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## **FASEB Supports SEAB Task Force Recommendations on the Future of Science Programs at DOE**

**Bethesda, Md.** — In a letter to Spencer Abraham, Secretary of the Department of Energy, FASEB President, Robert D. Wells, Ph.D., urged the adoption of the recommendations of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) Task Force on the Future of Science Programs at DOE. In addition, he expressed support for the 20-year facility plan that Secretary Abraham announced in November of 2003. “The thoughtful implementation of the plan,” Dr. Wells stated, “in conjunction with the adoption of these recommendations, will help ensure the health of the Nation’s research activities and the achievement of DOE’s mission.”

The network of national laboratories and scientific user facilities operated by DOE has led to profound breakthroughs in medicine, environmental science, biology and physics that continue to transform the way we all live. According to Dr. Wells, “Work at the interface of frontier disciplines like bioinformatics, genomics, proteomics and nanotechnology is greatly enhanced by DOE’s capacity in large-scale computational and research tools based upon physical science and engineering.”

FASEB also concurs with the Task Force in recognizing the need to reverse past decades of static investment in science and engineering. This lack of federal support has affected the ability of DOE to maintain the national laboratories, which are critical resources for the research and development of new technologies.

Of the 10 Task Force recommendations, Dr. Wells highlighted the need for merit-based competition, collaboration with industry and academia, increased investment in DOE’s science programs and an increased role for the Agency in the education and training of scientists and engineers.

*FASEB is comprised of 22 societies with more than 65,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB’s mission is to enhance the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB serves the interests of these scientists in those areas related to public policy, facilitates coalition activities among Member Societies and disseminates information on biological research through scientific conferences and publications.*

January 9, 2004

Spencer Abraham  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, our 22 member societies and their 65,000 members, I am pleased to announce our support of the recommendations of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) Task Force on the Future of Science Programs at DOE.

The ability to conduct interdisciplinary research of increasing complexity is especially important in today's rapidly changing world. Work at the interface of frontier disciplines like bioinformatics, genomics, proteomics and nanotechnology is greatly enhanced by DOE's capacity in large-scale computational and research tools that are based upon physical science and engineering. Furthermore, the interface between physical science and life science is crucial as we continue to increase our capacity to work at very small scales and to probe the dynamic, three-dimensional structure of molecules.

In consideration of DOE's significance and accomplishments, FASEB concurs with the Task Force in recognizing the need to reverse past decades of static investment in science and engineering. This lack of federal support has affected the ability of DOE to maintain the national laboratories, which are critical resources for the research and development of new technologies. These unique research facilities are of a scope, cost and focus beyond the realm of either the industrial sector or universities.

FASEB is fully supportive of the Task Force's list of recommendations. However, there are three recommendations that I would like to highlight. First, the greater use of merit-based competition and collaboration with industry and academia can indeed lead to further advancement in DOE's mission areas. Second, DOE's investment in the physical sciences and advanced engineering research needs to be increased given our Nation's current energy and environmental concerns and the lack of significant funding increases over the past three decades. Finally, DOE should enhance its role in educating and training scientists and engineers. Without an adequate supply of innovative scientists, the ability of the U.S. to meet its future energy needs and the overall health of our scientific resources will be compromised.

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In addition to its backing of the Task Force's suggestions, FASEB would also like to express its support for the 20-year facility plan that you announced in November of 2003. The thoughtful implementation of the plan, in conjunction with the adoption of these recommendations, will help ensure the health of the Nation's research activities and the achievement of DOE's mission.

FASEB urges DOE to adopt the recommendations of this Task Force.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Wells, Ph.D.