

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Cochran:

We are writing to request that an additional \$350 million in emergency funding be included in the Fiscal Year 2008 supplemental appropriations bill for critical science programs administered by the Department of Energy's Office of Science and the National Science Foundation (NSF). We anticipate there will be a strong push by the Administration and others for a supplemental appropriations bill that focuses funding solely on the troops, and we understand that desire. However, should the Committee choose to include additional funding, this emergency funding is needed to support our critically important scientific workforce, avoid cost increases to our major scientific projects, and fulfill commitments to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) Project.

Specifically, we ask that \$250 million be allocated for the Office of Science, and \$100 million be allocated to the National Science Foundation. The \$250 million for the Office of Science will help keep our commitments to the ITER Project, ensure that we retain Fermi Laboratory as our nation's premier high physics facility, and provide the funding necessary to ensure that other major Department of Energy facilities in California, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, and Virginia can continue to meet our nation's scientific needs. The \$100 million for NSF would provide additional graduate fellowships and research grants at our nation's universities, while helping maintain new initiatives in supercomputing and high-speed networking.

ITER is a multinational scientific project and has been one of the Office of Science's top priorities for the last several years. The President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008 included \$160 million for the project. It is imperative that Congress appropriate supplemental funding for ITER as soon as possible to keep our commitments to our international partners, keep this important project on track, and avoid losses in scientific talent among U.S.-based employees working on ITER.

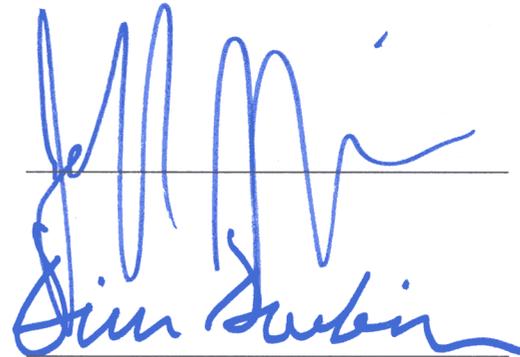
The Office of Science and the National Science Foundation are key elements of the bipartisan America COMPETES Act, which passed Congress overwhelmingly last year. The funds requested in this letter will help restore the broad policy outlines in that bill to ensure our nation remains competitive in our global economy.

We recognize the pressure you face to minimize the size of supplemental appropriations bills in the face competing budgetary priorities. However, we strongly believe that it is necessary to provide critically needed research funding immediately to avoid unintended and permanent damage to our critical scientific infrastructure and our standing in the world as the leader in science.

Sincerely,



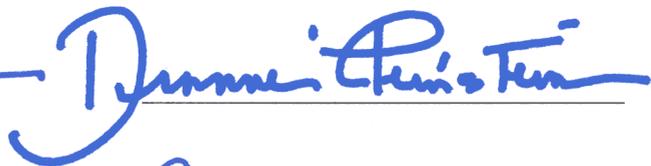
Lamar Alexander



Jim Ruben



Ed Kennedy



Chuck Scherer
