

## **President Signs \$43 Billion Science Authorization Bill to Promote Innovation and Competitiveness**

August 9, 2007 – President Bush today signed into law a massive bill that authorizes \$43 billion over the next three years for a plethora of research and science education programs. “The bill I will sign today will help ensure that we do remain the most competitive and innovative nation in the world,” Bush said before signing the bill.

The America COMPETES Act, or the “America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act,” embodies recommendations in recent innovation and competitiveness reports, especially *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* by the National Academies.

The America COMPETES Act authorizes \$22 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF) over fiscal years 2008 - 2010, putting it on a path to double its budget in approximately 7 years. Particularly strong increases are authorized in fiscal year 2008 for K-12 education programs at NSF.

The bill authorizes nearly \$17 billion to Department for Energy (DOE) programs over fiscal years 2008 – 2010, keeping DOE’s Office of Science on a seven-year doubling path. It also establishes an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy, or ARPA-E, which is designed to engage in high-risk, high reward research under the Department of Energy.

The 407-page bill contains numerous additional provisions regarding NSF, DOE, NIST, NASA, NOAA, the Department of Education, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Many leaders in Congress praised the bill for creating good jobs in the United States. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said, “By focusing and investing in four key areas – math and science education, research and development, energy independence, and small businesses – the America COMPETES Act will launch new thriving industries that will produce millions of good jobs here at home and a better future for the next generation.”

“This is the prime model of bipartisan cooperation on a massively important issue to every citizen of our country,” said Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), who guided the bill through the Senate. “The America COMPETES Act is a direct response to the challenge our country faces in keeping our brainpower advantage so our good jobs don’t go overseas to places like India and China.”

Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN), Chairman of the House Committee on Science and Technology, said, “Now is the time for us to strengthen our support for the creativity, the innovation and the talented workforce that makes the U.S. unique and gives us our competitive edge.”

Differing versions of the legislation initially passed the U.S. House of Representatives in May and the U.S. Senate in July. House and Senate negotiators worked quietly for several weeks to resolve differences between the two bills. On August 2, the final compromise passed the House by a vote of 367-57 and passed the Senate by unanimous consent.

The President signed the bill into law despite reservations about parts of the package. A statement released by the White House says, “The President is concerned that the legislation includes excessive authorizations and new duplicative programs. The bill creates over 30 new programs that are mostly duplicative or counterproductive – including a new Department of Energy agency to fund late-stage technology development more appropriately left to the private sector – and also provides excessive authorization for existing programs. Accordingly, the President will request funding in his 2009 budget for those authorizations that support the focused priorities of the ACI [American Competitiveness Initiative], but will not propose excessive or duplicative funding based on authorizations in the bill.”

It is important to distinguish this multi-year authorization bill from the annual appropriations bills that determine the actual funding levels for the science agencies under consideration. An authorization bill is neither necessary nor sufficient to appropriate funds for federal agencies and programs. The White House has already indicated that President Bush will not ask Congress to appropriate all of the funding that is authorized in the American COMPETES Act. Nevertheless, enactment of the America COMPETES Act reflects strong, bipartisan support for increasing the nation’s investment in research and science education.

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