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April 24, 2017

Congressman Mike Doyle
U.S. House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Doyle:

On behalf of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce – an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference, I write to respectfully request your support for critical research funding that is subject to widespread cuts in the administration’s 2018 budget request, including cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). I ask that you support a final fiscal year (FY) 2017 omnibus while incorporating the House and Senate appropriation committees’ priorities. Furthermore, I ask that you support robust appropriations to research accounts in the final House and Senate appropriations bills for the FY 2018.

Our chamber is part of the Business for Federal Research Funding Coalition, which was formed to support federal research funding and to bring a heightened focus to the critical impact that federal research has on our nation’s competitiveness. In the Pittsburgh region, our thirty-five regional colleges and universities fuel an innovation engine that conducts over \$1 billion in research annually, paving the way to commercialization of great ideas. For example, the University of Pittsburgh currently ranks 16th nationally in federal R&D expenditures. Drastic cuts in research will hurt our region’s economy and our progress on key research and development goals.

Funding levels included in the administration’s budget request, particularly the proposed \$5.8 billion cut to the NIH, and the \$1.7 billion cut to the Department of Energy, would be devastating to innovation, jobs, and the economy. According to the latest report released this week from United for Medical Research (UMR), research funded by NIH supported almost 22,000 jobs and \$4 billion in economic activity across Pennsylvania in 2016. Slashing these funds so dramatically would not just impact the gains our region has made in medical research and advancements, but it would result in real job loss and reduce the economic benefits created by these investments.

The United States needs to remain competitive with countries like China and Germany in technology and research & development. Our leaders should not be focused on how much to cut from these budgets—rather, the focus should be on how much we should be investing in research to retain our global competitiveness. Funding for research accounts have seen increases in the past few fiscal years, but for agencies like NIH, funding has not kept pace with inflation. According to the NIH Office of Budget, since 2003 the U.S. spent \$111.7 billion less on NIH funding than it would have if it kept pace with medical research inflation. In order to prevent further stagnation of U.S. innovation, it is crucial that appropriators ensure reliable annual appropriations at a steady rate above inflation.

Because we are still operating on under a short-term 2017 continuing resolution, you will likely soon finalize appropriated spending levels in the coming omnibus spending bill. It is my hope that the strong support to invest in research accounts that was so clearly exhibited last year during the appropriations process and in the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act continues as you finalize the FY17 spending plan and as debate begins on the FY18 spending plan.

Our nation must invest in innovation and partner with the private sector to commercialize new developments. Please support robust investments in basic research that has driven so much our region's economic improvements.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Matthew Smith

President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce