

April 23, 2008

Sen. Byron L. Dorgan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Pete V. Domenici
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Peter J. Visclosky
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
House Committee on Appropriations
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. David Hobson
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
House Committee on Appropriations
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dorgan and Visclosky and Ranking Members Domenici and Hobson:

Our organizations are very concerned about the troubling state of nuclear science and engineering education programs at U.S. universities. The precipitous decline in the number of graduates with degrees in nuclear science, nuclear engineering, nuclear chemistry, and health physics, combined with a serious deterioration in U.S. university nuclear education capabilities, raises a very real threat to our nation's energy security and our long-term ability to support our country's nuclear energy infrastructure. To address this disturbing situation, we urge your Subcommittees to provide \$12 million in Fiscal Year 2009 for the Nuclear Science Talent Expansion Program at the Department of Energy, the same level authorized by the recently enacted and overwhelmingly bipartisan *America COMPETES Act*.

Section 5004 of the *America COMPETES Act*, which is intended to bolster academic infrastructure for nuclear education, provides:

- Significant grant assistance to universities for establishing new academic programs in nuclear science and engineering, with the goal of increasing the number of graduates in the field;
- Merit-based scholarships for students studying in the fields of nuclear science, nuclear engineering, nuclear chemistry, and health physics; and
- Grants to existing university nuclear science programs for the purposes of improving laboratory, instrumentation, and other hands-on learning resources, and recruiting new faculty.

We firmly believe that the Department of Energy's Office of Science can accomplish the mission of bolstering university academic nuclear education infrastructure as envisioned by the *America COMPETES Act*. In addition, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to provide full funding for the Nuclear Science Talent Expansion Program authorized by the *America COMPETES Act* in a manner that does not diminish the resources provided for existing Office of Science programs. Such funding is critical to ensuring we have the highly skilled technology workforce we need to address our nation's future energy challenges.

Sincerely,

Allegheny-Singer Research Institute
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Chemical Society
American Nuclear Society
American Physical Society
ASME Energy Committee
Baltimore/Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce
Council on Undergraduate Research
General Atomics
Health Physics Program Directors Organization
Health Physics Society
IEEE-USA
National Association of Manufacturers
National Science Teachers Association
National Organization of Test, Research, and Training Reactors
Nuclear Energy Institute
Nuclear Engineering Department Heads Organization
Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation
The Babcock & Wilcox Company
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Van Fleet and Associates