



**For Immediate Release
April 29, 2009**

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**HOUSE R&D CAUCUS AND SCIENCE ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP LINK
SCIENCE RESEARCH TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

***Co-Chairs Holt and Biggert, Scientists, Engineers and Graduate Students
Discuss Importance of Investing in Research and Innovation***

Washington, D.C. - Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Judy Biggert (R-IL), Co-Chairs of the House Research and Development Caucus, joined with members of The Science Coalition (TSC) and the Science Engineering and Technology Working Group (SETWG) today to urge Congress and the Obama Administration to keep funding for science research strong. Speakers linked funding for science research to new infrastructure and new jobs. Participants agreed that those investments in research have the effect of lifting regional and local economies across the United States. Several speakers praised President Barack Obama's pledge earlier this week at the National Academy of Sciences to increase spending for research and development to more than 3 percent of the nation's GDP.

"It is significant that President Barack Obama put research in the economic section of his inaugural address and placed it at the heart of his American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," Representative Holt said. "We have the opportunity to drive home the message that research is something you invest in year in, year out, not only in good times or in times of economic collapse."

Representative Biggert remarked that she had recently visited Argonne National Laboratory in her district, where she saw how research funds are being spent on new scientific discoveries such as next generation vehicle batteries, alternative energy technologies, crash testing, and supercomputer modeling of traffic patterns. "Argonne's work has helped to create dozens of spin-off businesses that are commercializing these technologies and creating new high-tech industries all around the country," she said.

"Engineers create jobs," said Dr. Gordon Day, president of IEEE-USA (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), explaining that research projects touch more people than those immediately involved. Depending on the nature of the project, it may involve hiring student researchers, tradespersons, manufacturing staff, and builders.

That theme was picked up by Dr. John Huchra of Harvard, president of AAS (American Astronomical Society) and Senior Advisor to the Provost for Research Policy at Harvard University, who said that often basic research develops into important scientific discoveries that might not have been anticipated at the time of the discovery. For example, he said, cameras originally developed for astronomers are used in heart surgery, and imaging technology used by astronomers has been redeveloped for use in discovery of breast cancer.

Dr. Ralph James, president-elect of SPIE, an international society advancing light based research and a manager at Brookhaven National Laboratory, also made the connection between research and federal funding. "Stimulus funds have been game-changing at Brookhaven," he said. The lab will receive funds to build the National Synchrotron Light Source II, a project that will produce X-rays 10,000 times brighter than an existing version. According to Dr. James, it is expected to yield energy breakthroughs in nano-structured photovoltaic cells, solid state electronics; it will also have an effect in other disciplines, such as medicine, environmental sciences and national security.

Dr. James Smith, president of SAE International, a professional engineering society focused on mobility in the aerospace, automotive, and commercial vehicle sectors and a professor at West Virginia University, commented that ongoing investment is critical because often the full potential of one innovation isn't realized until other, later, innovations come along. He added: "New concepts in wind turbines were developed when I was a graduate student, but until several other technologies matured, the use of that advanced turbine technology was not possible. Now that wind turbine technology is coming into use at last – it is likely to create as many as 1500 jobs."

MIT graduate student Lauren Culver explained how important long-range science research funding is to students who are contemplating careers in science. "Some students leave school prematurely because funding for their research is not available," she said. "America's young people will rise to the challenge of discovering solutions to problems, if given the opportunity," she added.

Other participants included Virginia Connolly, president of the Society of Women Engineers, Dr. Randy Keller, Councilor, Geological Society of America and Chair, Geology and Geophysics Department, University of Oklahoma, and MIT graduate student Gary Shu.

The press briefing was part of the annual "Congressional Visits Day" sponsored by the Science Engineering and Technology Working Group (SETWG), which is comprised of more than 30 organizations representing a broad cross section of science and technology in academia, government and private industry.

The Science Coalition is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization representing 48 of the nation's leading public and private research universities. It is dedicated to sustaining the federal government's commitment to U.S. leadership in basic science.