

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2208

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Mike Simpson
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As the subcommittee prepares its Fiscal Year 2018 Energy and Water appropriations legislation, we respectfully request that you continue to provide strong support for the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Science and, in particular, the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) within the Nuclear Physics program.

As you know, DOE's Nuclear Physics program is vital to national interests, including homeland security, nuclear nonproliferation, and developing advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies for cancer and other diseases. Importantly, the program also contributes to maintaining the safety of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. According to a 2013 report from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the Office of Science's nuclear physics facilities are able to provide capabilities that "allow NNSA to address important questions for the stewardship mission without constructing new, dedicated systems."

FRIB is a prime example of a cutting-edge nuclear physics initiative. The facility originally proposed in 2001, the Rare Isotope Accelerator (RIA), was estimated to cost \$1.1 billion. When it became clear that RIA was too expensive to build, the U.S. nuclear physics community quickly mobilized together to develop an alternate, more feasible design. Thus FRIB was conceived, preserving most of RIA's scientific ability at roughly half the cost.

After a competitive selection process, Michigan State University was chosen as the site at which to build this new research facility. The DOE and Michigan State University began work on FRIB in 2008. In Fiscal Years 2009 through 2017, FRIB has received its anticipated funding, totaling \$375 million to date. Because of the commitment by both the Appropriations Committee and Congress, to finishing what it started, this project has been able to stay on both its cost and time schedules.

In 2014, the project broke ground to start civil construction and in March 2017, the project assumed beneficial occupancy of the buildings and began to install technical equipment. FRIB

construction is on time and on budget with completion expected in FY21. A disruption in funding at this point in the project would only cause delays and cost overruns.

Once completed, FRIB will be the most powerful radioactive beam facility in the world, serving at least 1,400 researchers. According to the 2015 Nuclear Science Advisory Committee Long Range Plan, "expeditiously completing the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) construction is essential. Initiating its scientific program will revolutionize our understanding of nuclei and their role in the cosmos." The research performed at this facility will significantly impact the body of science on issues ranging from our understanding of the origins of stars to the development of new national defense and nuclear medicine technologies.

With the DOE's permission to start civil construction, FRIB is on a solid path towards becoming a reality. Strong funding will ensure that FRIB's progress continues to be timely and within budget. It also will help ensure U.S. leadership in this important area of science. Already, facilities in countries such as China and South Korea are taking significant steps to eclipse the United States. The United States cannot afford to let that happen.

We thank you in advance for consideration of our support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,


Michael D. Bishop


Daniel T. Kildee

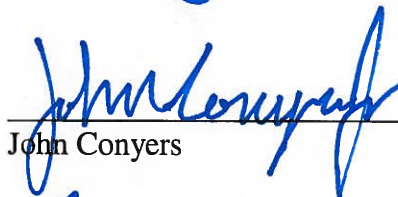

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