August 5, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2314 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2112 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Byrd, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

On behalf of the 95 member institutions of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), a consortium of 71 research universities, we are writing to encourage you to make climate research and observations a priority throughout the fiscal year 2009 appropriations process.

Climate change poses the greatest threat to global security and the health of the planet. On June 25, 2008, the chairman of the National Intelligence Council testified before Congress and said:

“The United States depends on a smooth-functioning international system ensuring the flow of trade and market access to critical raw materials such as oil and gas, and security for its allies and partners. Climate change and climate change policies could affect all of these—domestic stability in a number of key states, the opening of new sea lanes and access to raw materials, and the global economy more broadly—with significant geopolitical consequences.”

If we are going to be able to successfully mitigate impacts and adapt to a rapidly changing climate, we need to know what lies ahead. Unfortunately, our nation has lost its edge as the world leader in earth and ocean observations as our scientists are losing access to critical data. Climate observations and research can reduce the uncertainties in climate forecasts, which is essential for making wise policy and resource management decisions.

We fear that the current impasse in the appropriation process may threaten our nation’s ability to anticipate accurately and adapt to climate change. Consequently, we respectfully request the
following increases over the FY 2008 level be included as anomalies for the anticipated continuing resolution. All of these increases were included in the President’s budget request and endorsed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees:

- $242 million increase for NOAA’s Geostationary Operational Satellites (GOES) – R
- $74 million increase for NOAA climate sensors to preserve decades long climate records
- $153 million to accelerate the earth science decadal missions at NASA
- $38 million for NOAA’s Integrated Ocean Observing System
- $96 million increase for the Geosciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation

Climate change is happening at a rate faster than we anticipated, with consequences touching every American. Without these investments, we risk charting our nation’s course in the dark – effectively threatening our nation’s infrastructure and economy as well as our citizens’ health, safety and welfare. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Robert Gagosian
President, Ocean Leadership

Richard Anthes
President, UCAR