Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2013

The Honorable Jeffrey Zients
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Acting Director Zients:

As you continue discussions with the Department of Energy (DOE) regarding the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Congressional Budget Request, we write to express our strong support for the DOE Office of Science and its Nuclear Physics program. In addition, we strongly urge you to act on the recommendation of the Nuclear Science Advisory Committee (NSAC) and increase the overall baseline for the DOE Office of Science and Nuclear Physics program by an additional $50 million above the FY 2013 request.

We know from past experiences that sufficient funding for this kind of research has the critical potential to have a substantial positive impact on the economy. Making federal funding for nuclear physics a high priority is necessary to expand our knowledge about the makeup of the universe through basic scientific discovery, as well as ensure that Americans benefit from better medical imaging and diagnostic tools, new cancer therapies, advanced tools to deter nuclear proliferation, and innovative energy storage systems that develop as a result of this research.

Another reason this request is vital is that our world-class nuclear physics facilities and research play a critical role in recruiting talented men and women into the nuclear physics discipline. Reducing federal support for nuclear physics will signal a weakened commitment to this vital component of scientific research, thus discouraging the next generation of scientific leaders from pursuing careers in nuclear physics. This will also ultimately reduce our global role in scientific advancement and leave us less prepared to address nuclear security challenges.

Our economic competitors in China, India and other countries now repeat our approach to innovation, and are increasing their rate of investment in research and development (R&D). As a result, more of their students obtain undergraduate and doctoral degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields as opportunities resulting from increased investment in R&D in those nations grow. They are harnessing the power of science and technology to compete with the U.S. economically and strategically; it is imperative that we continue to do the same.

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Strengthening federal support for nuclear physics will fuel the engine of scientific discovery and technological innovation necessary for the United States to maintain its position as a scientific and economic leader. Therefore, we strongly urge you to increase the baseline for the DOE Office of Science and Nuclear Physics program by an additional $50 million above the FY 2013 request. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tim Bishop
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable William Brinkman, Acting Under Secretary for Science, Department of Energy