Dr. Eric Lander Office of Science and Technology Policy The White House Washington, DC 20001

Dear Dr. Lander,

As you know, the Taliban represent an immediate threat to the safety of anyone in Afghanistan connected with the western world. This includes engineers, scientists and technical professionals, many of whom are trying to evacuate Afghanistan. It is becoming clear the Taliban are targeting technical professionals based on membership in professional associations. We expect this persecution to get worse as the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate.

Volunteers in professional societies help the global technical community conduct research, provide opportunities to network, share employment opportunities, and train the next generation of STEM talent. In countries like Afghanistan, professional societies also act as beacons of hope and inspiration for the next generation. Volunteers in Afghanistan and around the world are vital to these efforts, and we hope someday to the future of Afghanistan.

As the United States continues to evacuate vulnerable populations from Afghanistan, we ask that you extend assistance to engineers, scientists, and other educated professionals in the country, especially those who, despite all odds, have joined global technical communities. We specifically ask that you assist women in STEM in their exodus of Afghanistan. Women and girls, along with their STEM mentors, are currently being targeted by the Taliban.

Despite incredible hurdles and dangerous risks, these engineers, scientists, and technical professionals have built robots, researched cutting edge technology, and advanced many areas of engineering and science that are of interest to both the United States and Afghanistan. It is precisely their collaboration with US counterparts on these STEM projects as members of our technical societies that has led to being targeted by terrorists.

The professional STEM community stands ready to support the engineers, scientists, and technical professionals seeking to leave Afghanistan. We are already working with our Afghan members to provide what support and assistance we can. But we need your help to assist our members to leave Afghanistan and find refuge in a safer part of the world. Specifically, we need P-2 Priority designation visas for our volunteers and members of global professional societies to facilitate their rapid evacuation from Afghanistan. We cannot let wording on the visa application form lead to the harm or deaths of these technical professionals, engineers and scientists that are willing to come conduct research in the United States.

Thank you for your help with this urgent and critical matter.

Sincerely,

American Association of Geographers

American Association of Physics Teachers

American Astronomical Society

American Education Research Association

American Geophysical Union

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Mathematical Society

American Physical Society

American Society of Agronomy

Association for Women in Science

Biophysical Society

Computing Research Association

Cornell University

Council of Graduate Schools

Council of Scientific Society Presidents

Crop Science Society of America

Ecological Society of America

Entomological Society of America

Eversole Associates

Gerontological Society of America

IEEE-USA

Materials Research Society

Michigan State University

Northwestern University

OSA—The Optical Society

Rochester Institute of Technology

Society for Research in Child Development

Soil Science Society of America

Washington State University

cc: Allison Schwier Ian Brownlee

Carol Perez