Dear Senator Obama:

The next President of the United States will face a wide range of domestic and international challenges, from financial and regulatory reform to healthcare and rising energy costs, from global climate change to ensuring U.S. economic competitiveness and national security. These challenges share one thing in common: long-term solutions that will be impossible without groundbreaking scientific and technological advances. It is therefore critical that the next President seek out and rely upon sound scientific and technological advice early and often in the new Administration.

Your responses to the Science Debate 2008 questions reflect your acknowledgment of the important role that science will play in a new Administration. With this in mind, it is essential to quickly appoint a science advisor who is a nationally respected leader with the appropriate scientific, management and policy skills necessary for this critically important role.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations representing the business, education and scientific communities urge you, if you are elected President, to appoint your White House Science Advisor by January 20, so this individual can participate immediately in coordinating relevant policy and personnel decisions relating to science and technology.

We further urge that the next President give the science advisor the title of Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and assign the position a cabinet rank, the same status currently given to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Trade Representative.

The next President must lead our country in addressing the national issues of concern to us all. To do so effectively, science and technology must be part of the solution. Putting a science advisor in place early, and providing this individual with adequate stature and authority within the White House, will help the new President effectively address the challenges we face.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner       Robert M. Berdahl
Chief Executive Officer      President
American Association for the Advancement of Science  Association of American Universities

Deborah L. Wince-Smith      David M. Abshire
President        President
Council on Competitiveness  Center for the Study of the Presidency

The Honorable John Edward Porter      Richard A. Meserve
Chair, National Academies Committee on  President
Ensuring the Best Science and Technology  Carnegie Institution for Science
Appointments in the New Administration
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Space Enterprise Council
Union of Concerned Scientists
University at Buffalo
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of California Office of the President
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Central Florida
University of Cincinnati
University of Illinois
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Minnesota
University of Michigan
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rhode Island
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution