



FASEB

Federation of American Societies
for Experimental Biology

Representing Over 130,000 Researchers

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www.faseb.org

9650 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi,
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20150

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy and Schumer:

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), a coalition of 28 biological and biomedical scientific societies collectively representing over 130,000 individual scientists and engineers, commends the swift actions of Congress and the President to enact the \$8.3 billion Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. These funds will help address immediate public health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as support additional research to understand the virus, develop rapid diagnostics, vaccines, and effective treatments and deploy them to the public.

As Congress continues to take actions in response to the pandemic, FASEB joins other professional scientific societies in urging that associations, non-profit organizations, and other tax-exempt organizations be included within any additional economic stimulus packages or supplemental appropriations measures related to the coronavirus. Many scientific societies have been and will continue to be adversely impacted by meeting and conference cancellations as a result of COVID-19.

Our members organize meetings and conferences of various sizes throughout the year serving tens of thousands of scientists, trainees, graduate students, and research personnel. Over the last few weeks, many of our members have cancelled annual meetings including Experimental Biology, the US Human Proteome Organization (US HUPO) 2020 Annual Conference, ENDO 2020 hosted by the Endocrine Society, IMMUNOLOGY 2020™ hosted by the American Association of Immunologists, and The Allied Genetics Conference (TAGC) 2020 organized by the Genetics Society of America, and the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting and ToxExpo as well as several others. Regional seminars, symposiums, and workshops have also been cancelled or postponed.

The conferences and meetings organized by FASEB societies that have already been cancelled or face cancellation bring together thousands of life scientists from academic institutions, government agencies,

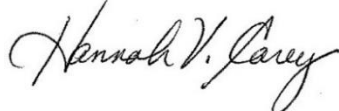
and industry to share the latest cutting-edge research and foster interdisciplinary collaborations across the life sciences. These conferences also play a critical role in discussing fundamental scientific questions related to emerging scientific issues including current and future public health emergencies such as COVID-19. In addition, scientific meetings provide valuable on-site career and mentoring services for the next generation of researchers, as well as offer a venue to highlight innovative products and services integral to a broad range of disciplines.

Scientific professional societies draw no benefit from tax credits that may help other industries. Those societies that have had to cancel or postpone conferences and meetings stand to lose a significant source of their annual revenue. This loss is compounded by other costs including significant cancellation penalties, legal fees resulting from negotiations with host venues, and administrative expenses related to processing registration refunds. In addition, organizations that have received federal support for cancelled conferences and meetings will need to return these funds to the government. As 501(c)(3) non-profits, most scientific societies do not have sufficient financial reserves or additional sources of revenue to make up for the loss of funds brought in through their annual meeting and other events.

The federal government should extend zero-interest loans and grants to scientific societies. This would not only help them withstand the current economic impact of cancelled meetings but also allow them to continue their work in service to the life sciences and to explore ways to expand and partially replace their in-person conferences with virtual options where possible.

Following the latest guidance from public health officials and in light of travel restrictions and emergency declarations to help contain the spread of the coronavirus, scientific professional societies took the right course of action and cancelled meetings and conferences scheduled throughout the United States this year. Given that this is an especially critical time for frequent, open, and transparent communication of science and the exchange of critical data to ensure that the public is fully informed about the coronavirus as well as other emerging infectious diseases, FASEB respectfully requests that relief for non-profit organizations be included in the economic stimulus legislation currently being considered by the House and Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hannah V. Carey".

Hannah V. Carey, PhD
President