

January 18, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations bills, the undersigned organizations—committed to advancing scientific research on the microbiome—request the inclusion of the following report language that was included in the FY 2022 House Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations report in support of the Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome research:

Microbiome.—The Committee requests an update from the National Science and Technology Council on the implementation of the Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research, which was developed by the Microbiome Interagency Working Group, and in particular, any proposal for the continuation of the plan at its completion in 2022. The Committee encourages OSTP to prioritize leveraging the National Microbiome Data Collaborative at the Department of Energy to ensure *cross-agency collaboration and integration of microbiome datasets*.

Research on the microbiome aims to advance understanding of microbial communities (microbiomes) and how they interact with the world around us. This research has broad, practical implications for human nutrition, health care, food production, and environmental restoration to benefit individuals, communities, and the environment. Understanding of the microbiome has evolved significantly since the concept of the human microbiome emerged roughly two decades ago. Today it is understood that microbial communities exist on, in, and around people, plants, animals, soil, oceans, and the atmosphere, making the microbiome relevant to all living things. The rapid pace of discovery has led to greater technology needs and data sharing infrastructure.

The Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research FY2018-2022¹, developed by the Microbiome Interagency Working Group (MIWG), provides recommendations for improving coordination of microbiome research among Federal agencies and between agencies and non-Federal domestic and international microbiome research efforts. The five-year Strategic Plan provides recommendations for improving coordination of microbiome research activities in eight Target Areas across 21 government agencies. The Strategic Plan also proposes interagency objectives, structure and operating principles, and recommends three areas to transform microbiome discoveries to solutions:

¹Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research

https://commonfund.nih.gov/sites/default/files/Interagency_Microbiome%20Strategic_Plan_Final_041918_508.pdf, accessed April 27, 2021.

1. Supporting interdisciplinary and collaborative research to enable a predictive understanding of the function of microbiomes in diverse ecosystems to enhance public health, food, and environmental security and grow new bioeconomy product areas.
2. Developing platform technologies to generate critical insights and to improve access to and sharing of microbiome data across ecosystems.
3. Expanding the microbiome workforce through educational opportunities, citizen science, and public engagement.

As the Strategic Plan's term ends in FY 2022, you can ensure that this important initiative can reach its full potential by requesting that the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) evaluate the progress made and develop a proposal for continuation of the work in the next iteration of the Strategic Plan. We request that you also consider whether the Federal investment has been adequate to fully realize the promise of microbiome research.

With the requisite federal support, we can further understanding of microbiomes and leverage their diverse applications in medicine, agriculture, and the environment. If we can be of further assistance, please have your staff contact Allen Segal, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at the American Society for Microbiology, at asegal@asmusa.org.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Microbiomes Research Coordination Network
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Phytopathological Society
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
Biophysical Society
C3 Think Tank
Crop Science Society of America
Endocrine Society
Geological Society of America
International Agricultural Microbiome Research Coordination Network
Microbiome Centers Consortium
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society
Rochester Institute of Technology
Soil Health Institute
Soil Science Society of America
Tufts University
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of California San Diego
University of California System
Wisconsin Energy Institute