September 1, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader  Republican Leader
U.S. Senate  U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510  Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House  Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515  Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

We are writing today to highlight the importance of the provisions included in the Senate-passed United States Innovation and Competition Act that set aside 20% of research funding for Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) designated states.

As you know, the National Science Foundation (NSF) launched EPSCoR in 1979 to reach states that have historically received a low share of research and development (R&D) funds with the goal of enhancing their capacity to conduct nationally competitive research. But currently, EPSCoR represents only a tiny fraction of the NSF’s annual R&D budget, and severe regional inequities in federal research investment still exist. The top five states that receive the most NSF grants account for nearly 40% of the total.

The United States Innovation and Competition Act, passed on a bipartisan basis by the Senate in June to increase U.S. competitiveness in science and technology, includes important provisions to remedy this imbalance by setting aside 20% of NSF and Department of Energy research funding for the 28 EPSCoR designated states and jurisdictions that are currently underserved by R&D funds. We strongly support this approach and believe that it is necessary to leverage every state and community in the nation to remain globally competitive. With the robust investment in R&D funding included in the United States Innovation and Competition Act, this approach will continue to support states that traditionally receive a high amount of NSF research dollars while also supporting innovation in underserved regions.

As both chambers consider legislation to improve U.S. competitiveness, create new jobs, and expand economic opportunity, we urge you to incorporate these important Senate EPSCoR provisions into the conferenced bill. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you as Congress continues to consider ways to improve U.S. science and technology.
Sincerely,

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

Jerry Moran  
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator

Tom Carper  
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Lindsey Graham  
United States Senator
John Barrasso
United States Senator

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Richard Shelby
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

James Lankford
United States Senator

Sharice Davids
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Trent Kelly
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Nancy Mace
Member of Congress
Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Jake LaTurner  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Don Bacon  
Member of Congress

Teresa Leger Fernandez  
Member of Congress

Ron Estes  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

Melanie A. Stansbury  
Member of Congress

Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress