

fiscal year limitation. The final provision incorporates by reference the programs, projects, and activities included in the report accompanying this bill.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The Committee recommendation includes a total of \$5,643,370,000 for the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is \$170,546,000 above the current year funding level and \$38,370,000 above the request.

Established in 1950, the National Science Foundation's primary purpose was to develop a national policy on science, and support and promote basic research and education in the sciences filling the void left after World War II. The Committee is committed to keeping the Foundation's current activities true to the founding purpose of supporting basic scientific research.

The Committee directs NSF to amend its operating plan procedures, as necessary, to ensure that they are consistent with the direction contained in section 605 of this Act, which provides reprogramming guidelines and requirements for all departments and agencies funded in the bill. It is the intent of the Committee that the reprogramming requirements described in section 605 also shall apply to all balances of funds carried over into fiscal year 2006 by the NSF. Detailed recommendations for NSF's individual appropriations accounts are contained in the following paragraphs.

RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Committee recommends a total of \$4,377,520,000 for Research and Related Activities. The recommendation is \$156,964,000 above the fiscal year 2005 level and \$44,030,000 above the request.

The recommendation does not include specific funding allocations for each directorate or for individual programs and activities. The Foundation is directed to submit a proposed spending plan to the Committee for its consideration within 30 days of enactment of this Act that addresses the Foundation's highest priority research requirements. This spending plan shall be subject to the reprogramming procedures in section 605 of this Act.

Language is included that provides up to \$425,000,000 for Polar research and operations support, as requested. The recommended funding level in this account acknowledges the decision of the Administration to shift funding for polar icebreaking from the budget of the Coast Guard to that of the NSF. Language is included allowing the NSF Director to use funds under this account to reimburse the Coast Guard for services provided in support of the NSF's mission. Additional language is included requiring that any such reimbursement be treated as a reprogramming of funds under section 605. The Committee believes that burdening the NSF with the responsibility for maintenance and long-term modernization costs of the Coast Guard icebreaking fleet would irresponsibly jeopardize the nation's primary source of funding for critical basic scientific research. While using Coast Guard capabilities may be necessary to meet fiscal year 2006 requirements, the Committee expects NSF to immediately begin a concurrent pursuit of alternative, more economical, icebreaking solutions for 2006 and beyond. The Committee directs NSF to pursue the most cost-effective means of obtaining

icebreaking services in the Antarctic for the 2005–2006 season, including, but not limited to, reimbursing the Coast Guard on a mutually agreed upon basis for the operations and maintenance of the U.S. polar icebreaking fleet. NSF is specifically given the flexibility to pursue alternatives to current operations. Should NSF continue to utilize the Coast Guard for icebreaking capabilities in fiscal year 2006, the Committee would expect NSF to model a reimbursement agreement with the Coast Guard on their successful Memorandum of Understanding with the Defense Department.

The Committee is aware of studies currently underway to review the Nation's icebreaking needs and to examine options for supporting the presence the United States has maintained in the Antarctic for the past four decades. The Committee directs NSF to immediately inform the Committee when the results and recommendations from these studies become available. The Committee anticipates a preliminary report on options for meeting long-term icebreaking needs from the National Academies in September. No later than December 31, 2005, the Committee expects a report from the Office of Polar Programs advisory committee outlining options and potential costs for alternative means of providing logistical support to the McMurdo and South Pole stations in the event that icebreaking capabilities are not available.

The Committee commends NSF for its Silicon Nanoelectronics and Beyond program which involves the sponsorship of research in the areas of information technology and electronics. The Committee encourages NSF to continue the support of such research in fiscal year 2006.

The Committee is aware that NSF's Children Research Initiative has assisted important interdisciplinary collaborations that are making important contributions to research in child development. The Committee expects NSF to continue its research efforts in this area in FY 2006.

The recommendation includes language that allows funds provided under this account to be available for innovation inducement prizes. The concept of inducement awards to encourage broad involvement in solving a specifically stated scientific problem has been a catalyst for scientific advancement since at least the early 18th century. In 1999, a National Academies workshop on this topic encouraged Federal agencies to make more extensive use of this mechanism to pursue particular scientific and technological objectives. The Committee expects NSF to engage the National Academies to craft a prize or categories of prizes that would be of an appropriate scale and to develop the rules and conditions for awarding prizes, and to report back to the Committee on plans to initiate a prize program in fiscal year 2006. The Committee strongly encourages NSF to use this mechanism, particularly in programs that specifically emphasize innovation, to focus on high risk/high payoff research projects. The Committee also expects NSF to encourage private sector involvement in the effort to create a prize program.

MAJOR RESEARCH EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

The Committee recommends a total of \$193,350,000 for the major research equipment and facilities construction account for fiscal year 2006, an increase of \$19,700,000 above the fiscal year 2005

funding level and \$56,660,000 below the request. This account provides funding for the construction of major research facilities that provide unique capabilities at the cutting edge of science and engineering.

The Committee recommendation assumes that, in addition to new fiscal year 2006 appropriations, at least \$14,880,000 will be available from prior year appropriations, for a total available funding level of \$208,230,000. The Committee recommendation includes funding for the following major projects: \$49,240,000 for Atacama Large Millimeter Array construction; \$50,620,000 for EarthScope; \$50,450,000 for the IceCube Neutrino Observatory; and \$57,920,000 for the Scientific Ocean Drilling Vessel. The recommendation does not provide for any new project starts, as none were requested.

EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The Committee recommendation for fiscal year 2006 includes \$807,000,000 in this account, which is \$34,421,000 below the current year level and \$70,000,000 above the request. In light of the challenges facing the nation in improving math and science educational participation and achievement, the Committee is disappointed by the reductions proposed in the budget in this account. The recommendation provides the full request for Math and Science Partnerships, which will support awards made in previous years, as well as data collection and evaluation activities.

The Committee's recommendation includes the following program levels: \$60,000,000 for Math and Science Partnerships; \$97,000,000 for the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR); \$175,000,000 for Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education; \$150,000,000 for Undergraduate Education; \$155,000,000 for Graduate Education; \$120,000,000 for Human Resource Development; and \$50,000,000 for Research, Evaluation and Communication.

The Foundation is directed to submit a proposed spending plan to the Committee for its consideration within 30 days of enactment of this Act that addresses the Foundation's highest priority education requirements. This spending plan shall be subject to the reprogramming procedures in section 605 of this Act. Within the amounts provided for the Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education, the Committee recognizes the value of engaging the general public in informal science and technology education at all ages. The Committee encourages the NSF to continue to ensure geographic diversity in the institutions that participate in the program. Within the amounts provided for the Undergraduate Education activity, the Committee encourages the NSF to allocate funding to the Robert Noyce Scholarship program and the Advanced Technological Education program. Within the amounts provided for Human Resource Development, the Committee encourages the NSF to allocate funding to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Program.

The Foundation's Education and Human Resources activities are designed to encourage the entrance of talented students into science and technology careers, to improve the undergraduate science and engineering education environment, to assist in providing all pre-college students with a level of education in mathe-

matics, science, and technology that reflects the needs of the nation and is the highest quality attained anywhere in the world, and to extend greater research opportunities to underrepresented segments of the scientific and engineering communities.

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

The recommendation includes \$250,000,000 for salaries and expenses, which is an increase of \$26,800,000 above the current year level and \$19,000,000 below the request. Of the amount provided, \$10,600,000 is intended to cover built-in pay and benefits adjustments for fiscal year 2006. The Salaries and Expenses activity provides for the operation, support and management, and direction of all NSF programs and activities and includes necessary funds that develop, manage, and coordinate Foundation programs.

The Committee has been disappointed and concerned with NSF's inability to provide specific information concerning the allocation of additional requested personnel resources to specific NSF programs and activities in both the fiscal year 2005 operating plan, and in the fiscal year 2006 budget request. The Committee agrees that priority areas for the allocation of additional personnel include award oversight, and oversight of large facility projects. The Committee encourages NSF to assign additional resources to these activities. The Committee expects NSF to submit detailed information on the allocation of fiscal year 2005 staff resources as soon as possible. For fiscal year 2006, the Committee expects NSF to submit a specific allocation of any new staffing resources within 30 days after the enactment of this Act.

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,000,000 for the operations of the National Science Board, which is \$32,000 above the current year level and the same as the request.

The National Science Board, established in 1950, establishes policies and assesses the quality, relevance and performance of the National Science Foundation's awards and capital investments. In addition, the Board provides advice to the President and the Congress on matters of science and engineering policy.

The Committee understands that the Board has taken steps to establish a commission to make recommendations for NSF and Federal Government action to achieve measurable improvements in the Nation's science education at all levels. The Committee strongly endorses this effort, and expects the Board to provide an interim report by September 30, 2005, on the establishment of the commission, and to report the commission's findings and recommendations to the Committee at the conclusion of the commission's work.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Committee recommendation includes \$11,500,000 for the Office of Inspector General, which is \$1,471,000 above the current year level and the same as the request.

This account supports the National Science Foundation's audit and investigation functions to identify and correct management and administrative deficiencies that could lead to fraud, waste, and abuse.