MESSAGE FROM RICK ANTHESE
October 18, 2005

The U.S. government is now operating under a Continuing Resolution until its expiration on November 18th. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have begun working to resolve differences on their respective FY 2006 Science, State, Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies appropriations bills, which funds NSF, NASA and NOAA. A number of competing pressures, continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, will squeeze spending for atmospheric and related sciences and education, so it's critical that the science community weigh in now.

I am contacting you because you have (or are very near) a House and/or Senate Member who is on the conference committee finalizing FY06 appropriations for the agencies that support our work. As you may recall from previous reports, the House provided NSF with over $100 million more than the Senate. However, the Senate provided NOAA with one billion dollars more than the House. The House provided NASA with $75 million more than the Senate.

I urge you to contact your Member(s) and ask them to work to provide the highest levels for research and education within these agencies. We have provided a sample letter below, which you are welcome to use or tailor to your particular interests. The list of conferees is also below. Please FAX your letter asap; contact Laura Curtis (lcurtis@ucar.edu) for the fax number, or go to OGA's website, which has contact information for Members of the 109th Congress (http://www.ucar.edu/oga/html/links/109th_congress.html). As always, please send Laura a copy of your letter. Thanks very much for your attention to this. -- Rick Anthes

Members on the House Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies:
Frank R. Wolf, VA (Chairman)
Charles H. Taylor, NC
Mark Steven Kirk, IL
Dave Weldon, FL
Virgil Goode, VA
Ray LaHood, IL
John Abney Culberson, TX
Rodney Alexander, LA
Alan B. Mollohan, WV (D - Ranking Member)
Jose E. Serrano, NY
Robert E. "Bud" Cramer, Jr., AL
Patrick J. Kennedy, RI
Chaka Fattah, PA

Members on the Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science:
Richard Shelby (chairman) (AL)
Judd Gregg (NH)
Ted Stevens (AK)
Pete Domenici (NM)
Mitch McConnell (KY)
Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX)
Sam Brownback (KS)
Christopher Bond (MO)
Mikulski (Ranking Member) (MD)
Daniel Inouye (HI)
Patrick Leahy (VT)
Herb Kohl (WI)
Patty Murray (WA)
Tom Harkin (IA)
Byron Dorgan (ND)

SAMPLE LETTER

The Honorable XXXXXXXXXXX
Subcommittee XXX
United States Senate OR U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Senator OR Congressman/woman XX:

As a researcher and educator in [FILL IN YOUR STATE], I am writing to respectfully urge you, in your work to finalize appropriations for the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice and Commerce and Related Agencies appropriations bill, to support robust funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) -- three extremely important agencies for the nation's scientific endeavors. As you are aware, federal funding for R&D is eroding. In the report issued last week by the National Academies, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future," industry leaders, including Norm Augustine (Retired Chair and CEO, Lockheed-Martin), Craig Barrett (Chair, Intel Corporation) and P. Roy Vagelos (Retired Chair and CEO, Merck & Co.) argued that increased investments in the physical sciences and K-12 math and science education would yield large returns for the nation in the form of new jobs and a more competitive economy. Please support the following critical investments for FY06:

National Science Foundation (NSF):
I urge you to support the House level of $4.377 billion for NSF's Research and Related Activities (R&RA) account which funds as much as 50 percent of this country's civilian basic research in the physical sciences. NSF proposal
requests are alarmingly oversubscribed; the agency's proposal success rate has slipped in recent years from one-in-three to less than one-in-four – the lowest funding ratio in 15 years. This means that much excellent research is left undone and much new technology goes undeveloped, with resulting consequences for the economy and innovation in this country.

I am extremely concerned that 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, were cut dramatically in both the FY06 House and Senate marks. 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 support, at a minimum, the House level of $807 million for NSF's Education and Human Resources account.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):
While the science community supports the President's Moon-Mars initiative, there is great concern that it will result in diminished research opportunities in the agency's science programs. The Senate report addressed this issue and included the language, "...the strong, balanced science program that has served the Nation so successfully for many years could be left behind instead of being nurtured and sustained... NASA is encouraged to look for ways to maintain a balance with the productive science NASA is known for and currently has underway, while taking the steps to fulfill the exploration vision." Please work with your colleagues to ensure that Congress continues to protect NASA’s science programs from the increasing costs likely to be incurred by the President’s Moon-Mars initiative.

I urge you and your colleagues to pay particular attention to a recent report by the National Research Council, "Earth Science and Applications from Space - Urgent Needs and Opportunities to Serve the Nation." It clearly cautions that opportunities to gain new knowledge about Earth are currently under threat due to budget cutbacks, and calls NASA and NOAA environmental satellite systems "at risk of collapse." These satellite systems are essential to fulfilling important initiatives, such as the Climate Change Research Initiative and the subsequent Climate Change Science Program. We cannot afford to delay or descope missions underway that will contribute to improved monitoring, and data collection and dissemination related to weather, atmosphere, oceans, land and near-space environment.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):
There is a nearly $1 billion difference between the Senate and House marks for NOAA. I ask that you support the Senate mark of $4.476 billion that would give NOAA the opportunity to enhance its current critical programs and to fulfill expanded obligations recommended by the U.S. Commission on Ocean
Policy. One need look no farther than the accurate and timely warnings issued by NOAA’s National Weather Service regarding hurricanes Katrina and Rita to know that this agency plays a significant role in the health and well being of U.S. citizens. I urge you to support the Senate mark of $4.476 billion for NOAA in FY06.

Please also support the Senate amount of $470.1 million for NOAA’s Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. This will allow, for example, the continued maintenance and enhancement of the global ocean observing system. It will fund the small but instrumental Climate and Global Change Program, which contributes 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.

As a scientist and concerned citizen, I know the critical impact that these agencies have on the nation in terms of global competitiveness and prosperity. While I recognize the spending constraints under which Congress must work, I respectfully urge you to make investments in NSF, NASA and NOAA a priority.

Sincerely,