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PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA APPOINTS HOLDEN SCIENCE ADVISOR, OTHER KEY SCIENCE APPOINTMENTS MADE... ASTRA WEIGHS IN ON STIMULUS PACKAGE... TRANSITION DOCUMENT AUGURS WELL FOR OBAMA SCIENCE PRIORITIES... APS DEVELOPS STIMULUS PACKAGE SCIENCE SPENDING PRIORITIES... STATUS OF FY 2009 SCIENCE SPENDING BILLS... INAUGURAL GALA 2009 EVENT TO CELEBRATE SCIENCE & INNOVATION... PLEASE HELP ASTRA HELP YOU — DONATE TODAY...

HOLDEN IS NEW SCIENCE ADVISOR, KEY SCIENCE APPOINTMENTS MADE: President-elect Obama has named **Dr. John P. Holden** as the new **Assistant to the President for Science & Technology, Director of the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP)**, and **Co-Chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST)**. Obama also announced the appointments of former **NIH Director Dr. Harold Varmus** and **Dr. Eric Lander** to serve as additional co-chairs of PCAST. Obama made the appointments in remarkable time, suggesting that his well-organized science policy team wanted to hasten new policy initiatives and an increased emphasis on innovation, alternative energy development, and competitiveness. Dr. Holden had been serving as the head of the Harvard Kennedy School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs...

NOBELIST STEVEN CHU NOMINATED AS ENERGY SECRETARY, LUBCHENCO AT NOAA: Obama also nominated **Dr. Steven Chu** to serve as Secretary of Energy. Dr. Chu is a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and has been Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. **Dr. Jane Lubchenco** was named Obama's choice to lead the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Drs. Chu and Holden are strong advocates for innovation in energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy... for more on what the appointments may portend, see:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/18/AR2008121803640.html?hpid=topnews>

NEW TECH AGENDA HIGH ON OBAMA TRANSITION LIST: The **Obama Transition Team** continues to prepare for dramatic changes in science and technology policy. ASTRA's Board discussed the emerging agenda during an off-the-record meeting with members of the Transition Team in early December. In explaining the premises of the **Obama Science & Innovation Agenda**, The Board was told that, absent ASTRA's research and advocacy efforts on such science funding and innovation issues over the past eight years, such a document could never have existed (!). See <http://www.usinnovation.org/files/ObamaTransitionTechAgenda112708.pdf>

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE — OR PACKAGES? Even as the new Congress tries to wrap up its deliberations over the FY 2009 Budget, immense pressure is building to rescue the economy from what appears to be a deepening crisis related to the housing bubble, massive theft and corruption within financial markets, and a freezing up of credit markets. Congress is preparing a several types of economic stimulus packages, which seem to change as the crisis deepens. Insiders tell us that a legislative package will be enacted just after Congress reconvenes next week, on January 6. According to Obama spokesman **David Axelrod**, as much as \$775 billion in monetary stimulus may be readied for the new President's signature on January 20, Inauguration Day. The Obama stimulus plan will now include an immediate tax cut for middle-class families, according to Axelrod, who said in late December that the stimulus package will be implemented soon and will seek to create (or save) 3 million jobs...

ASTRA WEIGHS IN ON STIMULUS PACKAGE: **ASTRA Board Director Wayne Johnson** led an effort during December to get more science funding included in the pending Economic Stimulus package. With the assistance of the **American Physical Society (APS)** and the **CNSF Coalition**, ASTRA submitted letters urging increased science spending to the Congressional leadership and all appropriators in both Houses of Congress. For a copy of the letter to Speaker Pelosi and the APS analysis, see <http://www.usinnovation.org/files/ScienceSpendingPriorities2009.pdf>

ASTRA CO-SPONSORS INAUGURAL GALA 2009: ASTRA is among several dozen key science, technology and STEM Education organizations sponsoring the Inaugural Gala 2009 event. Slated for the Corcoran Gallery of Art during the evening of January 20, the event will link many science and advocacy organizations up with satellite feeds at other locations across the country. Many of the incom-



ing Administration's science and technology advisors have been invited, and the event is expected to celebrate a Renaissance for U.S. science and technology leadership. ASTRA will be providing on-line advocacy materials, a preview of the new **ASTRA Innovation Index**[®] and state-specific information about science funding, the economy, competitiveness and STEM Education. For more details, see <http://www.linkamericas.org/gala2009.htm/> as well as <http://www.usinnovation.org/files/InauguralGalainvite2009.pdf>

FY 2009 SCIENCE BUDGET UPDATES: Advocates for increased science spending for key federal agencies are more optimistic following a series of developments following the November elections. The Congressional leadership hopes to have an Omnibus FY 2009 spending bill ready for President-elect Obama's signature following his swearing-in on January 20 and Congress wants to move quickly on to the FY 2010 Budget, which is not looking very good given the \$3 trillion in new deficit spending triggered since the recent economic catastrophes. Here are some highlights of key agency spending plans as of this writing:

NIST BUDGET INCLUDES TIP AND MEP INCREASES: The current NIST budget is \$755.9 million. The outgoing Administration requested an FY 2009 budget of \$638 million. Senate appropriators recommended \$813.5 million, an increase of 7.6 percent or \$57.6 million. House appropriators recommended \$817.0 million, an increase of 8.1 percent or \$61.1 million. Key increases will include "Investments in science and technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and workforce development is critical... and nearly \$817,000,000 for the National Institute on Standards and Technology, including \$122,000,000 for the **Manufacturing Extension Partnerships** program and \$65,200,000 for the **Technology Innovation Program**, which leverage private funds to invest in research and development and improve manufacturing productivity and job creation..."

DOE OFFICE OF SCIENCE INCREASES: House appropriators voted their approval of the **Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee** bill in late June, but only recently released the Committee report after deliberations were suspended in late spring. The bill contains a 20.5 percent increase for **DOE's Office of Science**. Senate appropriators approved a bill with a 15.0 percent increase. The Senate bill recommends a doubling of R&D within DOE between 2006 and 2016.

NSF FUNDING INCREASES SIGNIFICANTLY: The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of NSF funding legislation and both House and Senate committees provided the full NSF request. The two Houses differ in their funding recommendations for **Research and Related Activities**, and **Education and Human Resources**. These bills will be reconciled, then made part of the omnibus bill that will be presented to President-Elect Obama after his inauguration. Both the House and Senate bills recommend the full \$6.85 billion request for NSF, an increase of 13.0 percent (or \$789.1 million) from the current budget of approx. \$6.07 billion.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH): NIH would receive an additional \$1 billion for its Office of the Director, which shall be transferred to the Institutes and Centers of the National Institutes of Health and to the NIH Common Fund...

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD): The Defense Appropriations Bill was one of only three bills passed by Congress during 2008 and signed into law by President Bush. It provides for a 6.4 percent increase for the three defense science and technology programs (6.1, 6.2, and 6.3.) Of special note is the 12.7 percent increase in funding for 6.1 basic research...

TIMSS RESULTS MIXED: The 2007 **Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)** report was released in mid-December (there is nearly a year's delay in reporting the data given the complexity of administering the tests across the globe). The results for U.S. students were mixed. Although U.S. average math scores rose a bit from 1995 levels, science scores stagnated. Moreover, the U.S. continues to lag behind major European and Asian nations. The eighth grade math score average (508) is higher than the TIMSS scale average of 500 and the 1995 math average of 492. And the eighth grade science average of 520 was higher than the 1995 test group (513). Disconcerting as well to U.S. educators is the fact that American eighth graders continue to perform comparatively below fourth graders. To download the complete TIMSS results, see [http://www.usinnovation.org/files/TIMSS2007Highlights\(Dec2008\).pdf](http://www.usinnovation.org/files/TIMSS2007Highlights(Dec2008).pdf)

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