March 2019

The Honorable Jose Serrano  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: FY20 Appropriations—Support for the National Science Foundation

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), represent over 18,000 scientists in academia, industry, and government, 13,500 Certified Crop Advisers (CCA), and more than 700 Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS). We are the largest coalition of professionals dedicated to the agronomic, crop and soil science disciplines in the United States.

In the coming decades, our agricultural system must sustainably produce food and fuel for a rapidly growing global population. The Nation’s economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to address the challenges facing our food system. The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA appreciate the appropriations that that National Science Foundation (NSF) received in FY 2018 and 2019. Yet, as our nation’s farmers face increasing extreme weather and market uncertainty, NSF’s programs become even more important providers of the science they need to stay in business. NSF’s Big Ideas initiatives, its core programs that sustain research infrastructure, and its unparalleled support for STEM students and the future STEM workforce require increased investment.

We support $9 billion for the National Science Foundation for the fiscal year 2020. This funding level will put the premier government-funding agency for scientific research on track to address farmers’ challenges by increasing the broad knowledge base supported by a wide range of scientific disciplines, such as biology, plant science, chemistry and soil science.

Within NSF we are very supportive of Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy, and Water Systems. There is a pressing need to understand the interconnectedness of food, energy and water. Of particular interest is the production, resilience, safety, and security of food, energy, and water resources. Continuing droughts and hurricanes in the U.S. and the corresponding impacts on water, food production and the energy sector is an example of these challenges.

We urge you to include report language highlighting the importance of this effort and the need to better understand the fundamental science behind the interconnected food-energy-water system.
Science is essential. A strong commitment to federally funded scientific research will boost the Nation's capacity for innovation, agricultural productivity and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration. For additional information or to learn more about the ASA, CSSA and SSSA, please contact Karl Anderson, Director of Government Relations, at kanderson@sciencesocieties.org or 202-408-5382.

Sincerely,

Ellen Bergfeld, CEO

Cc:
Members of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies