

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 22, 2016

The Honorable Dr. France A. Córdoba
Director
United States National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. Córdoba:

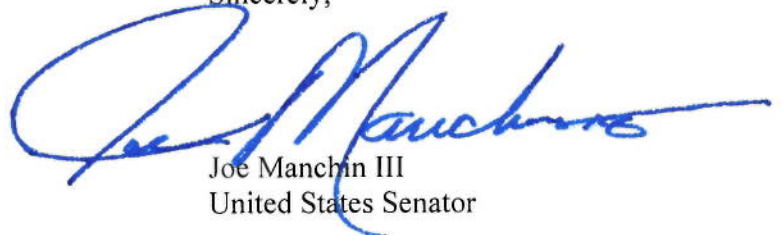
As you may know, the world's largest fully steerable telescope is located in Green Bank, West Virginia. For the United States to continue to be a leader in scientific discovery and radio astronomy, our scientists must have access to the best equipment in the world. With that in mind, I write in strong support of the research occurring at the Green Bank Observatory (GBO) and urge the National Science Foundation (NSF) to continue its partnership with this important facility in West Virginia.

The GBO was originally dedicated in 1957, and the updated GBO of today continues to drive world-class research in many fields including physics, chemistry, astronomy, planetary studies, and STEM education that will help our nation better conduct the science activities of tomorrow. The Green Bank Telescope is the premiere facility available to scientists developing new astronomical techniques, and it has also engaged more than 100 teachers and 2,000 high school students through the Pulsar Search Collaboratory in analyzing more than 2.5 million pieces of data. More than 50,000 students, teachers, and visitors annually tour the facility and visit the surrounding community.

The unique scientific expertise of GBO within the research and educational communities is complemented by the significant economic impact within Pocahontas County and the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia. The more than 100 year-round employees and 40 seasonal summer employees contribute more than \$17 million annually to the local economy. In total, the GBO generates nearly \$30 million every year, which in turn supports the first responders and organizations that support local families. In an area that has welcomed the sacrifices of this unique way of life, the economic contributions of GBO are vital to the continued success and growth of the community.

For all these reasons – scientific, educational, and economic – GBO plays a critically important role in Pocahontas County and across West Virginia, and through the research capabilities it provides for the nation. This observatory should be quantified not only by these measures but by its value as an emblematic public display of the positive impact NSF-supported activities can have on our communities and the lives of those who live in them.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator