

LOCAL 5810

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December 13, 2012

The Honorable Jeffrey Zients
Acting Director, The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Zients:

As you begin work on the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014, I write to you on behalf of the union representing more than 6,000 Postdoctoral Scholars at the University of California in support of increased funding for basic science research through federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and NASA. These agencies and many others provide the funding for the science research that forms the bedrock of innovation and advancement in technology, medicine, industry, and our understanding of the world around us.

I understand that in the current economic climate that there are many pressures to reduce federal spending, and that there are many varied concerns that need to be balanced in the FY2014 budget. I am writing to urge the Office of Management and Budget to resist these pressures and to develop a budget that prioritizes investment in basic science research as the driver of progress and economic growth that it is. Federally funded science research is an economic stimulator that has directly created thousands of high-wage jobs and spurred growth in fields like manufacturing, biotechnology, clean energy, and many more. Furthermore, increasing our national investment in science exponentially increases the return on that investment in terms of the economic growth, jobs, inventions, and new industries that it will create.

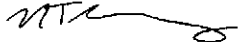
The idea that federal science funding leads to economic growth is not speculation; it is a proven, reliable outcome. For example, NIH funding in California alone helped generate over 70,000 jobs and nearly \$8 billion in economic activity in 2010. There is perhaps no part of the country that has benefited more from federal investment in research – and no place that will be hit harder if those investments diminish – but California is not alone. Cutting federal funding for research, or even merely keeping budgets constant, would not be money saved. It would mean jobs lost all across the country and innovation abandoned in all sectors of the economy. As a nation, we cannot afford to neglect scientific research.

From the Internet to cell phones, clean energy to the Human Genome Project, our lives and the economy have been vastly improved by the broad investments in scientific research that the federal government has made. Since 1990, nearly one in five FDA-approved medical advances – included 40 new cancer drugs – were developed in federally funded labs. Federal science funding supports nearly every scientist in the US at some point in his or her career, and increased spending on science will strengthen our ability as a nation to innovate in an ever-changing world while at the same time strengthening the economy.

The funding that laboratories at the University of California, along with many other globally renowned institutions all across the nation, receive from the NIH, NSF, NASA, and other agencies, supports the cutting-edge research that drives American innovation in technology. For more than a dozen years, the University of California has developed more patents than any other university, and its researchers produce an average of three inventions every day. This is no accident. This is because of the financial support that the federal government has put behind basic science research, and that support is more important now than ever.

The economic ripple of the research done by federally funded scientists has created hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country and supports programs that benefit people from all walks of life. In order to maximize the benefit that we as a nation draw from this engine for progress and economic growth, we need increased investment from the federal government. We respectfully urge you to support the crucial nexus between scientific discovery and economic recovery in developing the FY 2014 budget, and increase federal funding for science research.

Sincerely,



Neal Sweeney, Ph.D.

President, UAW Local 5810