



Ecological Society of America

1990 M St, NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20036

September 14, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Commerce, Science and
Transportation Committee
420-A Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) writes in support of the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R. 7308, S. 4286), which authorizes approximately \$26 billion in emergency relief for federal science agencies – such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation and others – to award to research universities, independent institutions, and national laboratories to continue working on federally-funded research projects. We urge the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee to advance the RISE Act to the full Senate.

COVID-19 has disrupted or suspended research activities across the US. It is critical that Congress take steps to fully restore our nation's valuable research enterprise, which has led us to be a global leader in innovation, improved the health of our citizens, and strengthened our economy and national security.

The RISE Act would help relieve the strains our federal science agencies are facing and maintain leadership in an increasingly competitive global research ecosystem. It would enable graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and Principal Investigators to complete work that was disrupted by COVID-19 or extend the training or employment of researchers on an existing research project for up to two years because of the disruption of the job market.

Not only would the funding seek to improve U.S. research competitiveness and pandemic preparedness, but it would also provide critical support to the nation's economy. According to IRIS data, American universities used research funds to pay more than 560,000 people on campuses across the country in fiscal year 2018-2019. The RISE Act will help ensure that this important sector of the economy continues to thrive even after the pandemic subsidies.

Founded in 1915, ESA is the world's largest community of professional ecologists and a trusted source of ecological knowledge, committed to advancing the understanding of life on Earth. The 9,000-member Society publishes five journals and a membership bulletin and broadly shares ecological information through policy, media outreach, and education initiatives. ESA members receive funding from the National Science Foundation, the US Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agencies and other federal agencies to conduct research needed to understand

and address environmental challenges.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We urge passage of RISE Act and at least \$26 billion dollars in research funding in the next coronavirus relief package

Catherine O’Riordan
Executive Director