

15 June 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States of America (IEEE-USA), I am writing to urge Congress and the Obama Administration to maintain a stable, consistent long-term federal investment in science and engineering research and development (R&D).

While we realize that the country is undergoing a uneven economic recovery and that tough budgetary decisions will have to be made, we encourage Congress and the Administration to keep in mind that science and engineering R&D are key drivers of economic growth and the lifeblood of national innovation and competitiveness. Economists estimate that up to half of the U.S. economic growth in the last five decades is due to advances in technology. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports a return on investments of more than 15 percent on R&D.

Engineering and science R&D is one of the largest job creators in the United States. Advances in areas such as integrated circuits, computer science, electro-optics and signal processing have created new markets, including information technology, the Internet, computer-aided design and manufacturing, laser technology, Global Positioning Systems, and high-tech medical diagnostic equipment. The R&D portfolio is also a vital element of national security.

Despite this, federal funding for R&D in all engineering and science fields has been flat or declining for more than 30 years. To be optimally successful, the nation's investments in research must be balanced across engineering and science; between short-term needs for practical applications of state of the art technologies; and between longer-term searches for promising future technologies.

IEEE-USA believes that effective competitiveness and innovation policies will sustain U.S. technological leadership and encourage the development of a skilled, creative and competitive workforce critical for U.S. prosperity and national security. To accomplish this goal, the United States needs sustained commitment for supporting fundamental research in the physical sciences, and for improving education, training and lifelong learning. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of 210,000 engineering, computing and technology professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE. <http://www.ieeeusa.org>. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Bill Williams in our Washington office at (202) 530-8331 or email at bill.williams@ieee.org.

Sincerely,



Ronald G. Jensen
IEEE-USA President