Science and the Public Interest
An Open Letter to President-Elect Trump and the 115th Congress

Scientific knowledge has played a critical role in making the United States a powerful and prosperous nation and improving the health and well-being of Americans and people around the world. From disease outbreaks to climate change to national security to technology innovation, people benefit when our nation's policies are informed by science unfettered by inappropriate political or corporate influence.

To build on this legacy and extend the benefits of science to all people, including Americans who have been left behind, the federal government must support and rely on science as a key input for crafting public policy. Policy makers and the public alike require access to high-quality scientific information to serve the public interest. There are several actions Congress and the Trump administration should take to strengthen the role that science plays in policy making.

First, creating a strong and open culture of science begins at the top. Federal agencies should be led by officials with demonstrated track records of respecting science as a critical component of decision making. Further, recognizing that diversity makes science stronger, administration officials should welcome and encourage all scientists regardless of religious background, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Second, Congress and the Trump administration should ensure our nation's bedrock public health and environmental laws—such as the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act—retain a strong scientific foundation, and that agencies are able to freely collect and draw upon scientific data to effectively carry out statutory responsibilities established by these laws. They should also safeguard the independence of those outside the government who provide scientific advice.

Third, Congress and the Trump administration should adhere to high standards of scientific integrity and independence in responding to current and emerging public health and environmental threats. Decision makers and the public need to know what the best-available scientific evidence is, not what vested interests might wish it to be. Federally funded scientists must be able to develop and share their findings free from censorship or manipulation based on politics or ideology. These scientists should, without fear of reprisal or retaliation, have the freedom and responsibility to:

- conduct their work without political or private-sector interference;
- candidly communicate their findings to Congress, the public, and their scientific peers;
- publish their work and participate meaningfully in the scientific community;
- disclose misrepresentation, censorship, and other abuses of science; and
- ensure that scientific and technical information coming from the government is accurate.

Finally, Congress and the Trump administration should provide adequate resources to enable scientists to conduct research in the public interest and effectively and transparently carry out their agencies' missions. The consequences are real: without this investment, children will be more vulnerable to lead poisoning, more people will be exposed to unsafe drugs and medical devices, and we will be less prepared to limit the impacts of increasing extreme weather and rising seas.

These steps are necessary to create a thriving scientific enterprise that will strengthen our democracy and bring the full fruits of science to all Americans and the world. The scientific community is fully prepared to constructively engage with and closely monitor the actions of the Trump administration and Congress. We will continue to champion efforts that strengthen the role of science in policy making and stand ready to hold accountable any who might seek to undermine it.

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