

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Jim Baird at R&T Subcommittee Hearing on FY20 NSF Budget

May 8, 2019

Opening Statement

Good morning Chairwoman Stevens. Thank you for convening today's hearing on the Fiscal Year 2020 budget request for the National Science Foundation (NSF). I appreciate this opportunity to learn more about the National Science Foundation and its mission to promote the progress of science.

The NSF is the only federal agency that supports basic research across all scientific fields from biology to physics.

As a trained PhD scientist, I know that basic research is the seed that grows into the products and solutions that drive our economy and improve our lives.

The NSF also plays a critical role in helping educate and train the next generation of STEM workers. We need to invest in young people who will go into fields where there is a national need and good paying jobs.

Earlier this year, I joined Chairwoman Stevens in introducing the Building Blocks of STEM Act. I look forward to moving that bill forward and working with NSF to make sure we are giving young students a foundation to continue in STEM studies.

For the U.S. to remain competitive, we must ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate in STEM fields and build valuable, fulfilling careers.

In my district, I am proud to represent Purdue University, Indiana's Land Grant University. NSF funded nearly \$68 million in groundbreaking research at Purdue last year. To share just one example, NSF is funding an engineering research center at Purdue, which is developing new technologies to produce fuels from U.S. shale-gas deposits that could inject \$20 billion annually into the economy. This is an example of the potential impact of NSF funded research.

As we've heard, the president's budget request for NSF is just over 7 billion, a 12.5 percent decrease from last year's enacted funding. Like all other agencies and departments, NSF was forced to make tough choices. The budget request reflects an attempt to set priorities in a constrained budgetary environment.

The budget request prioritizes funding for critical areas like artificial intelligence, quantum technology, and advanced manufacturing. I look forward to hearing about these new investments.

But the president's budget proposal is just that, a budget proposal. It's ultimately up to Congress to decide at what level NSF is funded.

We have a constitutional obligation and a responsibility to ensure every taxpayer dollar spent is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. I appreciate that today's hearing gives us the opportunity to fulfil that duty.

I thank the witnesses for being here today and yield back the balance of my time.