

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 6, 2017

The Honorable France Córdova  
Director  
National Science Foundation (NSF)  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Dr. Córdova,

Congratulations to you and the National Science Foundation (NSF) on the recent successes of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), including the third detection of gravitational waves from merging black holes. We remain astounded and impressed by the remarkable discoveries made at LIGO's Livingston, LA and Hanford, WA facilities, and look forward to witnessing how the observatory further shapes the way we understand our universe.

In anticipation of the end of LIGO's current five-year funding cycle, we are eager to work with you to ensure that the observatory remains adequately funded. Over the course of this current funding cycle, NSF rescissions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 resulted in reductions to LIGO's core science mission in its FY 2017 and 2018 budgets. The discoveries LIGO has made are truly inspiring and we are confident that further discoveries will justify its continued priority. For these reasons, we seek your assurance that the NSF will devote sufficient resources to LIGO over its next five-year funding cycle and continue fully leveraging previous taxpayer investments to achieve further scientific discoveries. To that end, we ask you to clarify the following:


- How the NSF will work with LIGO's principal investigators to ensure that budget obligations are met over the course of the FY 2019-2023 funding cycle;
- What the NSF's current projections are for LIGO's annual budget under the upcoming FY 2019-2023 funding cycle; and
- How those projections may differ from those requested by LIGO's principal investigators, and how those differences will be resolved.

The NSF rightly champions LIGO as an example of what the Foundation, as well as our nation's scientific community, can achieve. Given the considerable taxpayer investment in LIGO, we urge you to ensure that the observatory is appropriately funded and fully utilized over the course of its next five-year funding cycle. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices should you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and for your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
Patty Murray  
U.S. Senator

  
Maria Cantwell  
U.S. Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
U.S. Senator

John Kennedy

John Neely Kennedy  
U.S. Senator

Garret Graves

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

Dan Newhouse

Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress