



## **FYI: The AIP Bulletin of Science Policy News**

### **Obama Administration Requests Significant Increases in S&T Funding**

[Richard M. Jones](#)

Number 14 - February 2, 2010

*“The Obama Administration is committed to scientific discovery and continued American leadership in innovation.”* - Office of Science and Technology Policy

Describing President Barack Obama as “a leader who gets it,” John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, outlined the Administration’s FY 2011 S&T request yesterday to a standing-room-only audience. The request for the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, and the laboratories at the National Institute of Standards and Technology would increase funding by 6.6 percent, or \$824 million. While this would be a significant increase in any budget request, it is particularly dramatic since the Administration kept total discretionary spending flat (with several exceptions) in its budget request.

Federal support for FY 2011 basic and applied research would increase 5.6 percent if approved by Congress, with total nondefense R&D funding up by 5.9 percent. The decision to increase funding was made against a backdrop of major problems, said Holdren, including a troubled, although recovering, economy, two wars, rising health care costs, and a growing national debt. Describing the Administration’s FY 2011 budget strategy as “not a mindless across-the-board freeze,” Holden, and accompanying OSTP documents, outlined a series of targeted investments to promote new industries and employment, cleaner energy, a healthier nation, and enhanced security.

The important linkages between science, enhanced STEM education, innovation, and a strong American economy are emphasized in Administration documents describing the FY 2011 request. An OSTP document explains:

“These investments are a cornerstone of ‘A [Strategy](#) for American Innovation: Driving Towards Sustainable Growth and Quality Jobs,’ announced by President Obama in September 2009 as a comprehensive Administration strategy to lay the foundation for the innovation economy of the future. They are also key to moving toward President Obama’s goal that as a nation, the United States should invest at least three percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in public and private R&D. Investments in the 2011

Budget build on recent investments in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (P.L. 111-5), the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act, and recently enacted 2010 appropriations.”

Regarding the effort to double the budgets of NSF, the DOE Office of Science, and the NIST laboratories, the OSTP document states:

“The 2011 Budget sustains the Administration’s commitment with \$13.3 billion total for NSF, DOE SC, and the NIST labs, an increase of \$824 million or 6.6 percent above the 2010 enacted total. These substantial increases keep the agencies on track for the fifth year of a doubling path. In addition, the 2011 Budget establishes a path to completing the doubling effort with \$19.5 billion for the three agencies in 2017, double the \$9.7 billion they received in 2006, with a special emphasis on encouraging high-risk, high-payoff research and supporting researchers at the beginning of their careers.”

Future issues of FYI will review the requests for agencies and programs of particular interest to the physics community. Select budget requests follow:

- NASA Science: Up 11.4 percent
- National Science Foundation: Up 8.0 percent
- National Institute of Standards and Technology Laboratories: Up 6.9 percent
- Department of Defense 6.1 Basic Research: Up 6.2 percent
- Department of Energy’s Office of Science: Up 4.6 percent
- National Institutes of Health: Up 3.2 percent
- National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering: Up 3.0 percent
- U.S. Geological Survey: Up 2.9 percent
- NASA: Up 1.5 percent

Of particular significance, the Administration seeks to terminate NASA’s Constellation program consisting of new Ares rockets and the Orion crew capsule.

Yesterday House Science and Technology Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN) issued the following statement regarding the Administration’s request:

I applaud the president’s commitment to R&D. I’m pleased to see continued increases for the agencies in COMPETES: National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, as well as substantial funding for DOE’s Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy. Half of the growth in our GDP since World War II has been related to the development and adoption of new technologies. Creating new technologies - especially new energy technologies - and getting them to the market is critical to maintaining our nation’s competitive edge, meeting our growing need for energy, reducing carbon emissions, and establishing U.S. leadership in these emerging fields. Ultimately, this is the path to grow our economy out of a deficit. I look forward to working with the White House and my congressional colleagues to find the most efficient ways to invest our limited federal funds, as well as ways to attract additional private-sector investments. The reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act is a key priority for the Committee this year, and I am pleased to see support from the White House to keep the agencies on a path towards doubling, as was set forth in the original legislation.

“Turning to NASA, the space agency’s budget request represents a radical departure from the bipartisan consensus achieved by Congress in successive authorizations over the past five years. This requires deliberate scrutiny. We will need to hear the Administration’s rationale for such a change and assess its impact on U.S. leadership in space before Congress renders its judgment on the proposals.”

The committee Ranking Republican Member, Ralph Hall (R-TX) focused his remarks on the cancellation of NASA’s Constellation program:

“In these tough economic times, we must prioritize federal spending to generate the greatest return on our investment. Our space program has contributed as much or more than any civilian government program to securing America’s technological and economic leadership in the world. If the President’s budget is enacted, the U.S. could lose a highly skilled and educated workforce, the cooperation of our international partners, and our competitive edge globally.

“President Obama proposes to cancel NASA’s Constellation program, which develops a new capsule and rocket, with a crew escape mechanism, to replace the aging Shuttle. The Constellation program has been established over several years of careful deliberation by both Republican and Democratic Congresses and written into law in two separate NASA Authorization bills. The American people have already invested \$9.1 billion in the Constellation system to replace the Space Shuttle.

“I am alarmed that this administration is planning to reject all that we have accomplished and instead rely on a risky new initiative to buy commercial crew services from companies that, in some cases, have little-to-no track record developing space systems. This could jeopardize our ability to ferry our own astronauts to our own International Space Station -- a project that reflects a multi-decade investment.

“It is my hope that both Republicans and Democrats will join together in a bipartisan approach to question the President on this decision. I look forward to the future hearings where the Administration will be required to justify this radical decision.”

Richard M. Jones  
Media and Government Relations Division  
American Institute of Physics  
[rjones@aip.org](mailto:rjones@aip.org)  
301-209-3095