TO: UCAR Trustees/Members/Affiliates with House Appropriators in/near Your District
FROM: Rick Anthes

The Science, State, Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee plans to begin marking up their FY06 appropriations bill this week. As you are aware, they will be faced with some painful decisions and compromises and need to hear from constituents regarding funding priorities.

I am contacting you because you are in (or near) the district of a House member who is on the Science, State, Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies Subcommittee, which will determine funding for NASA, NSF, and NOAA. If the President's budget request for FY06 is enacted, federal funding for R&D will fail to keep pace with inflation for the first time in a decade. Even worse, the Science, State and Justice subcommittee was allocated 5.2% less than the President's request to divide among the agencies for which it is responsible - so final budget numbers could look even worse than originally thought. (See http://www.ucar.edu/oga/html/budget/index.html for budget request numbers.) As a constituent, it is critical that your Member hears and weighs your concerns about maintaining funding for NOAA, NSF and NASA research programs. Therefore I am urging you to FAX your Representative asap -- below is a list of the subcommittee Members as well as a sample letter (also attached) that you are welcome to use/adapt. Please see http://www.ucar.edu/oga/html/links/109th_congress.html for fax numbers. As always, please use your own letterhead and let Laura Curtis (lcurtis@ucar.edu) know that you have responded to this request.

Thank you very much for your advocacy efforts which are absolutely critical for the health of our science. -- Rick

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Frank R. Wolf, VA (R - Chairman)
Alan B. Mollohan, WV (D - Ranking Member)
Charles H. Taylor, NC (R)
Jose E. Serrano, NY (D)
Mark Steven Kirk, IL (R)
Robert E. "Bud" Cramer, Jr., AL (D)
Dave Weldon, FL (R - Vice Chair)
Patrick J. Kennedy, RI (D)
Virgil Goode, VA (R)
Chaka Fattah, PA (D)
Ray LaHood, IL (R)
John Abney Culberson, TX (R)
Rodney Alexander, LA (R)

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SAMPLE LETTER

The Honorable XXXXXXXXXXX
Subcommittee on Science State Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies
Dear Congressman/woman XX:

As a researcher and educator in (YOUR STATE), I am writing to bring to your attention grave concerns that many of my colleagues and I have regarding the FY06 budgets for NSF, NASA, and NOAA. These agencies fund scientific and operational programs that affect this country's advances in technology development, citizen safety, military applications, the health of the planet, and the quality of scientific education. We cannot afford to allow the nation's scientific enterprise to be diminished at a time when the rest of the developed world is catching up with our capabilities -- but for the first time in a decade, federal funding for R&D in the budget request fails to keep pace with inflation.

In your upcoming work on the Science, State, Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I ask you to pay particular attention to the critical basic science, scientific applications, and science education funded by NSF, NASA, and NOAA.

NSF’s Research and Related Activities (R&RA) account supports as much as 50 percent of this country's civilian basic research in the physical sciences. R&RA receives an increase of 2.7 percent in the FY06 request, but this increase all but disappears due to new requirement that the NSF pay for Coast Guard icebreaking services - costs that could shrink the R&RA increase to less than 1 percent. I urge you to find an alternate way in which to cover the cost of the Coast Guard icebreakers and to provide a 6 percent increase for NSF’s R&RA account in order to make up for the FY05 sub-inflationary increase while providing a modest increase for FY06.

The NSF's education programs, so important to the future skills of the nation's workforce and the ability of our citizens to make intelligent decisions in our democratic society, are greatly diminished under the FY06 budget request for the second year in a row. FY05 actual and FY06 requested combined cuts to NSF's Education and Human resources Directorate (EHR) total approximately $200 million. Programs like the National STEM Education Digital Library, which brings a wealth of science and technology information to classrooms across the country; and Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education, which awards competitive grants to innovative educational programs, will lose more than 10 percent of their funding. The NSF has a critical role in ensuring that our students are scientifically literate and that the next generation of American scientists will have the desire and the training to keep our nation on the forefront of scientific and technological innovation. Please reverse the decline of NSF’s Education and Human Resources account in order to ensure that our nation's children will emerge as competent, skilled members of the U.S. workforce.

Though NASA's overall budget grows under the President's FY06 budget request, the agency's science programs are slated for an overall cut of 0.9 percent. I believe that the
diminishment of NASA's research emphasis is one of the most significant issues facing the country's scientific research enterprise. Understanding the Sun and the complex, changing planet upon which we live is one of the greatest intellectual and practical challenges facing humanity. I urge you to protect NASA's unmanned science missions and to reaffirm the critical role that the agency plays in gathering knowledge about our planet and universe - a role that cannot now be duplicated by any other agency. In addition, I ask that you work with your colleagues to reinstate a separate appropriations account for NASA's science programs so that other mission priorities do not undermine continued progress in this area. Such a "firewall" should be instituted again in order to protect NASA's science programs including smaller, unmanned missions that produce enormous sets of data that benefit the country in a myriad of ways.

The President's budget request calls for a much-needed $16.1 million for NOAA's Climate Observations and Services program within the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research that will allow, for example, for the continued maintenance and enhancement of the global ocean observing system. I urge you to support this amount. However, the small, but instrumental Climate and Global Change Program is slated for a 13 percent cut. This program is critical to our country's basic climate research and education enterprise affecting international field campaigns in support of climate and global change research, research programs in several areas of global climate change, and advanced climate education programs. I urge you to consider reinstating this important program, just as Congress reinstated it in the FY05 final budget after the Administration proposed a similar deep cut.

I understand you and your colleagues are working with restrictive allocations this year, but I ask you to please support the highest possible levels for our nation's scientific research and education enterprise. The establishment of the Science State Justice and Commerce Subcommittee gives you the unique opportunity of ensuring that three of the nation's most important scientific and operational agencies continue to provide knowledge about our planet and the universe that provide tremendous societal benefits for our country.

Sincerely,