

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 753

To enhance scientific research and competitiveness through the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 2, 2007

Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. REED, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. COCHRAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To enhance scientific research and competitiveness through the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “EPSCoR Research and
5 Competitiveness Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Ensuring regional diversity in research
2 funding is an essential strategy in strengthening
3 international competitiveness.

4 (2) Economic development in high technology
5 fields is often advanced by industrial partnerships
6 located nearby research institutions from which com-
7 panies can acquire intellectual property, highly
8 trained staff, and vital resources.

9 (3) The National Science Foundation is an
10 independent Federal agency created by Congress in
11 1950 “to promote the progress of science; to ad-
12 vance the national health, prosperity and welfare,
13 and to secure the national defense”.

14 (4) Congress has subsequently directed that, “it
15 shall be an objective of the Foundation to strengthen
16 research and education in the sciences and engineer-
17 ing, including independent research by individuals,
18 throughout the United States, and to avoid undue
19 concentration of such research and education”.

20 (5) Currently, Foundation research investments
21 are concentrated in a small number of States. In
22 contrast, 25 other States together receive less than
23 10 percent of the Foundation’s research funding, yet
24 these States are home to 20 percent of the popu-
25 lation, 25 percent of doctoral/research universities,

1 and 18 percent of academic scientists and engineers,
2 and train nearly 20 percent of science and engineer-
3 ing graduate students.

4 (6) Insufficient research infrastructure dimin-
5 ishes the ability of many universities to compete ef-
6 fectively for research funding, and thereby limits
7 their contributions to regional economic development
8 and international competitiveness.

9 (7) The Foundation’s Experimental Program to
10 Stimulate Competitive Research, or EPSCoR, is the
11 primary program by which the Foundation seeks to
12 improve the research infrastructure of institutions in
13 States that presently receive small portions of Foun-
14 dation funding. EPSCoR is thus an important com-
15 ponent of national efforts to increase innovation and
16 improve competitiveness.

17 (8) EPSCoR jurisdictions possess strong
18 science and technology resources that can be utilized
19 to address national priorities and needs in areas
20 such as “energy”, where EPSCoR States account
21 for 7 of the 10 leading energy producing States;
22 “health”, where EPSCoR States’ medical univer-
23 sities have developed IT-based distance medical care
24 for their rural populations; “defense”, where
25 EPSCoR universities are producing “high” tech

1 tools for military; “homeland security”, where
2 EPSCoR universities are developing tools to monitor
3 human and animal traffic across some of the world’s
4 longest open borders; and cyber infrastructure,
5 where nearly all EPSCoR universities are making
6 significant investments for the future.

7 (9) Full participation by EPSCoR jurisdictions
8 in National Science Foundation science and engi-
9 neering programs will enable these jurisdictions to
10 contribute to National Science Foundation efforts to
11 increase the number of United States born students
12 who enter science and engineering disciplines. Pro-
13 viding resources to EPSCoR universities will enable
14 the American born students who are trained by
15 these institutions to fill an important workforce need
16 in science and technology areas.

17 (10) Existing National Science Foundation
18 EPSCoR award mechanisms need to be more flexible
19 and longer-term, reflecting the particular needs of
20 different States and regions. There should also be
21 better use by EPSCoR of existing National Science
22 Foundation grant mechanisms that effectively serve
23 other National Science Foundation research pro-
24 grams.

1 **SEC. 3. FUNDING.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Foun-
3 dation for EPSCoR—

4 (1) \$125,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

5 (2) for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012,
6 an amount equal to the sum of—

7 (A) \$125,000,000; and

8 (B) \$125,000,000 multiplied by a percent-
9 age equal to the percentage by which the Foun-
10 dation's budget request for such fiscal year ex-
11 ceeds the total amount appropriated to the
12 Foundation for fiscal year 2008.

13 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT**
14 **GRANTS.**

15 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—In the administration of the
16 Foundation's research infrastructure improvement grant
17 program, the Director shall authorize States participating
18 in the grant program to include partnerships with out-of-
19 State research institutions if the amount of funding trans-
20 ferred to another State does not exceed 5 percent of the
21 amount of the grant in any fiscal year.

22 (b) **AUTHORIZATION LEVEL.**—From amounts appro-
23 priated pursuant to section 3, the Director shall make
24 available to the research infrastructure improvement grant
25 program—

26 (1) \$65,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

1 (2) for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012,
2 an amount equal to the sum of—

3 (A) \$75,000,000; and

4 (B) \$75,000,000 multiplied by a percent-
5 age equal to the percentage by which the Foun-
6 dation's budget request for such fiscal year ex-
7 ceeds the total amount appropriated to the
8 Foundation for fiscal year 2008.

9 **SEC. 5. CO-FUNDING.**

10 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—For each of fiscal years 2008
11 through 2012, the Director shall obligate and expend not
12 less than 20 percent of the amount available for EPSCoR
13 on co-funding projects that are ranked, by a peer-review
14 process, in the top 20 percent of all proposals submitted
15 in response to an announced competition.

16 (b) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—The Director shall submit an
17 annual report to the Committee on Commerce, Science,
18 and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on
19 Science of the House of Representatives that provides in-
20 formation about—

21 (1) co-funded projects on a State-by-State basis
22 for the preceding year; and

23 (2) the amount and use of co-funding by each
24 of the Foundation's directorates for that year.

1 **SEC. 6. CYBER INFRASTRUCTURE.**

2 Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment
3 of this Act, the Director, through the Office of Cyber In-
4 frastructure, shall develop and publish a plan enabling
5 States participating in EPSCoR to participate fully in the
6 Foundation’s Cyber Infrastructure Initiative.

7 **SEC. 7. MAJOR RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION.**

8 Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment
9 of this Act, the Director, through the Office of Major Re-
10 search Instrumentation, shall develop and publish a plan
11 enabling States participating in EPSCoR to develop part-
12 nerships and participate fully in the Foundation’s major
13 research instrumentation program.

14 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act:

16 (1) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
17 the Director of the National Science Foundation.

18 (2) EPSCoR.—The term “EPSCoR” means
19 the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive
20 Research authorized by section 113 of the National
21 Science Foundation Authorization Act of 1988 (42
22 U.S.C. 1862g).

23 (3) FOUNDATION.—The term “Foundation”
24 means the National Science Foundation.

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