June 20, 2005

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

FACSIMILE SENT TO: 202-228-0587

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), a consortium of 68 leading universities involved in weather and climate research (including the University of Alabama at Huntsville), 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. But if funded at the President's FY06 Request, R&D will fail to keep pace with inflation for the first time in a decade and at a time when other countries are accelerating their scientific research progress. In your upcoming work on the Commerce, Justice, and Science 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.

**National Science Foundation**

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 the new requirement that the NSF pay for Coast Guard icebreaking services - costs that could shrink the R&RA increase to less than 1 percent. In the House bill, the Science, State, Justice and Commerce Appropriations Subcommittee has provided an additional $46.5 million for Research and Related Activities which should enable NSF to pay for ice breaking services while receiving a real increase for scientific research of 2.7 percent. I urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee to equal or exceed the amount of $4.38 billion provided for NSF's Research and Related Activities in the House bill.

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.
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. In order to ensure that our nation's children have the opportunity to emerge as competent, skilled members of the U.S. workforce, I urge you and your colleagues to equal or exceed the amount of $807.0 million provided by the House Appropriations Subcommittee for NSF's Education and Human Resources account.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
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 and your colleagues 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 by equaling or exceeding the House Appropriations Subcommittee mark of $5.516 billion for NASA science.

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" was established years ago so that Space Station overruns would not harm NASA's science programs. Dropped just last year from the Omnibus Bill, it 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.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
The President's budget request calls for a much-needed $16.1 million increase for NOAA's Climate Observations and Services program within the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) that will allow, for example, for the continued maintenance and enhancement of the global ocean observing system. I urge you and your colleagues to support the Administration's request of $69.2 million for Climate Observations and Services. The House has recommended restoring OAR's Climate and Global Change Program, which was slated for a 13 percent cut in the request. 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 and your colleagues to equal the House mark of $68.5 million in order to reinstate funding for this program, just as Congress reinstated it in the FY05 final budget after the Administration proposed a deep cut.
The National Weather Service provides the country with services that affect security and defense activities, citizen safety, the protection of property, the nation's economy, and quality of life. The House recommendation provides an increase of $14.3 million above the request "to bolster critical forecast and warning functions." I urge you and your colleagues to support the House recommendation of $759.1 million to maintain and enhance critical weather related operations for the nation.

During the floor vote on the Science, State, Justice and Commerce funding bill, the House approved Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. Dreier. The amendment reduces the NOAA budget by $50 million on top of the cuts of almost $500 million already recommended over FY05. It would be very difficult for NOAA to absorb these massive cuts in a budget that is less than $3.5 billion. I urge you and your colleagues to reject the $50 million cut to the NOAA budget that the Dreier amendment represents.

I understand you and your colleagues are faced with stringent budget pressures 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 Commerce, Justice, and Science 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,

Richard A. Anthes
President
June 20, 2005

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

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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. In order to ensure that our nation's children have the opportunity to emerge as competent, skilled members of the U.S. workforce, I urge you and your colleagues to equal or exceed the amount of $807.0 million provided by the House Appropriations Subcommittee for NSF's Education and Human Resources account.

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Richard A. Anthes
President