

Washington Update 2-26-09

Apparent Rocket Failure

On a very sad note, I am sure you have seen the news that NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory crashed into the ocean shortly after launch early this morning. (see <http://www.space.com/missionlaunches/090224-oco-launch-failure.html>) This is terrible news for global climate research in this country, and those of us at UCAR want to extend personal sympathy to colleagues who were so involved with this critical mission.

FY09 Omnibus Bill

On a happier subject – You saw in our communication last night that the marks for science are good in the conferenced FY09 Omnibus Bill. It sounds as if it will pass easily on the floor of the House this week, possibly as early as tomorrow. If you would like to urge your representatives to vote for the bill, please do, but it is not urgent at this point. As soon as the House passes the bill and it goes to the Senate, we will be back in touch with an action alert since it is likely that that vote will be much closer.

Stimulus Thank You to Members

Before the stimulus bill was signed into law, we collected signatures from many of you for a letter to the congressional conferees of the stimulus bill urging them to include significant funding for science. We were not able to get the letter out in time since the bill was conferenced over night. The results for science were extremely favorable, so we would now like to put all your signatures to good use in thanking the leadership for their support of the agencies of importance to our community. The proposed letter follows – the sample is for the House leadership and conferees; a similar letter will be sent to the Senate leadership and conferees. Please get in touch with me by replying to this e-mail by tomorrow (Wednesday) at 3:00pm EST _only if you do NOT want your signature used for this letter_. No need to reply at all if including it is okay with you. Thank you very much for this and for your extremely effective help with the entire stimulus bill effort. The funding for science included in the bill is an important signal of this country's renewed dedication to scientific progress.

Many of your senators and representatives supported the stimulus legislation. If you wish to thank them individually, please find contact information by entering your zip code under "My Elected Officials" at: <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>

Thanks again for your help with community advocacy efforts – Cindy Schmidt

PROPOSED LETTER WITH MULTIPLE SIGNATURES:

February 25, 2009

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Honorable Steny Hoyer
Honorable John Boehner
Honorable David Obey
Honorable Jerry Lewis
United States House of Representatives

(this will also be sent to Conferees)

Speaker Pelosi, Majority leader Hoyer, Minority Leader Boehner, Appropriations Committee Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

On behalf of the atmospheric sciences community of this country, we want to thank you for your work on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

We are particularly appreciative of the bill's implicit acknowledgment of the importance of science to the economy of this country. In study after study, economists have concluded that up to 80 percent of America's economic growth over the past 50 years is attributable to technological innovation that has its roots in research. Much of this investment leads directly to job creation in the short-term, and innovation in the long-term. Stimulus bill funding for research and development as well as scientific infrastructure will pay dividends well into a more prosperous and globally competitive future for this nation.

Thank you again for your commitment to this bill and to the important role science will play in the country's economic recovery.

Sincerely,

the undersigned members of the atmospheric sciences community of the United States
(institutions denote affiliation only):