



# Congress of the United States of America

## House of Representatives

Vernon J. Ehlers

September 23, 1998

Michigan

The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Chairman, Committee on Science  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Sensenbrenner:

I am pleased to submit to you the report on a new national science policy, which you commissioned me to do last year. We have been able to mount an intense effort during the past twelve months, and have not only reviewed our nation's science policy and the status of our mathematics and science education programs, but have also developed a series of recommendations that will improve both.

Science policy has become considerably more complex since the last major policy statement was written by Vannevar Bush in 1945. Hence we had to consider many areas that had not been addressed before, and this broadened scope made it difficult to go into the detail some might expect in a science policy statement. My hope is that this document will serve as the basis for future discussions and further action with respect to science policy.

Addressing improvements to science and mathematics education programs in our nation's elementary and secondary schools proved to be a massive task that could not be accomplished in the twelve months allotted us. The challenges we face in this area are significant enough to warrant additional attention, and I urge you to make this an important component of the Science Committee's agenda in the next Congress.

Dr. Homer Neal of the University of Michigan deserves special thanks for planting the seed for this study. During his tenure as Vice President for Research at the University of Michigan, Dr. Neal organized several meetings of officials from more than a dozen universities to discuss the need for new directions in U.S. science policy. He was also the driving force behind the 1996 Jerome B. Wiesner Symposium, an effort to encourage bipartisan development of principles that would guide the partnership of research universities and the federal government. While not formal parts of this study, these meetings were influential in highlighting important science policy issues and catalyzing my interest in undertaking an analysis and revision of our nation's science policies.



I also would like to thank the Republican staff of the Committee on Science, especially Mike Champness; the Democratic staff of the committee, particularly Dr. Njema Frazier; and also Dr. Sharon Hays, a AAAS Science Fellow who has served in my office for the past year. Dr. Hays deserves special accolades because she served as the principal writer of this report, proving once again that scientists can not only be expert at exploring the universe, but can also artfully communicate in the English language.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work on this project, conduct the many hearings involved, discuss science policy with literally thousands of scientists, and be of service in preparing this document for your use and the consideration of the Science Committee and the House. I hope that all those involved in this project have served you and the nation well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vernon J. Ehlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent, sweeping initial "V".

Vernon J. Ehlers  
Vice Chairman, House Committee on  
Science