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January 6, 2009

**The Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate  
Office of Senator John Kerry  
304 Russell Senate Building, 3rd Floor  
Washington, DC 20510**

**Dear Senator Kerry:**

**The Massachusetts Life Science Collaborative is a broad-based coalition of leaders from industry and academia committed to the growth of the life sciences in the Commonwealth. As co-chairs of the Collaborative, we want to congratulate you on your re-election to the United States Senate and look forward to working with you on issues of critical import to the life sciences cluster in Massachusetts and throughout the nation.**

**Like all Americans, we are deeply aware of the implications of the current economic crisis on workers, families and businesses across the country. We know that there will be many critical needs competing for limited federal dollars in any future stimulus legislation. We are also cognizant of the need to target federal investments in ways that assure impact broadly throughout the economy.**

**In this context, we write to you today to urge that you consider increased funding for the National Institutes of Health in any contemplated stimulus package. We do so because as academic and business leaders intimately involved in biomedical research and life sciences industry, we are confident that NIH funding can have a near immediate economic impact not only here in Massachusetts but in regions throughout the United States. As a result of the many highly-rated NIH grants currently waiting in the agency's pipeline, any new funds could be allocated and put to use quickly. These funds would not only support important scientific work, but also stimulate local economies by the creation on average of seven new jobs for every grant awarded.**

**The infusion of federal funding into the NIH at the start of this century fueled a scientific transformation in many fields of biological research and set the course for accelerated advances in a broad range of disciplines. New fields like genomics and proteomics, and powerful new medical technologies, have enabled scientists to investigate biological phenomena that were outside our range of vision only a decade ago. By illuminating the genetic errors that may lead to disease, these advances have shown new pathways towards the creation of new therapies.**

# Massachusetts LIFE SCIENCES Collaborative

NIH grants also contribute directly and substantially to the economic health of the nation. It is estimated that each NIH dollar results in more than twice that amount in economic output. With an overall extramural research budget of \$22.846 billion in 2007, NIH generated a total of \$50.5 billion in economic impact. The average wage of the estimated 350,000 jobs nationally that NIH supports is \$52,000 (collectively generating \$18 billion in wages). Ten percent of the NIH funding for biomedical research is secured by Massachusetts institutions. Furthermore, the impact of life sciences funding reaches other important sectors such as energy, defense, software and IT as significant overlaps are growing. Along these lines, it is important to strengthen related funding programs such as DOE and NSF as the research supported by these agencies play an important role, often interwoven with breakthroughs in the life sciences, in fostering improved health and fueling new innovations.

While the positive economic impacts of NIH funding are demonstrable, so too are the long-term negative effects of five consecutive years of funding levels below inflation. NIH is now funding less than two of every ten grant applications, often only after multiple resubmissions and 18-24 months of delay. The result is a slowdown in scientific progress, a reduction in the new business spin outs derived from biomedical research, and a delay in the delivery of new therapies to patients. But, an even more insidious consequence of this erosion of NIH support is the way it has discouraged the next generation of scientific leaders from pursuing careers in biomedical research. The average age of a first time recipient of a major NIH grant is 43 years old and rising; a fact that creates pause for even the most optimistic young scientist.

We are confident that increased funding of NIH will stimulate economic activity and job growth throughout the country in the short term, and also advance critical longer term economic interests of the United States by stabilizing our position in the worldwide competition to attract and support the best and brightest minds to biomedical research.

We respectfully request that you consider the addition of increased NIH funding to whatever stimulus legislation may be under consideration by the Congress in the next weeks and months.

Sincerely,



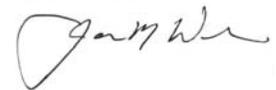
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