is a failure in governance and a weight on our economy and the American people.

At a time when the US faces significant and real challenges in creating the next generation of innovations, discoveries, and inventions, our country is hamstrung by a shutdown of the leading agencies that drive the research engines in the US. For nearly one month, the vital contributions from agencies such as the National Science Foundation, National Institute for Standards and Technology, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,

Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey have ceased, posing an unnecessary internal threat to our nation's future economic prosperity and national security.

During this shutdown, world-class researchers who dedicate their careers to the missions of the affected agencies sit idle at home. New, innovative ideas that have been proposed by universities and industry sit un-reviewed. Research projects slated to start in 2019 remain unfunded and dormant while the research efforts by our competitors in other countries—competitors who do not share our values or best interests—move forward uninterrupted.

The shutdown is negatively impacting currently funded projects from the agencies at US universities and companies. Mandatory approvals for expenditures or activities are not being provided. New activities that require agency approvals sit idle. Critically important technical exchanges between universities and agency scientists and engineers have ceased.

As the shutdown continues, these negative impacts on US research will worsen. Our competitive edge in innovation and research is being eroded every day the shutdown continues. These self-imposed hardships, threaten our nation's economic, national security and reputation as a science leader. We ask that you reach across the aisle to find a path forward and end this stalemate today so that these agencies, their employees, and others can get back to work to drive our nation forward.

Sincerely,

Mike Fitzsimmons

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Fitzsimmons', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

President
Materials Research Society