



Biological Ecological Sciences Coalition

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June 1, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
SD-113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
SH-311 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Byrd:

We are writing to encourage you to do all that you can to fund the Administration's fiscal year 2007 budget request of \$6.02 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). As members of the Biological & Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC), we are particularly supportive of the NSF's Biological Sciences Directorate, which would receive \$607.8 million, a 5.4 percent increase, under the President's plan.

NSF funds more than 65 percent of fundamental biological research, including botany, zoology, microbiology, ecology, basic molecular and cellular biology, and systematics and taxonomy. These fields of research enhance our understanding of the natural world and contribute to the development of sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

BESC also encourages support for *all* the NSF's programs, including social and behavioral sciences research and formal and informal science education programs. Scientific discoveries increasingly depend upon interdisciplinary research efforts. Moreover, the application of innovative discoveries to the resolution of societal and environmental problems requires the insights gained from social science research. Equally important, the scientific understanding needed to appropriately address these challenges, as well as to develop the skilled work force that will grow our economy in the coming years requires a robust national commitment to science education. Programs within the NSF's Education and Human Resources directorate contribute to a more scientifically literate population.

We thank you for your prior efforts on behalf of the National Science Foundation and hope you will lend your strong support to the NSF and all its important programs.

Sincerely,

American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Museum of Natural History
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography
American Society of Plant Biologists
Biophysical Society
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Estuarine Research Federation
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Institute of Food Technologists
National Council for Science and the Environment
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Ornithological Council
Soil Science Society of America

The Biological & Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) is an alliance of organizations united to support national investment in the biological (nonmedical) sciences.