

A Letter from America's Physics Nobel Laureates

May 6, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As scientists and Nobel Laureates, we are writing to urge you to reverse the damage done to basic science research in the Fiscal Year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill by requesting emergency supplemental funding for at least \$310 million for the Department of Energy's Office of Science; \$170 million for the National Science Foundation; and \$30 million for the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Since the FY '08 appropriations bill was enacted, hundreds of scientists have been laid off; research grants have been slashed; and facilities operations have been seriously curtailed at national laboratories. In addition, the U.S. is being forced to renege on its \$160 million commitment to the construction of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), damaging our reputation as a reliable partner for international projects.

The FY '08 funding for science sends a terrible message to the next generation of scientists who are weighing whether to make science a career. Instead of following the plan to double the funding for key scientific agencies, as your American Competitive Initiative calls for, the budget even fails to provide for inflation-adjusted operational costs. Instead of providing incentives for budding scientists, the funding plan provides discouragement.

Much is at stake as the nation grapples with increased global competition from countries such as China, India and South Korea. There already has been some damage to science and more damage to science in FY '08 will become permanent if it is not rectified within the next few months.

We applaud your commitment to science through the American Competitiveness Initiative and the proposed FY '09 budget, but we believe that steps must be taken before it makes its way through the legislative process. We strongly urge you to work with Congress in the coming weeks to enact emergency supplemental funding.

Sincerely,

James W. Cronin
University of Chicago
1980 Nobel Prize

Val L. Fitch
Princeton University
1980 Nobel Prize

Jerome Friedman
MIT
1990 Nobel Prize

Sheldon Glashow
Harvard University
1979 Nobel Prize

David J. Gross
UC, Santa Barbara
2004 Nobel Prize

John L. Hall
University of Colorado
2005 Nobel Prize

Wolfgang Ketterle
MIT
2001 Nobel Prize

David M. Lee
Cornell University
1996 Nobel Prize

T.D. Lee
Columbia University
1957 Nobel Prize

John C. Mather
University of Maryland
2006 Nobel Prize

Douglas D. Osheroff
Stanford University
1996 Nobel Prize

Martin L. Perl
Stanford University
1995 Nobel Prize

William D. Phillips
Gaithersburg
1997 Nobel Prize

H. David Politzer
California Institute of Technology
2004 Nobel Prize

George F. Smoot
UC, Berkeley
2006 Nobel Prize

Burton Richter
Stanford University
1976 Nobel Prize

Charles H. Townes
UC, Berkeley
1964 Nobel Prize

Daniel C. Tsui
Princeton University
1998 Nobel Prize

Robert W. Wilson
Harvard University
1978 Nobel Prize

Frank Wilczek
MIT
2004 Nobel Prize