

AIP|Matters

Monday, February 28, 2011



Director's Matters

By H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director & CEO

Science funding needs your support

The US Congress sets the budget that funds everything the federal government does; without a budget, the government cannot operate. There is no budget for the current fiscal year, however, because Congress has not been able to agree on overall funding levels for discretionary spending. In the absence of a budget, Congress has been operating on continuing resolutions (CRs) since October 1, and these CRs have funded the government at the previous year's level. The current CR expires this Friday, March 4. Now the House of Representatives has passed a new CR (HR 1) that, if signed into law, would be devastating for programs of interest to the physics community and particularly to the national labs at Department of Energy facilities across the country. As one example, HR 1 would cut 18% from the DOE Office of Science. But because there are only seven months left of the fiscal year, the cut would effectively slash 40% of the remaining budget. Federal research laboratories would need to shut down, and thousands of people could be laid off or furloughed for the remainder of the year. (See the op-ed by Eric Isaacs and Pier Oddone published by the *Chicago Tribune*: [Science budget cuts threaten high-tech jobs, future frontiers](#).) Very few activities react well to unplanned budget cuts, but scientific research is particularly vulnerable.

It's a tough realization that, in the current political environment, science and many other programs funded from the discretionary portion of the federal budget would not be spared. Although it is tempting to see those cuts as a reflection of the values of Congress or of one political party over another, I choose to believe that they were political decisions, made for political reasons that largely have nothing to do with science. Science has traditionally enjoyed wide bipartisan support, and that's what we want! At the same time, I believe that when actions are taken to so dramatically cut funding for science, we must be very clear about the consequences for US competitiveness.

The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform said it well:

Cut and invest to promote economic growth and keep America competitive. We should cut red tape and unproductive government spending that hinders job creation and growth. At the same time, we must invest in education, infrastructure, and high-value research and development to help our economy grow, keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs.

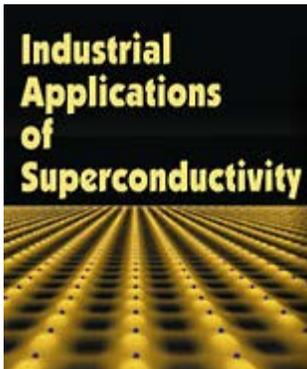
We can take action by reaching out to Congressional representatives and other leaders who can influence appropriate budget cuts and to educate policy makers

about the negative impacts of the types of cuts the House currently proposes. There are 110 new members of Congress, many of whom might not understand what cuts to science programs can mean for their particular state or district. **As constituents, each of us has the opportunity to reach out to our congressional representatives with specific concerns about those cuts. I have done so, and I urge you to do so.** Due to the nature of this type of budgeting process, specific data about any particular grant or institution may not be available, and this uncertainty can be a challenge. Nevertheless, you can speak about the passion you have for your work and what it means to you as a citizen and member of the science community. (APS maintains a website that makes it easy for you to [send messages to your elected representatives](#).)

To keep the science community informed, AIP will continue to publish *FYI*, our science policy electronic newsletter, and we will work vigorously with other scientific societies to keep funding for science strong. We welcome your persuasive voice to make the case for science as a sound economic investment in our nation's future.

PHYSICS RESOURCES CENTER MATTERS

Gearing up for IPF 2011



AIP's Corporate Associates and the APS Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics have joined forces for the first of two Industrial Physics Forums in 2011. This first IPF, titled "[Industrial Applications of Superconductivity](#)," will be held at the APS March Meeting, March 20–21, in Dallas, TX. The IPF will feature talks by leading researchers from industry, national laboratories, and universities. The ever-popular Frontiers in Physics session will explore exciting new physics ranging from a lab that has created the coldest place in the entire universe to another that has created the highest-temperature fluid on

Earth.

Supporting Member Societies now, historically speaking

AIP supports two distinct history programs: the Center for History of Physics and the Niels Bohr Library and Archives. Why two? Simply put, it's because of the importance of history to physicists.



Among the many functions of the library and archives is the preservation of all of our Member Societies' important records. In the last year, the library has accepted material from AAPM, AAS, AAPT, ACA, AGU, APS, and SOR. It is also an information clearinghouse and constantly expands the International Catalog of Sources (ICOS), a worldwide union catalog of individual physicists' manuscript collections: their letters, notebooks, and other important papers. (Looking for Richard Feynman's letters to colleagues? Check ICOS: They're at Caltech.) In addition, the library cares for a growing collection of 18,000 titles, focused on the physical sciences of the 19th and 20th centuries—as well as 30,000 photographs, more than 1,000 oral history interviews, a number of institutional histories, and more.

In 2010, the Center for History of Physics online exhibits received more than

1,100,000 visits. The center also organizes conferences and other programs. History can be important to AIP Member Societies in as many ways as those societies can imagine. APS's Forum on the History of Physics organizes very successful historical sessions. AAS has its Historical Astronomy Division. And a few other societies have historical committees of some kind. Two societies have expressed interest in developing systematic, ongoing oral history programs. The Center for History of Physics will work with any Member Society to explore its ideas regarding activities and projects having to do with history.



Joe Anderson, Director of the Niels Bohr Library and Archives (left), and Greg Good, Director of the Center for History of Physics (right).

In the fall of 2011, the Center for History of Physics and the Niels Bohr Library and Archives will organize a one-day workshop for Member Society officers and volunteers interested in encouraging historical activities in their societies. To get on the workshop list, contact History Center Director [Greg Good](#).

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK

Friday, March 4

- PRC advisory committee meetings (College Park, MD)

Saturday, March 5

- Physics Resources Policy Committee meeting (College Park, MD)

We invite your feedback to this newsletter via email to aipmatters@aip.org.

For past issues of this newsletter, visit the [AIP Matters archives](#).