

MRS Urges Congress to Double R&D Funding

On October 22, 1997, 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 (see *MRS Bulletin*, December 1997, p. 10). The unified statement is the culmination of a year-long effort to issue a joint professional society statement on the importance of sustained federal support for scientific research. Last spring, 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 competitiveness, our medical health, our national security, and our quality of life." The multisociety efforts of the past year have been given much of the credit for the rather good showing of science in the FY 1998 budget, despite the low budget numbers submitted to Congress by the Administration.

Also on October 22, Senators Phil Gramm (R-TX), Joseph I. Lieberman (D-CT), Pete V. Domenici (R-NM), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) introduced a bill in the Senate, S. 1305, the "National Research Investment Act of 1998," which would double the annual authorized amount of federal nondefense funding for scientific research over a 10-year period. They followed up this bill with a letter to the President urging him to "take the lead" on this issue when submitting his FY 1999 budget proposal (see *MRS Bulletin*, February 1998, p. 10). This bill has been referred to the Committee of Labor and Human Resources. More Senate cosponsors are needed if the bill is to have any chance of further consideration. Many of the professional societies that signed the Unified Statement are actively trying to secure other Senators to cosponsor S. 1305.

In support of the spirit of S. 1305, MRS President Bob Nemanich has sent a letter to all U.S. Senators and key leaders in the House of Representatives.

JULIA M. PHILLIPS

Julia M. Phillips is chair of the MRS Public Affairs Committee.

Letter sent by the Materials Research Society

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

As the president of the 12,000-member Materials Research Society, I am writing to urge you to support recent legislative initiatives to double the federal government's funding of scientific research over the next 10 years.

I applaud the spirit of bipartisan bills such as S. 1305, and want to encourage you to become personally involved in aiding such efforts.

The federal investment in scientific research is vital to four national goals: our military security, our economic competitiveness, our medical health, and our quality of life. Scientific disciplines are interdependent; therefore, weakness in any one of them will ultimately prevent us from reaching these goals. A strong foundation across the spectrum of research activities is imperative for our nation to meet the challenges of the next century. Doubling the nation's research budget during a 10-year period strikes a balance between near-term fiscal goals and long-term economic growth and productivity.

In closing, I once again ask you to lend your support to legislative initiatives which return science to the forefront of the national interest by assuring an adequate level of funding for the future.

Sincerely,
Robert Nemanich, Ph.D.
President, The Materials Research Society

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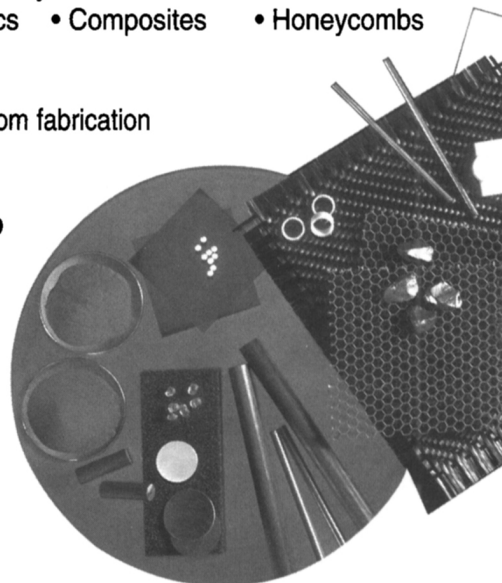
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