



AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Office of the President

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Gary Peters
724 Hart Senate Office Bldg
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Bldg
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Booker
359 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Peters, Gardner, and Booker,

On behalf of members of the American Astronomical Society (AAS) and its Solar Physics Division (SPD), we write to express our strong support for the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act and to thank you for your leadership on this important topic. The legislation that you introduced this week is comprehensive in its scope, addressing key aspects of space weather and its significance for national security, for activities and communications in the terrestrial and near-Earth environments, for health, and for manned and unmanned space operations in low Earth orbit and in interplanetary space.

In particular, we strongly support the following elements of the legislation, all of which are essential to our capability to understand the causes and effects of space weather, and to forecast hazardous events:

- the emphasis placed on basic and applied research, on the analysis of data and interpretation of observations, on the development and maintenance of observational capabilities, and on improved communication between the research community and the personnel involved in pertinent arenas of operations, including the formation of heliophysics science centers to facilitate this communication;
- the need for continued operation of existing space- and ground-based observatories, as well as for complementary new instrumentation, that provide timely and systematic observations of the Sun, solar wind, and geospace environment;
- the recognition of the wide impact of space weather and the concomitant call for strong cooperation between stakeholder agencies such as the NSF, NOAA, NASA, and Departments of the Interior, Homeland Security, Energy, Transportation, and Defense;
- the call for the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to establish an interagency working group on space weather, with broad representation of key federal stakeholders, and for accountability to Congress through the submission of pertinent reports; and,
- the plan to establish a formal mechanism for the transition of research knowledge to operational capabilities and for communication of operational needs to the research community.

Thank you your attention to this timely and important issue. The membership of the SPD, which includes the nation's foremost experts in many of the areas addressed in this legislation, stands ready to assist in any way we can. If there is anything we can do, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Joel Parriott, the AAS's Director of Public Policy, at (202)-328-2010 or joel.parriott@aaas.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. C. Megan Urry
President, AAS

Dr. Dana Longcope
Chair, SPD