



Letter to the editor: Support science investments

Mar 17, 2024

The administration's Fiscal Year 2025 budget, released this Monday, requests essential funding for scientific and engineering research. I urge Sens. Jon Tester and Steve Daines, and Reps. Ryan Zinke and Matt Rosendale to support this crucial part of the spending plan. These important investments, made through several federal agencies (including the National Science Foundation; the Departments of Defense, Energy, and Agriculture; and the National Institutes of Health), advance America's national security, energy, biomedical, agricultural, environmental, and other needs, while boosting our international competitiveness.

As a retired scientist in Butte, I want my fellow Montanans to know that a significant amount of this research and development ("R&D") funding benefits Montana universities, colleges, industry, and start-ups: more than \$200 million in FY 2022, alone. The Federal government has long been the largest supporter of the basic research that produces the discoveries innovative Montanans convert into future technologies and successful businesses.

Economists estimate that as much as 85% of America's long-term economic growth is due to innovation inspired by scientific advances. We can see this happening throughout Montana, with the growth of companies in optics, computing, medical diagnostics, agriculture, energy, and pharmaceuticals, among others. These companies, moreover, provide outstanding home-grown internships and job opportunities for eager Montana students.

By approving robust federal science budgets, Montana's congressional delegation can keep Montana and the nation on a path of strong economic growth. Please encourage them to support these federal science investments, which pay big dividends in the long run, and benefit all Americans.

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