

# TAPPING AMERICA'S POTENTIAL

March 9, 2011

The Honorable Harry M. Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-522  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building, SR-361A  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Reid and McConnell:

We write to you as companies and business organizations that understand the challenge Congress faces to reduce federal budget deficits and bring the national debt under control.

We are well aware that every constituency will plead its case to be spared as you make difficult decisions. However, we believe that leaders set priorities that are in the national interest and determine where the federal government's support is essential for U.S. competitiveness, economic expansion and job growth. The private sector is doing its part to ensure that the U.S. remains the world's scientific and technological leader. Even in the midst of recessions, when revenues are in decline, U.S. businesses invest in research and development (R&D) because those activities support future sales and market leadership. American business largely preserved its R&D intensity throughout the deep economic downturn of 2008-2009.

The private sector cannot replace, however, the federal support for basic science and engineering research and math and science education that undergirds America's national economic competitiveness. Because these investments are the key to future productivity growth, they must remain a top national priority, even while deficit spending is reduced.

The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, headed by Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, said it well:

“Cut and invest to promote economic growth and keep America competitive. We should cut red tape and unproductive government spending that hinders job creation and growth. At the same time, we must invest in education, infrastructure, and **high-value research and development** to help our economy grow, keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs.”

That is why we supported passage of the America COMPETES Act in 2007 and its reauthorization in 2010. COMPETES addressed a serious national problem and began to reverse nearly twenty years of flat funding, as a fraction of national output, for federal

innovation investments. We applaud the Senate for engaging in the hard work that was necessary to achieve a bipartisan majority to enact that legislation in the previous Congress.

Even in the context of reducing overall government spending, you have an opportunity to reaffirm that commitment and continue to support the goals of the COMPETES legislation. As the Senate completes Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations, we ask that you put a priority on funding for the key agencies that support basic scientific research in the physical sciences and engineering, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs contained in the law.

As Congress determines the budget for world-class scientific facilities in the U.S., basic research of national importance, and some of the nation's best scientific and engineering brainpower, our greatest concern is the message that is communicated about America's commitment to sustaining its leadership position in science and innovation. Recent trends indicate that without sustained investment in basic scientific research and developing U.S. STEM talent, America is on a path to ceding our premiere position to international competitors.

In this resource constrained environment, we urge the Senate to prioritize and support strong funding of basic scientific research and STEM education programs. They are essential to U.S. innovation, which in turn produces the economic growth needed to restore long-term fiscal strength and national prosperity.

Sincerely,

Accenture  
Advanced Micro Devices  
Aerospace Industries Association  
Altera Corporation  
American Council on International Personnel  
A Plus Education Partnership (Alabama)  
ArvinMeritor  
Avery Dennison  
Battelle  
Bechtel Corporation  
The Boeing Company  
Business Coalition for Educational Excellence  
at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce  
The Business Council of New York State

The Business-Higher Education Forum  
Business Roundtable  
California Business for Education Excellence  
CEO Council for Growth (Greater Philadelphia)  
CH2M Hill  
Cognizant Technology Solutions  
Colorado Succeeds  
Connecticut Business & Industry Association,  
Education Foundation  
Corporate Voices for Working Families  
Delaware Business Roundtable  
The Dow Chemical Company  
DuPont Company  
Eastman Chemical Company

Eaton Corporation  
EMC  
Florida Council of 100, Inc.  
Freescale Semiconductor Inc.  
GLOBALFOUNDRIES  
Harris Corporation  
Illinois Business Roundtable  
Intel  
Iowa Business Council  
Johnson City/Jonesborough/Washington  
County TN Chamber of Commerce  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Macy's, Inc.  
Mass Insight Education and Research Institute  
Massachusetts Business Roundtable  
The McGraw-Hill Companies  
Medtronic  
Micron Technology  
Microsoft  
Minority Business Roundtable  
Motorola Solutions, Inc.  
National Gypsum Company  
NDIA  
Nevada Manufacturers Association  
New Mexico Business Roundtable  
Nucor Corporation  
Ohio Business Roundtable  
ON Semiconductor Corporation  
Oracle  
Owens Corning  
Partnership for Learning (Washington)  
Partnership for New York City  
Pennsylvania Business Council  
The Procter & Gamble Company  
Qualcomm  
Rockwell Automation  
RR Donnelley  
SAP America, Inc.  
Semiconductor Equipment and Materials  
International  
Semiconductor Industry Association  
Semiconductor Research Corporation  
Siemens Corporation  
Software & Information Industry Association  
State Farm  
Technology CEO Council  
Tennessee Business Roundtable  
Texas Instruments Incorporated  
Time Warner Cable  
Washington Roundtable

C: Members of United States Senate