



January 7, 2009

Dear President-Elect Obama:

As you stated clearly and forcefully in your campaign, federal funding for scientific research is essential to the health, prosperity, and future of our country. On behalf of the Biophysical Society and its 8300 members, I thank you for your strong support of science and your commitment to double funding for key science agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, over the next ten years. I also thank you for appointing the first career scientist to lead the Department of Energy. Dr. Steven Chu, a Biophysical Society member, is an exceptional choice for the Secretary of Energy position and his selection makes a clear and powerful statement. The Society is also pleased that you moved quickly in appointing a science advisor and we look forward to working with Dr. John Holdren during the next four years.

Your Presidency begins at a time when the U.S. is faced with many economic challenges. As you consider how to move forward with the proposals that you outlined during the campaign, and how to secure United States' standing as a global leader, the Biophysical Society asks you to consider the following recommendations.

**I. Include science funding in the stimulus package.**

The economy needs a jump start and the government must invest in projects that will create jobs. A major consideration, however, is to ensure that the investment benefits society in the long run. Scientific research and infrastructure fits these goals perfectly and presents a backlog of projects ready for investment that can achieve both the immediate and long term objectives. Scientists from across the country have submitted proposals to government agencies for funding. Experts have reviewed and rated these proposals highly. Yet, due to a lack of funding, these scientists can't get started. With stimulus dollars, government agencies could quickly fund these projects and scientists could immediately hire lab workers to develop new knowledge that will not only prevent disease and improve our health, but feed the economic pipeline for small and large businesses thriving on innovation and discovery to maintain our competitive position in the world.

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**II. Commit to providing steady predictable annual increases to the NIH, NSF, and DOE Office of Science.**

Federal funding of basic research helps the economy by creating skilled jobs at universities, teaching hospitals, and laboratories nationwide, and by creating innovative products and improved technologies. With steady reliable increases, federal agencies, universities, and individual researchers can plan multi-year projects and prevent the feast or famine situation that resulted from rapid doubling of the budgets, followed by flat funding.

**III. Provide federal support to Bridging the Sciences and research in efficient energy sources.**

Research has become much more interdisciplinary in recent years, yet the federal funding agencies have not followed it in the way they provide funding. The Bridging the Sciences demonstration program, which became law with the NIH Reform Act of 2006, aims to provide a dedicated source of support for scientists to conduct upstream and cross-disciplinary research. We are certain that supporting research at the intersection of biomedical and physical, mathematical and computational sciences will facilitate groundbreaking new knowledge that will also lead to new diagnostic and therapeutic technologies capable of saving and enhancing lives. In the past, breakthroughs such as x-ray crystallography, CAT scans, and magnetic resonance imaging were funded by sources, such as the Bell Labs, that are no longer in existence. These discoveries have had enormous and important effects on our understanding of biology, drug discovery, and health care, and today direct Federal support is required for research to work on analogous breakthrough technology.

The use of such technology by commercial markets will also stimulate the economy in the long-term by creating high-skilled jobs and addressing global energy and environmental challenges, and enable the U.S. to become less dependent on foreign energy sources.

The Biophysical Society congratulates you on your election to the Presidency. The Society, which represents a highly knowledgeable segment of the international academic and commercial scientific community, is very eager to assist your administration in formulating and prioritizing programs regarding scientific research and technology. We are confident that you will make informed decisions on these and other science-related issues and stand ready to help as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harel Weinstein', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Harel Weinstein  
President