



July 24, 2020

The Honorable Ed Markey
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Markey, Tillis, Peters, and Gardner:

On behalf of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), one of the largest life science societies composed of more than 30,000 scientists and health professionals, thank you for introducing the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act, which will provide much-needed supplemental funding for federally-funded research. Microbiologists, including those in clinical laboratories, are on the front lines of helping our nation address the unprecedented challenges SARS-COV-2 has presented to our society, our healthcare system, and our economy.

As is the case in the overall economy, researchers, students, post-docs and lab personnel have had their work cut short due to COVID-19. This has implications not only for the research workforce – where hiring has been disrupted and employees furloughed – but also on the process of scientific discovery. Experiments will need to be restarted, animal colonies repopulated, and fieldwork rescheduled for an indeterminate later time. The longer the slowdown continues, the more serious the consequences will be, especially for graduate students, postdocs, principal investigators, laboratory and technical staff.

Microbial science is a cross-cutting endeavor, and our members' federally funded research is fundamental to advances in human health, agriculture, energy, and the environment. ASM is deeply concerned about the serious consequences of the ongoing disruptions to the broader research enterprise. The RISE Act will address this by authorizing approximately \$26 billion in much-needed supplemental funding for federal research agencies, to mitigate the negative scientific and economic effects of the COVID-19-related laboratory closures and disruptions on research already in progress.

While our nation's research capacity has demonstrated it can absorb shocks, the scale of this one is still growing and unprecedented in duration and impact. As such, it is vital that Congress enact measures to increase support for the research enterprise by passing the RISE Act. If you have any questions, please contact Allen Segal, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, at asegal@asmusa.org or 202-942-9294.

Sincerely,

Stefano Bertuzzi, PhD, MPH
ASM Chief Executive Officer