



**The Canadian Society of  
Biochemistry, Molecular  
& Cellular Biology**

**La Société Canadienne de  
Biochimie, et de Biologie  
Moléculaire & Cellulaire**

**President / Président**

Dr. Laura S. Frost  
Professor  
Department of Biological Sciences  
CW405 Biological Sciences Building  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E9  
tele: 780-851-7609  
fax: 780-492-9234  
E.mail: laura.frost@ualberta.ca

Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa  
K1A 0A2

February 5, 2009

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Dear Mr. Harper;

On behalf of the Canadian Society of Biochemistry, Molecular & Cellular Biology (CSBMCB), I would like to congratulate the Government of Canada for a number of measures in the 2009 Budget, including the more than \$1.5 billion investment in science and technology. The CSBMCB is pleased to see in the budget \$750 million for the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) in support of research infrastructure and \$87.5 million for the temporary expansion of the Canada Graduate Scholarship Program as well as continued funding for Genome Canada.

However, the lack of additional new investment in Canada's granting agencies Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), NSERC and SSHRC is of great concern. Without increased investments in operating funds to support doing research, Canada could lose the competitive edge that previous investments in students, scientists and infrastructure have achieved. Operating monies are the funds that allow our gifted students and other trainees to become competitive at an international level and leaders in the next generation of scientists. Without these crucial increases, fewer labs will be funded and fewer students, scholarships notwithstanding, will be trained in the diverse areas of science that define "interdisciplinary research". Targeted research is one essential component of the funding process, but as a country, we need a strong background in basic research that feeds into technological development and planning for crises ranging from SARS to mountain pine beetles to environmental concerns in the oil sands.

Over the past several years, many leaders and national and provincial partners dedicated to advancing research in Canada have advocated for increased investments in discovery research through the granting councils to match the growth in infrastructure and research capacity through the CFI and the Canada Research Chairs Program respectively. Failure to align these funding streams at the federal level has created a serious imbalance in the supply and demand in health research and research generally, which will, in turn, increasingly affect our capacity to retain and recruit the best scientists.

The biotechnology sector is also suffering from a lack of investment capital. This industry serves as a primary receptor for much of Canadian research related to health, agriculture, manufacturing, environmental and resource-based emerging technologies. Fifty percent of Canadian companies indicate they will be closing or selling off their operations to international partners by the end of this year. Canada cannot afford to ignore the competitive environment other nationals will be adopting to help grow and stimulate their knowledge-based industries.

The economic impact of Canadian health research is significant. On an annual basis our industry generates \$12 billion in economic activity and provides employment and training for over 10,000 people across Canada. The sector also supports more than 20,000 scientists, clinical investigators and other researchers and staff.

Canada has many of the right ingredients to succeed in the knowledge-based economy including a highly skilled workforce and some of the best research facilities in the world. The CSBMCB looks forward to working with the Government of Canada in laying the foundation for a stronger and more sustainable economy of the future in which research and development in the health and life sciences are a top national priority.

Sincerely,

Laura Frost, Ph.D.  
President, CSBMCB

cc: The Hon. Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Opposition  
The Hon. Gary Goodyear, Minister for Science and Technology

