February 24, 2014

The Honorable Harold Rogers    The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman, Appropriations Committee  Chairwoman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives   U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515             Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey    The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515             Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rogers, Chairwoman Mikulski, and Ranking Members Lowey and Shelby:

The Task Force on American Innovation urges you to make scientific research a top priority as you consider the FY 2015 302 (b) allocations for the Appropriations Committees. The many companies, universities, and scientific societies represented by the Task Force agree that America’s role as the world innovation leader is in danger, and unless our nation changes course we will lose not only our lead, but the benefits to our economy and national security that stem from being first in the world in innovation.

The National Science Board’s 2014 Science & Engineering Indicators illustrates that recent sequestration cuts and declining federal investments in scientific research over the past several years, combined with rapid advances in other countries are creating an innovation deficit that threatens our long-term leadership role. From 2001 to 2012, the U.S. share of the world’s R&D fell from 37 percent to 30 percent, while the share of worldwide R&D performed by Asian countries grew from 25 percent to 34 percent. China alone grew its share from four percent to 15 percent during this period. Other nations have significantly increased their pace of R&D investment at the very time the U.S. has slowed our R&D spending.

You have an opportunity in the FY 2015 appropriations process to take significant steps to help close this innovation deficit and maintain our nation’s innovation and economic leadership. We urge you to ensure that the FY 2015 302 (b) allocations for the Commerce-Justice-Science and Energy and Water Development Subcommittees will support strong investments in scientific research at the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy’s Office of Science, Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, NASA, and National Institute of Standards and Technology. We also urge you to send a strong signal in the allocations process for needed scientific research investments in other agencies, especially the basic research accounts within the Department of Defense.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Task Force on American Innovation

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees

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