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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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February 13, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Graves
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
HT-2, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Graves and Ranking Members Lowey and Wasserman Schultz:

I am writing to urge you to begin restoring funding to the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) in the Fiscal Year 2016 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. For more than two decades the OTA provided relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff. Today, the OTA would offer policy makers the tools to tackle and understand new technological developments and their impact on public policy.

The OTA is still authorized, but the office was defunded in 1995, stripping Congress of a valuable resource that understood both emerging technologies as well as the intricacies of the legislative process and the needs of policy makers. The OTA was unique in that its mission included prospective, forward-looking reports on future breakthroughs, how to benefit from new technologies, and how to treat them under the law.

In its absence the need for the OTA has only grown. Twenty years later, many of the topics OTA studied are still relevant today, whether it be a study on the rise of antibiotic resistant bacteria, electronic surveillance in the digital age, or testing in America's schools. These are the kinds of complex issues our nation will continue to face, and

Congress should have access to the thorough and insightful analysis OTA can provide to help us find the right path forward.

Funding the OTA is a wise investment for the future. In the last year it operated, the total budget for the OTA was \$23 million, but the savings that the OTA has created for the federal government have gone well beyond that level. A study on Agent Orange saved the government \$10 million, while another recommended computer upgrades at the Social Security Administration that led to a savings of over \$350 million. Perhaps most impressively, studies on the Synthetic Fuels Corporation led to its repeal, saving the federal government tens of billions of dollars.

I ask that you restore \$2.5 million to the OTA Account, to begin rebuilding the office in Fiscal Year 2016. These funds will better prepare Congress to account for emerging technologies in the legislative process and allow us to make informed policy decisions. Thank you for your consideration and your leadership on the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Member of Congress