

Testimony in Support of Increased FY 2009 Funding for the
Environmental Protection Agency

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Submitted by:

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Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
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The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) encourages Congress to provide the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with at least \$646.5 million for the Office of Research and Development (ORD) for fiscal year (FY) 2009. Within this amount, we encourage you to provide at least \$181 million for human health and ecosystem research. We also support additional funding for important programs within ORD, such as research in endocrine disruptors and global change.

AIBS is a nonprofit scientific association dedicated to advancing biological research and education for the welfare of society. Founded in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences, AIBS became an independent, member-governed organization in the 1950s. AIBS is sustained by a robust membership of some 5,000 biologists and nearly 200 professional societies and scientific organizations; the combined individual membership of the latter exceeds 250,000. AIBS advances its mission through coalition activities in research, education, and public policy; publishing the peer-reviewed journal BioScience and the education website ActionBioscience.org; providing scientific peer review and advisory services to government agencies and other clients; convening meetings; and managing scientific programs.

The ORD is the scientific research division of the EPA. The ORD performs valuable research needed to solve the environmental challenges facing the United States today and potential challenges in the future. EPA's environmental research plays an integral role in pollution prevention and safe guarding human health.

Scientists in EPA's human health research program uniquely incorporate many environmental science disciplines to build a strong foundation for risk assessment and improve understanding of toxic chemical exposure and health effects. For instance, EPA scientists have conducted research on the chemical atrazine, an agriculture herbicide in use since the late 1950s, to understand its effects on human health.

The EPA's Ecological Research Program is responsible for improving and protecting ecosystem services, such as clean air and water, rich soil for food and crop production, pollination, and flood control, which are often taken for granted. Research conducted by the Ecological Research Program provides scientific data, methods, models, and tools needed by states, communities, and tribes to understand the cost and benefits of using ecosystem services.

Research programs at the EPA have been steadily declining since FY 2004, when ORD was funded at \$646.5 million. The President's budget request for FY 2009 would allocate \$540.7 million for the ORD, which is approximately \$7 million less than the FY 2008 enacted amount and is over \$100 million less than what was appropriated in FY 2004. Consequently, research in human health and ecosystems within the ORD would be allocated \$144.7 million, \$8.3 million less than FY 2008 enacted funding and \$36.5 million less than funding enacted in FY 2004.

Over the past several years, the EPA Science Advisory Board has made multiple requests to EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson for a revitalization of ecosystem research and increased funding for ecological research. Dr. M. Granger Morgan, Chair of the Science Advisory Board, wrote to Administrator Johnson in March 2006 expressing concerns about funding declines and "systematic bias against ecosystem research" stating that ecosystem research at the EPA has "sustained a decrease of nearly 26 percent since 2004." Dr. Morgan stated that the Board was distressed that instead funding has been cut and work has declined.

We urge Congress to consider the Board's concerns and advice and provide the EPA with at least \$646.5 million for the ORD for fiscal year (FY) 2009 and at least \$181 million for human health and ecosystem research. Providing these amounts to the ORD, human health and ecosystem research, and other important biological science research will restore them to FY 2004 levels, thus allowing vital research in ecosystem services and healthy communities to continue productively.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.