

September 24, 2019

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
House Committee on Science, Space and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
House Committee on Science, Space and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson and Ranking Member Lucas:

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 H.R. 4373, the “Engineering Biology Research and Development Act of 2019.” We support the goals of this legislation, including the creation of a national initiative to advance engineering biology, and provisions to strengthen the ability to translate scientific discoveries into tools, technologies, and therapies that benefit society, our economy, and the world at large.

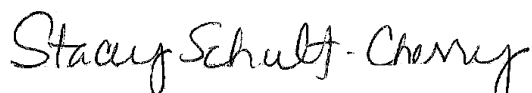
The central importance of the microbial sciences to understanding the world around us and solving major problems of our time cannot be overstated. Thanks to past investments in basic research, we now understand that microbial communities exist on, in, and around people, plants, animals, soil, oceans, and the atmosphere. Thus making microbiology and concepts like the microbiome relevant to almost everything. The rapid pace of discovery has led to a need for better cross-agency coordination, greater technology needs and data sharing infrastructure.

The provisions in this bill are important to ASM because microbiology is a highly interdisciplinary field, made stronger when federal agencies and stakeholders work in a coordinated manner to advance research, technology development, and infrastructure. As a diverse Society that represents scientists and health professionals working across the spectrum of the microbial sciences and in multiple sectors of society, we appreciate the bill’s efforts to facilitate collaboration, cross-agency funding, database curation, and the development of novel tools to accelerate translational research.


We also appreciate the bill’s recognition that the success in engineering biology, like other disciplines, depends on an inclusive and diverse workforce and a strong pipeline. ASM is committed to the development of the next generation of researchers who will carry the torch in to the future.

Thank you again for your leadership. Should you have questions or require additional information, please contact ASM’s Director of Public Policy Allen Segal at (202) 942-9294 or asegal@asmusa.org.

Sincerely,



Stacey Schultz-Cherry, Ph.D.
Chair, Public and Scientific Affairs Committee
American Society for Microbiology



Stefano Bertuzzi, Ph.D., MPH
CEO
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