



United States Congress



May 5, 2011

William S. Smith, Jr., President
Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy
Suite 450
1212 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Smith:

We write today to express our strong support for the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU) as a proposed relocation site for the National Solar Observatory (NSO) headquarters. As the Association of University for Research in Astronomy (AURA) makes its final decision on the location of the new headquarters of the NSO, we would like to highlight the bid of CU and demonstrate the strong, unified support for this project from the entire Colorado congressional delegation. Colorado's higher education institutions, federal labs, and quickly growing scientific and aerospace industries make it a strong, cost-effective candidate for the new facility.

As you know, Boulder is also home to National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and a significant branch of the National Institute of Standards in Technology (NIST). These labs, in conjunction with many other smaller organizations and private sector businesses in related fields, would provide ample and seamless opportunities for collaboration. Locating the NSO in Boulder would allow NSO scientists to tap into a highly-educated, well-trained workforce and to work with other local scientists in a variety of fields – including solar, space physics, astrophysics, data management, and mining and instrument design. Boulder ranks in the top three areas in the country for its concentration of high technology research firms and experienced technical workers – higher than any other city currently competing for the headquarters. The proximity to this community would lead to better collaboration and lower costs for the facility, as shared research leads to natural partnerships.

Locating the NSO headquarters at CU would allow the facility to work closely with CU's prominent departments of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences (APS), Aerospace Engineering Sciences (AES), and Physics. These departments are already working at the center of the NSO's larger mission to develop a better understanding of the dynamics and magnetism of the sun and

its potential effects on growing technological and human presence in space. In addition, a new headquarters in Boulder would allow the NSO to tap into the high-quality graduate students at CU and ensure the scientific success of the new Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST) in Maui.

Finally, the CU administration is actively involved in this bid and has reserved a major portion of a newly-acquired and sophisticated building in CU's East Campus Research Park. This site is in close proximity to the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) and the Center for Astrophysics and Space Astronomy (CASA), and associated high technology resources. It can be configured to meet the NSO facility's needs. In addition, CU continues to improve its facilities as outlined in the University Master Plan. Locating the headquarters at CU would be a cost-effective way for the federal government to build on the resources of the university and its existing infrastructure.

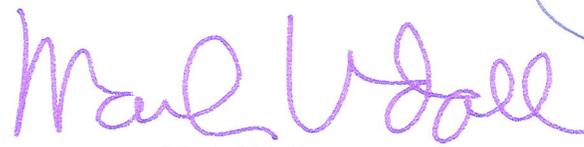
CU would make an excellent home for the new NSO headquarters, and the larger Boulder community would provide myriad opportunities for cost-effective, scientific collaboration. CU's proposal is supported by a unique coalition of the mayor and city manager of Boulder, the Boulder Chamber of Commerce, the Boulder Economic Council, and other local civic entities, making this a true community-driven and community-supported project.

We thank you for your fair consideration of the CU proposal and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Mark Udall
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
Governor



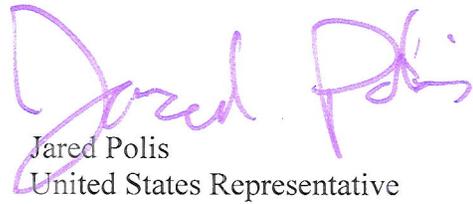
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United States Representative



Ed Perlmutter
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Scott Tipton
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Jared Polis
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Diana DeGette
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