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Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences Société Canadienne pour les Biosciences Moléculaires

Message from new CSMB president

July 25, 2014

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Dear members of the CSMB,

As incoming president I would like to thank you for your loyalty to and for your interest in the society. Your continued support is crucial for our ability to fulfil our mandate to promote bioscience research in Canada.

As you know, the CSMB engages in multiple activities to advance basic research in the molecular biosciences in Canada such as organizing high calibre meetings, giving out scientific prizes and supporting student activities. Considering the budgetary constraints at all government funding agencies, combined with the upcoming restructuring of the open programs at CIHR, our first priority this year is advocacy work to sensitize decision makers to the need for increased support for basic bioscience research. This research provides the back bone for biomedical advances and is crucial for the training of biomedical scientists.

To this end, we have submitted our response to the last federal budget, we have responded to the Ministry of Industry consultation on Science and Technology and we have continued our letter writing campaign among those funded by CIHR (<http://csmb-scbm.ca/advocacy.aspx>). We will work hard to engage in a dialogue on funding for research with members of parliament and with the government in the upcoming pre-election period. As you all probably know, there will be money on the table in the 2015 federal pre-election budget. Many will ask for this money and we need to make a strong case that part of the available resources should be allocated to turn the trend from the current erosion of funding for basic discovery research in our country.

To do this we need your help as formulated in this inspiring editorial in Science (<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6189/1207.long>). **You are all scientists as well as citizens and voters, and as such you should take the opportunity to make your views heard to those who ultimately decide on funding for research.** The next opportunity to do this is the ongoing pre-budgetary consultation by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and the CSMB will make a submission before the deadline on August 6.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6653302&Parl=41&Ses=2>

However, we will probably be seen as only one voice among those who have vested interests and may or may not accurately represent you. **What a difference and impact it could have if dozens of you submitted their views to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, especially graduate students and postdocs who are especially vulnerable in the current funding situation.** I strongly encourage you to speak up for science, as scientists as well as citizens. If we do not make a credible case for increased funding for basic discovery research and for the positive impact this will have for Canadians, nobody will! Thanks for your consideration and support.

Best regards,

Christian Baron

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