

**STATEMENT OF**  
**THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS**  
**MEMBER**  
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Hearing on the FY 2010 Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
Thursday, April 2 at [TBD]  
H-309 Capitol Building

Thank you, Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf, for the opportunity to testify before you today. As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education and as a member of the House Committee on Science and Technology, I work with my colleagues to support and strengthen several agencies of great importance to our nation's technological innovation capacity. The core of that capacity depends on basic research, and I believe a vigorous research base is crucial to our national economic security. To that end, **I ask you to give high priority to scientific research and development and math and science education in fiscal year 2010 by funding the National Science Foundation (NSF) at \$7.0 billion, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at \$907 million, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at \$5.0 billion.**

Since 2006, the Administration and many Members of Congress have sought to put the scientific research agencies on a budget doubling path. The timeline of this doubling has varied from five to ten years, but there has been common agreement that sustained funding increases for science and engineering are key to our national economic competitiveness. President Obama has also registered his support for doubling the budgets of these agencies in his campaign as well as his preliminary fiscal year 2010 budget request.

The Science and Technology Committee crafted authorization bills for the NSF and NIST that set these agencies on a pathway to double their budgets by the year 2017. This work culminated in the passage of the 2007 COMPETES Act. In conference, I was pleased that the pathway for the NSF doubling was accelerated to a seven instead of ten-year pathway. I appreciate that the House and Senate strongly endorsed fundamental research and education in the fiscal year 2009 appropriations bills, and that stimulus added to those funds. "Shovel-ready science" supported by the stimulus will help immensely with long-deferred infrastructure projects, but we cannot expect it to produce immediate discoveries. Long-term, stable funding which builds on the fiscal year 2009 omnibus levels is necessary to ensure that the investments being made today will result in transformational technologies needed in the future.

Supporting the NSF is critical to maintaining our pre-eminence in science and technology. NSF investments are aimed at the frontiers of science and engineering, where advances in science and technology underpin our ability to meet many of the challenges that America faces today, including securing the homeland, preventing terrorism, fostering

innovation and economic development, and educating our children to be able to compete in the knowledge-based, global economy.

For these reasons, I urge you to fund the NSF in fiscal year 2010 at \$7.0 billion, which concurs with the request of the Administration. The funding will allow for new innovative technologies to be developed by NSF scientists and engineers and support the scientific literacy of our nation. As a testament to the importance of NSF, **more than 50 of my colleagues co-signed a letter endorsing this request**, and it is my hope that you will seriously consider funding NSF at this level.

Next, NIST is one of our nation's most critical science organizations. Almost every federal agency and U.S. industry sector uses the standards, measurements, and certification services that NIST labs provide. The future of many cutting-edge technologies depends on the research and technical expertise of NIST. Emerging fields such as nanotechnology, quantum computing, and bioengineering will not mature into U.S. job-creating industries and markets without the existence of scientifically-based industrial standards. There is no other U.S. organization, public or private, with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide these highly technical services in a non-discriminatory manner.

I ask that you provide \$907 million in fiscal year 2010 for NIST, which is the authorized level of funding provided for NIST in the COMPETES Act. This sum includes the authorized level of funding of \$132 million for the important Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program and \$141 million for the Technology Innovation Program (TIP). These last two programs help our small companies compete in the global economy and depleting them would represent a blow to innovation. I know that this Committee worked to include funding for these programs in the stimulus, but unfortunately neither was included in the final bill.

Finally, I ask that you consider funding NOAA at \$5 billion for fiscal year 2010. NOAA is faced with several challenges in the near term that justify the need for increasing the fiscal year 2010 appropriation to \$5 billion. NOAA has a mandate to maintain its satellite capabilities, which are essential for weather forecasting and other earth observing needs. The costs for such satellites and sensors will continue to increase over the next few fiscal cycles. This increase should not come at the cost of shifting funding from non-satellite programs across the agency. Sufficient funding is also necessary to support improvement in "wet" programs of NOAA, including the restoration of the Great Lakes. I am a co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus, and many of my colleagues have signed on a Dear Colleague letter to you endorsing this request.

**In summary, I respectfully urge you to give high priority to scientific research and development and math and science education in fiscal year 2009 by funding the NSF at \$7.0 billion, NIST at \$907 million, and NOAA at \$5.0 billion.**

My staff and I would be happy to help answer any further questions you have about these priorities as you prepare the subcommittee's appropriations bill. I appreciate your leadership in these areas and on the difficult funding decisions facing the Congress this year. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.