

Missoulian

Letter to the editor: Support funding for scientific research

The administration's fiscal year 2025 budget, released March 11, requests essential funding for scientific and engineering research. I urge Sens. Jon Tester and Steve Daines, as well as Rep. Ryan Zinke, to support this crucial part of the spending plan. These important investments, made through several federal agencies (including the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, 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 to be sure that my neighbors 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! We can be proud that Montana Technological University in Butte is the third-largest recipient (after MSU Bozeman and UM in Missoula). Tech students, faculty, and researchers are doing amazing research in advanced materials design and manufacturing; sustainable extraction and use of earth resources (including critical rare-earth elements); environmental remediation and restoration; and biomedical science and biotechnology—much of it funded by the federal government.

Economists estimate that as much as 85 percent of America's long-term economic growth is due to innovation inspired by scientific advances. And the federal government has long been the largest supporter of the basic and applied research producing the discoveries that innovative Montanans turn into future technologies and successful businesses. And we can see this happening in many Montana communities, with the growth of companies in environmental services, advanced materials, optics, computing, medical diagnostics, agriculture, energy, and pharmaceuticals, among others. Moreover, these companies provide outstanding home-grown internships and job opportunities for eager Montana students at our two- and four-year campuses.

By approving essential federal science budgets, Montana's senators and representatives can keep Montana and the nation on a path of strong economic growth. Please contact members of our delegation in Washington, D.C., to let them know you support these federal science investments, which pay big dividends in the long run, and benefit the lives of all Americans!

Beverly Karplus Hartline

Butte