

October 10, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Vice Chairwoman Collins, Chairwoman Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations committed to advancing scientific research on the microbiome, we would like to thank the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for their ongoing support and request that you include the report language in the Senate Fiscal Year 2024 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations bill regarding the Microbiome Interagency Working Group in the final CJS funding bill. This language is an important step to ensure we continue to advance coordination of microbiome research and increase efficiency and collaboration in areas that impact human, animal, and ecosystem health.

The language in the Senate FY24 CJS Appropriations report states:

Microbiome Interagency Working Group.—The Committee recognizes that microbiome research is foundational research with the potential to advance human, animal, and environmental health through the bioeconomy. The Committee supports the continuation of the Microbiome Interagency Working Group and requests an update of the Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research. OSTP is encouraged to consider the renewal of the charter for the Microbiome Interagency Working Group.

Microbial communities exist on, in, and around people, plants, animals, and the environment and have symbiotic relationships that support immunity and protect against disease. Microbiome research aims to advance the understanding of microbial communities and how they interact with the world around us. The rapid pace of discovery of the microbiome has led to greater technological needs and data sharing infrastructure.

As the body of microbiome research and applications grows, the need for interagency coordination of the underlying science among federal science agencies has grown as well. The [Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research FY2018-2022](#), developed by the Microbiome Interagency Working Group, provided recommendations for improving coordination of microbiome research among Federal agencies and non-Federal domestic and international microbiome research efforts. As the Strategic Plan's term recently ended in Fiscal Year 2022, we urge the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to renew the charter of the Microbiome Interagency Working Group to assess the current state of microbiome research and to work on an updated Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research. Specific areas of microbiome research, such as human and animal therapeutics, soil health, and biomanufacturing, are burgeoning sectors of global research and development and are essential to the growing U.S. bioeconomy.

With the continuation of the Microbiome Interagency Working Group and an update to the Interagency Strategic Plan for Microbiome Research, we can further the understanding of the microbiome and its functions and lead to the diverse application of discovery in biomedical, agricultural, environmental, atmospheric sciences, and national defense sectors. If we can be of further assistance, please have your staff contact Nick Cox, Senior Federal Affairs Officer at the American Society for Microbiology, at ncox@asmusa.org. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Phytopathological Society
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Plant Biologists
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Endocrine Society
Entomological Society of America
International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research
Microbiome Centers Consortium
Ohio State University Center of Microbiome Science
One Health Microbiome Center at Penn State
Rochester Institute of Technology
Sela Lab, University of Massachusetts
UCI Center for Microbiome Science