



# Public Affairs Report

## ASM Submits Comments on FDA Science Report

The ASM Public and Scientific Affairs Board submitted a letter to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on 1 February, responding to an FDA request for comments on the report of the agency's Science Board Subcommittee on Science and Technology. ASM said it concurs with the highly disturbing conclusions of the FDA Science Board report which assessed the capacity of FDA science and technology to support current and future regulatory needs. The Science Board report found FDA science "in a precarious position" and clearly inadequate to meet broad FDA responsibilities, which include the safety and efficacy of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, most of the nation's food supply, cosmetics, and more. The report described 20 years of fiscal neglect, during which 125 additional statutes have been enacted increasing the FDA's already heavy workload. The ASM has submitted numerous statements to Congress urging that it recognize and support the critical need for a strong FDA science and technology base. In its letter to FDA, the ASM said it believes that excellent science must be the foundation upon which FDA effectively fulfills its regulatory mission. The full ASM letter is available at <http://www.asm.org/Policy/index.asp?bid=56150> and includes links to the FDA Science Board Report.

## FY 2009 Budget Request for Research and Public Health Agencies

The President released his FY 2009 budget request on 4 February. The

overall federal investment in R&D would increase \$4.6 billion, or 3.3% to \$145.4 billion, driven primarily by increases in development funding, with nondefense R&D increasing 2.7% to \$60.9 billion. The overall federal investment in research would fall 0.5% to \$57.1 billion in 2009. Highlights of the FY 2009 budget include:

- \$29.3 billion is requested for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the same amount appropriated in FY 2008. Included in the request is \$300 million within the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) that would transfer to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria, making the net budget for NIH \$29 billion.
- \$4.569 billion is requested for the NIAID, of which \$300 million would be transferred to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria. The FY 2009 request for NIAID without the Global Fund transfer is an increase of \$3 million or 0.1% over FY 2008.
- \$1.938 billion is requested for the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), and increase of \$2 million, or 0.1% above FY 2008.
- The FY 2009 request includes \$534 million for the NIH Common Fund, equal to 1.8% of the FY 2009 budget request for the NIH. This is a \$38 million, or 7.7%, increase over FY 2008.
- The NIH FY 2009 request would support 9,757 new and competing renewal RPGs, including 244 NIH director's Bridge awards, a decrease of 14 RPGs from FY 2008. Competing RPGs would total \$3.52 billion, approximately the same as FY 2008; with a projected success rate of 18% in FY 2009, a 1% drop from FY 2008. Included in this request is \$56 million in the NIH Common Fund to fund 25 NIH Director's Innovator Awards, and \$91 million to fund 244 NIH Directors Bridge Awards.
- \$5.9 billion requested in discretionary funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (not including funding for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)), a decrease of \$476 million, or 7.5%, below FY 2008.
- \$1.87 billion for Infectious Diseases, a decrease of \$30 million, or 5.1%, below FY 2008.
- \$104 million for Emerging Infectious Diseases, a decrease of \$26 million, or 20% below FY 2008.
- \$2.4 billion requested for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), an increase of \$130 million, or 5.7% above FY 2008.
- \$543 million for Foods, an increase of \$33 million or 6.5% over FY 2008.
- \$739 million for Human Drugs, an increase of \$58 million or 8.7% over FY 2008.
- \$245 million for Biologics, an increase of \$9.5 million or 3.8% over FY 2008. \$119 million for Animal Drugs and Feeds, an increase of \$11 million or 9.2% over FY 2008.
- \$291 million for Medical Devices and Radiological Health, an increase of \$7 million or 2.8% above FY 2008.
- \$6.85 billion requested for the National Science Foundation (NSF), an



- increase of \$789 million, or 13%, above FY 2008.
- \$5.6 billion for Research and Related Activities, an increase of \$773 million, or 16% above FY 2008.
  - \$675 million for the Biological Sciences Directorate (BIO), an increase of \$63 million, or 10.3%, above FY 2008.
  - \$4.7 billion requested for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, an increase of \$749 million, or 18.9%, above FY 2008.
  - \$569 million for Biological and Environmental Research (BER), an increase of \$25 million, 4.6%, above FY 2008.
  - \$21 billion requested in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), a decrease of \$3 billion, or 12.5%, below FY 2008.
  - \$256.5 million for the National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program, an increase of \$65.5 million, or 14%, over FY 2008. Directs \$19 million for bioenergy and biobased fuels research. The net increase for NRI programs when transfer and directed funding are taken into account is approximately \$6 million over FY 2008.
  - \$1.067 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), a decrease of \$118 million, 10%, below FY 2008. This number assumes zero for Congressional Add-ons, which totaled \$41 million in FY 2008.
  - \$1.092 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), an increase of \$21 million, or 2%, above FY 2008.

A detailed funding chart and summary documents on the FY 2009 budget request are posted on the Public Affairs website at <http://www.asm.org/Policy/index.asp?bid=56172>.

### ASM Releases Statement Expressing Concern Over Stagnant FY 2009 Budget Request for NIH

On 4 February, ASM released a statement expressing concern with the continuing shrinkage of appropriations for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with funding flat or declining when adjusted for inflation since FY 2003. The FY 2008 NIH budget of \$29 billion, minus the set-aside for the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, is a meager 0.5% increase over FY 2007. The FY 2009 proposal requests flat funding for the NIH. For five years the NIH budget has lost ground to biomedical research inflation, estimated at 3.5–3.7%. Since FY 2004 this situation has cost NIH more than 10% in purchasing power. To assure the benefits from biomedical research the ASM strongly recommends that Congress increase the NIH budget by \$1.9 billion for FY 2009. ASM's statement is available online at: <http://www.asm.org/Policy/index.asp?bid=56168>.

### ASM Sends Letter to Congress on 2007 Farm Bill

On 23 January, ASM sent a letter to both the House and Senate Agricul-

ture Committee members asking their support for the following provisions as they conference the 2007 Farm Bill.

The establishment of a National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which would administer all programs under the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), including competitive, peer reviewed grants on basic research. NIFA would raise the profile of competitive research. (i) The reauthorization of the National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program at \$500 million, and maintaining the \$200 million in mandatory funding for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS). (ii) An increase in the indirect cost benefit cap to 30%. (iii) The establishment of a Congressional Bipartisan Food Safety Commission required to study, and make recommendations for modernizing food safety programs emphasizing prevention, based on risk assessment and the best available science. (iv) Provide the USDA with authority to conduct research and diagnostics for highly infectious foreign animal diseases on mainland locations in the United States.

These provisions will help to achieve the goals of increasing support for agricultural research, improving efficiency in meeting USDA's mission, strengthening ties and linkages between government and universities, and improving the perception of USDA science. ASM's letter on the 2007 Farm Bill is posted online at <http://www.asm.org/Policy/index.asp?bid=55738>.