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December 22, 2020 by Natalie Barry [2]

Colorado Delegation Champions Research Relief for Universities

Relief for university researchers is among the University of Colorado's top priorities as Congress considers future legislation to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The Colorado delegation, and Congresswoman Diana DeGette in particular, have been among our most important congressional supporters. To provide a roadmap of where funding needs exist across federal science agencies, Congresswoman DeGette introduced the *Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act* (H.R. 7308 [3]) (S. 4286 [4]) in June. The legislation authorizes $26 billion in pandemic relief across 10 different federal science agencies to cover losses associated with the pandemic. Agencies may use supplemental funds to extend research projects disrupted by COVID-19 and support graduate students and postdocs experiencing delays to degree completion and employment.

Colorado Representatives Jason Crow, Joe Neguse, Ed Perlmutter and Senator Cory Gardner are among the bill's 139 bipartisan, bicameral supporters. More than 320 organizations, including CU, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce [5] and Google, have also endorsed the effort. At CU's urging, the Boulder Chamber, Denver Metro Chamber, South Denver Metro Chamber, Colorado Business Roundtable and Colorado BioScience Association have likewise endorsed the bill.

Following introduction of the RISE Act, the House Budget [6] and Science [7] Committees each convened hearings to address the urgent need for research relief. Notably, the Senate Commerce Committee favorably reported [8] the RISE Act in September. Senator Gardner issued a press release [9] applauding the bill's passage, which quotes CU President Mark Kennedy. While the legislation will not advance in the current Congress, it is expected to be reintroduced in the new Congress next year. CU's Federal Relations Team will continue to work with the Colorado delegation to advocate for research relief as Congress considers future pandemic legislation.

Space Weather Legislation Signed Into Law

On September 16, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the *Promoting Research and Observations of Space Weather to Improve Forecasting of Tomorrow (PROSWIFT) Act* (S. 881 [10]) that was led by Representatives Ed Perlmutter (CO), Mo Brooks (AL) and Senators Cory Gardner (CO) and Gary Peters (MI). The bill previously passed the Senate on July 27. This bipartisan and bicameral legislation aims to improve coordination across federal agencies to better understand and predict space weather events and their impact while building partnerships across academic and industry sectors to enhance operations and research capabilities.

Congressman Perlmutter credits Dr. Dan Baker of CU Boulder's Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP)

[11] for bringing this issue to his attention in previous congressional testimony, which led to efforts to enhance the federal government's ability to coordinate and respond to potentially damaging solar events. Dr. Baker and others at CU helped provide technical expertise to the legislation, which is now expected to be signed into law by the President.

Senator-Elect Hickenlooper Bio Frontiers Event

Senator-elect John Hickenlooper met with researchers and industry leaders from across Colorado to discuss how academia and industry are working to combat COVID-19 in November. The roundtable was hosted by CU Boulder's BioFrontiers Institute [12], an interdisciplinary hub for bioscience research and education with a focus on improving human health. Chancellor Phil DiStefano provided welcome remarks and CU Regents Sue Sharkey and Lesley Smith attended. Senator-elect Hickenlooper sits on the BioFrontier's Advisory Board.

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