The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 6,800 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters concerning their welfare, academic opportunities, and professional careers after graduation. We support all measures that strengthen federal funding for both basic and applied research and enable major scientific innovations. **We support the passage of H.R. 589, Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act**, now pending in the Senate. We also believe the bill can be strengthened with language that clarifies and institutionalizes federal support of open access research and language that supports theoretical research.

Investment in research is essential to increasing the competitiveness of the American economy, improving the overall health and prosperity of human society, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge. We commend the effort to pass bipartisan legislation that advances these goals. The Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act clearly lays out the priorities of the DOE’s research efforts and upholds the integrity of those scientific endeavors by extending the flexibility for researchers to pursue work guided by the expertise in their field. The bill also, by and large, strikes a strong and positive balance between fundamental and applied research, and we particularly applaud the recognition of investments in fundamental research and clean energy advancements. We also support efforts to bolster public-private partnerships in research and development. We welcome legislation that upholds these principles and that facilitates the coordination and collaboration between and across scientific endeavors.

There are several specific edits to the bill that would strengthen it. Firstly, the GSC strongly supports open access to research. In Section 105, Subsection (c), we recommend implementing an effort to enforce the open distribution of publications by publicly financed research. Secondly, the GSC represents graduate student researchers engaged in a diverse array of academic fields, and we believe it is crucial that research legislation supports all fields of research equitably. In Section 304, Subsection (c), the bill calls for research in applied mathematics, omitting theoretical research in this field. This bill also omits theoretical research in other fields, such as chemistry and physics, which is also relevant to the Department of Energy’s goals. Theoretical research can yield long-term advancements in applied fields, so we recommend the inclusion of theoretical research as an additional priority for the DOE.

Pending these changes to the bill, **we urge the Senate to pass H.R. 589, the Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act**.

*Prepared by the External Affairs Board on behalf of the MIT Graduate Student Council, June 2017*