ScienceWorksForUS

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Universities Highlight Benefits of Stimulus Research Funding

On Anniversary of Recovery Act, ScienceWorksForUS Provides Nearly 100 Examples of Groundbreaking Science and Infrastructure Investments

February 17, 2010 – On the first anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – the economic stimulus – the nation's research universities today provided nearly 100 examples of how a relatively small element of the measure is paying outsize short- and long-term dividends for the nation. Of the $787 billion contained in the ARRA, $21.5 billion is allocated for research and science infrastructure.

ScienceWorksForUS, a coalition of three associations and more than 160 public and private U.S. research universities, issued "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act One Year Later: Recovery Act-Funded Research Advancing Science, Aiding the Economy and Contributing to America's Prosperous Future." The report highlights nearly 100 examples of research on diseases, energy, climate, science education, and a host of other areas that are sustaining or creating new jobs in the short run and hold the promise of breakthroughs that can lay the foundation for long-term prosperity.

Examples of the highlighted research include a study of the relationship between depression and heart disease at Emory University; obesity research at Cornell University that tests a variety of strategies for encouraging better nutrition and eating habits, and at Washington University in St. Louis focused on helping overweight children lose weight and keep it off; a study of advanced battery technology and energy storage at Arizona State University, and creation of an Energy Frontier Research Center at Northwestern University that will look at new materials and their role in solar energy conversion, catalysis, and storage of electricity and hydrogen; separate efforts to advance clean coal technology at Western Michigan University and The Ohio State University; and development of more environmentally friendly methods of manufacturing pharmaceuticals at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

ScienceWorksForUS also released statements from university presidents, chancellors, and senior research officers across the country describing how Recovery Act science funding is benefitting their campuses and communities, creating or sustaining jobs, purchasing or restoring vital scientific infrastructure, and supporting groundbreaking research.

For example, Robert Birgeneau, chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, said that the more than $68 million in stimulus money received by its researchers, primarily from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, has been "a godsend." He added, "Thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we estimate that we have been able to create or retain nearly 150 jobs while stimulating innovative research in a broad range of areas, from public health and biomedicine to engineering and physics. Much of this research will lay the foundation for future rapid economic growth with the potential to both create whole new industries and to revolutionize existing ones."

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Princeton University President Shirley M. Tilghman said, “Recovery Act awards are allowing some of the world's top scientists to address many of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, including cancer and infectious diseases, climate change and the energy crisis, and the skyrocketing demand for access to information. In addition, recently announced awards from the Department of Energy are providing vital support to exceedingly promising physicists in the formative stages of their careers at Princeton and at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, where additional Recovery Act investment also has enabled the hiring of physicists and engineers who are advancing cutting-edge efforts to develop a sustainable fusion energy source for the future.”

President Obama signed the ARRA into law on February 17, 2009. The $21.5 billion for research and development, the purchase of scientific equipment, and science-related construction projects was approximately three percent of the overall stimulus.

The Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and The Science Coalition created ScienceWorksForUS to demonstrate the benefits of the ARRA science funding.

Recovery Act-funded research is happening in every state. The website www.ScienceWorksForUS.org provides more than 500 examples, with contributions from all 50 states.

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