

Materials Research Society Joins More Than 100 Societies in a Call for a Decade of Investment in Funding for Scientific Research

On October 22, Materials Research Society President Robert Hull joined more than 100 scientific society presidents in the announcement of a Unified Statement on Research, "A Decade of Investment," that calls for a doubling of the level of federal investment in research within the next 10 years. The statement was released at a press conference in Washington, DC. Senators Phil Gramm (R-TX), Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), and Pete Domenici (R-NM), who keynoted the press conference, are widely recognized as champions who have taken the lead in Congress to introduce legislation that calls for a doubling of federal support in basic science, medical, and pre-competitive engineering research in the next decade. Their bill, S 1305, is also sponsored by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). The signatory societies collectively represent over 3 million researchers. This action would reverse the declining investments in research and renew U.S. commitment to scientific research which has an important impact on the economy. A number of societies with a strong interest in materials, including the American Chemical Society, American Physical Society, American Association of Crystal Growers, American Vacuum Society, American Welding Society, ASM International, American Ceramic Society, The Electrochemical Society, and The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society, signed the statement.

The Materials Research Society (MRS) has been an active participant in helping to bring about this historical statement and believes that both the United States Congress and the Administration should make this a major priority for consideration in the deliberations of 1999 and subsequent

year budgets.

The present statement is a continuation of an effort launched early this year. In March, MRS was a key participant in the first drive to support a joint professional society statement on the importance of sustained federal support for scientific research. That statement was released at a press conference on March 4 in Washington, DC. (See the Public Affairs Forum in the May 1997 *MRS Bulletin*.) MRS also sent a letter to Members of Congress stating that "the federal investment in scientific research is vital to four national goals: our economic competitive-

ness, our medical health, our national security, and our quality of life."

Julia M. Phillips, chair of the MRS Public Affairs Committee, said that the continued activity of so many technical societies representing scientific and technological research to support a common goal is critical to communicating the importance of research to policymakers and the public. She said that MRS has been not only a participant in the process but also a member of the original group that had the vision and dedication to unite many organizations behind a common and important theme.

Unified Statement on Research "A Decade of Investment"

To secure the economic health and prosperity of the United States as the next century approaches, our national investment in research must be strengthened. The increased competitiveness of the global economy makes such an investment even more important now than in the past. To that end, we call upon the U.S. Congress and the Administration to double the current level of federal investment in research within the next 10 years, starting with fiscal year 1999.

The United States has a critical and long-standing interest in advancing engineering, mathematics, and scientific research and education. The reasons for this are well accepted by industry leaders and public policymakers alike.

- Research provides the basis for the nation's productivity and economic growth, sustains its high standard of living and quality of health, and ensures its security.
- Research conducted today generates the knowledge from which the future is built and helps develop researchers for the future.

Our nation has developed a dynamic, comprehensive, interdependent research system that has enabled the United States to assume global leadership and enjoy a high standard of living. The research efforts of the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Interior, and Transportation; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the National Institutes of Health; the National Science Foundation and others have provided countless scientific and technological innovations that have formed the foundation for our nation's prosperity.

Even during this time of extraordinary economic growth, it must not be forgotten that tomorrow's health, economic, environmental, and national security needs depend on the choices that are made today. As leaders of the science, engineering, and mathematics communities, we maintain that doubling the nation's research budget during a 10-year period strikes a responsible balance between near-term fiscal goals and long-term economic growth and productivity.

United States and China Agree to Broaden Cooperation on Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation

U.S. Secretary of Energy Federico Peña and Minister Zeng Peiyan, Vice Chair of China's State Planning Commission, signed the Agreement of Intent Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology during the U.S.-China Summit between Presidents Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin. The agreement is the first step toward joint initiatives in reactor technology and safety; advanced in-service inspection of nuclear power plant components; fuel handling and storage; the production of isotopes for medical, industrial, and agricultural uses; and decontamination and decommissioning.

Cooperation in these areas will benefit both countries as they seek to address energy needs for the next century. China's nuclear power sector is projected to grow faster than that of any other country.

The agreement also calls for cooperation in establishing systems for export control of nuclear materials, equipment and technologies; nuclear materials control and accounting; physical protection; and enhancement of international nuclear safeguards. Initiatives in these areas will build on the progress the United States and China have made already in nuclear nonproliferation, which now permits enhanced cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

"The progress we have made together in nuclear nonproliferation has permitted us to move forward with joint efforts to meet future energy goals with nuclear technology," said Secretary Peña. "As part of that broader relationship, we will continue to direct substantial efforts toward greater safeguards for nuclear materials

and stronger unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral nonproliferation efforts."

The nuclear agreement became possible following President Clinton's decision to certify to the U.S. Congress that China had met the necessary requirements to implement the 1985 Agreement for Cooperation between the United States and China Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. The Presidential certifications must be transmitted to Congress and remain there for 30 days before the 1985 Agreement can be implemented.

The Agreement of Intent between the United States and China paves the way for the negotiation of a broad "umbrella" agreement that will govern future cooperative activities related to nuclear energy and nonproliferation. □