Media Contacts: Joan Coyle, ACS, 202-872-6229, j_coyle@acs.org;
Ginger Pinholster, AAAS, 202-326-6421, gpinhols@aaas.org;
Randy Atkins, US National Academies, (202-334-1508), ratkins@nae.edu;
Shawn Otto, ScienceDebate.org, (310-433-4911), shawn@sciencedebate.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE AT 6:30 AM EDT, WEDNESDAY, AUG. 10, 2016

Over 50 Leading American Nonpartisan Organizations Call on Presidential Candidates to Address Major Issues in Science, Engineering, Technology, Health and the Environment

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 10, 2016 — A blue-ribbon coalition of fifty-six leading U.S. nonpartisan organizations, representing more than 10 million scientists and engineers, are calling on U.S. Presidential candidates to address a set of twenty major issues in science, engineering, technology, health and the environment, and encouraging journalists and voters to press the candidates on them during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election season.

“Taken collectively, these twenty issues have at least as profound an impact on voters’ lives as those more frequently covered by journalists, including candidates’ views on economic policy, foreign policy, and faith and values,” said ScienceDebate.org chair Shawn Otto, organizer of the effort. A 2015 national poll commissioned by ScienceDebate.org and Research!America revealed that a large majority of Americans (87%) say it is important that candidates for President and Congress have a basic understanding of the science informing public policy issues.

The group crowd sourced and refined hundreds of suggestions, then submitted “the 20 most important, most immediate questions” to the Presidential campaigns of Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Gary Johnson, and Jill Stein, "along with an invitation to the candidates to answer them in writing and to discuss them on television," said Otto. The questions and answers will be widely distributed to the science community, journalists, and the general public to help voters make well-informed decisions at the ballot box this November.

The list of organizations is a who’s who of the American science enterprise.
“Sometimes politicians think science issues are limited to simply things like the budget for NASA or NIH, and they fail to realize that a President’s attitude toward and decisions about science and research affect the public wellbeing, from the growth of our economy, to education, to public health. Voters should have a chance to know where the Presidential candidates stand,” said Rush Holt, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the Science family of journals. “We want journalists and voters to ask these questions insistently of the candidates and their campaign staff.”

“By engaging the candidates in a debate focusing on topics in science, engineering, technology, and innovation,” said Marcia McNutt, President of the National Academy of Sciences. “it would

be an opportunity for all voters to gauge how the candidates would use sound technical information in their future decision making."

“Informing citizens about the health of the nation and discussing pivotal science and policy issues such as mental health, chronic and emerging diseases and other public health threats, and vaccine research, are important to not only advance the national dialogue but also improve the country’s overall well-being,” said Victor J. Dzau, President of the National Academy of Medicine.

“Ahead lie many Grand Challenges for Engineering whose solution in this century have been posited as necessary for simply maintaining our quality of life,” said C. D. Mote, Jr., President of the National Academy of Engineering. “Unfortunately, these challenges stand unrecognized in the US Presidential debates."

The groups are asking candidates to provide responses by September 6.

Nonpartisan organizations participating in the effort include:

**ScienceDebate.org
*American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Geographers
*American Chemical Society
American Fisheries Society
American Geophysical Union
*American Geosciences Institute
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
*American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Professional Geologists
American Rock Mechanics Association
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists
American Society of Mammalogists
Association for Women in Geosciences
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers
Automation Federation
*Biophysical Society
Botanical Society of America
Carnegie Institution for Science
Conservation Lands Foundation
Crop Science Society of America
Duke University
Ecological Society of America
Geological Society of America
*IEEE-USA
International Committee Monitoring Assisted Reproductive Technologies
Materials Research Society
NACE International, The Worldwide Corrosion Authority

*National Academy of Engineering
*National Academy of Medicine
*National Academy of Sciences
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
*National Center for Science Education
National Ground Water Association
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Northeastern University
Organization of Biological Field Stations
Paleontological Society
*Research!America
Scientific American magazine
Seismological Society of America
*Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections
Society of Fire Protection Engineers
Society of Wetland Scientists
Society of Women Engineers
Soil Science Society of America
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Tufts University
*Union of Concerned Scientists
University City Science Center
*U.S. Council on Competitiveness
The Wildlife Society
World Endometriosis Research Foundation America

*Codeveloper of the questions
**Lead partner organization

The consortium's list of 20 questions are available online at ScienceDebate.org/20qs.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

THE QUESTIONS

The consortium's list of 20 questions most important science, engineering, health and environmental questions facing the next President are available at ScienceDebate.org/20qs.

ADDITIONAL AND/OR FULL QUOTATIONS:

Rush Holt, *chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the Science family of journals:*
"Sometimes politicians think science issues are limited to simply things like the budget for NASA or NIH, and they fail to realize that a President's attitude toward and decisions about science and research affect the public wellbeing, from the growth of our economy, to education, to public health. Voters should have a chance to know where the Presidential candidates stand," said Rush Holt, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of

Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the Science family of journals. “We want journalists and voters to ask these questions insistently of the candidates and their campaign staff.”

Marcia McNutt, *President of the National Academy of Sciences:*
“In hearing the candidates speak about the issues important to the American people. I am struck by the fact that there is hardly a topic that would not benefit from being informed by the best scientific evidence to guide sound policy. By engaging the candidates in a debate focusing on topics in science, engineering, technology, and innovation, it would be an opportunity for all voters to gauge how the candidates would use sound technical information in their future decision making."

C. D. Mote, Jr., *President of the National Academy of Engineering:*
"U.S. science and engineering have transformed our lives. In just the last century, U.S. advancements have brought electrification, the automobile, airplane, television, space travel, antibiotics, refrigeration, the Internet, and cell phones, just to name a few. But ahead lie many Grand Challenges for Engineering whose solution in this century have been posited as necessary for simply maintaining our quality of life. Unfortunately, these challenges stand unrecognized in the US Presidential debates."

Victor J. Dzau, *President of the National Academy of Medicine:*
“Informing citizens about the health of the nation and discussing pivotal science and policy issues such as mental health, chronic and emerging diseases and other public health threats, and vaccine research are important to not only advance the national dialogue but also improve the country’s overall well-being.”

Norm Augustine, *U.S. aerospace industry CEO and former Under Secretary of the Army:*
“The solution to many of the greatest challenges faced by our nation will depend to a large degree upon advancements in the fields of science and engineering. Such challenges include conquering diseases, creating jobs, developing clean energy, providing adequate water supplies, and defending our nation from terrorists and foreign aggressor nations. It is difficult to imagine how any citizen can intelligently cast their ballot without knowing where each candidate stands on the policy issues that will define whether America remains a leader or becomes a follower in the critical fields of science and engineering.”

Edward Egelman, *public affairs chairman and past president of the Biophysical Society:*
“Most Americans recognize that science and technology play an increasingly important role in many aspects of our lives. It is also science and technology that will drive the U.S. economy this century. It is imperative, therefore, that people who would like to lead our country provide us with their thoughts on issues involving science and technology.”

Robert Gropp, *interim co-executive director of the American Institute of Biological Sciences:*
“Science saves lives and improves our quality of life. The federal government provides almost half of the funding for basic research in the United States. This research is the foundation upon which society – from small start-ups to Fortune 500 companies – develops new products that improve human health, secures our food supplies, and solves complex environmental problems. Just think of the benefits we have derived from the government’s support of the Human Genome Project. Scientists now have a base of knowledge they can use to more strategically and precisely

study diseases and explore new treatments. The public deserves to know the candidates' positions on science."

Thomas M. Connelly, Jr., *executive director and chief executive officer of the American Chemical Society*
"Science is essential for the economic prosperity of our country. It creates jobs, improves our lives and makes our world healthier, safer, and more sustainable. The broader chemistry enterprise directly employs well over 800,000 people in the United States and serves as an important component of our nation's innovation engine, helping drive job creation and economic growth. So it's vital that candidates acknowledge and address the important role science plays in our economy, now and in the future."

VIDEO:
The group created a public service announcement featuring children asking the candidates to debate the big science issues facing the country, at http://sciencedebate.org/#kids

AUDIO:
Broadcast-quality audio clips of ScienceDebate.org chair Shawn Otto can be downloaded from:

How the group developed the questions
http://sciencedebate.org/goods/audio/Science%20Debate%20Dot%20Org's%20Shawn%20Otto-%20How%20We%20Developed%20The%20Top%2020%20Presidential%20Science%20Qs.aif

Why this is important
http://sciencedebate.org/goods/audio/Science%20Debate%20Dot%20Org's%20Shawn%20Otto-%20Important%20to%20Answer%20These%20Qs%20on%20Campaign%20Trail.aif

Some examples
http://sciencedebate.org/goods/audio/Science%20Debate%20Dot%20Org's%20Shawn%20Otto-%20Some%20of%20the%20Issues.aif

###

August 10, 2016

Dear (Candidate)
and Key Campaign Policy Staff,

Attached please find a presidential candidates questionnaire entitled:

"2016's Top Presidential Science, Engineering, Technology, Health and Environmental Questions."

These 20 questions were solicited from the public and refined by experts at America's leading nonpartisan science and engineering organizations. The questions are also available at http://sciencedebate.org/20qs.

President Obama, Senator McCain, and Governor Romney answered similar questions in 2008 and 2012. Our promotion of their responses garnered more than 850 million earned media impressions for the candidates each cycle.

We kindly request the following:

A) Please submit written responses to the questions **by September 6** to shawn@sciencedebate.org.

B) Please attend a forum, hosted by our organizations, to discuss your positions on these 20 major policy questions, broadcast by a mutually agreed upon broadcast partner.

Science, engineering, health and environmental issues affect every voter's life as profoundly as the foreign policy, economic policy, and faith and values candidates often discuss on the campaign trail. In order to successfully manage these increasingly complex issues in the policymaking process, we need to find new ways to incorporate them into our national dialog. Your leadership will help the nation in that process, and polling shows that 87 percent of American voters want to know candidates' views on these broad issues before they vote.

The ScienceDebate project is supported by nearly every major science organization and university in America. Supporters are listed at www.sciencedebate.org/signers.html

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to addressing these important policy issues with us and on the campaign trail.

Signed,

**ScienceDebate.org
*American Association for the Advancement of Science

continued

American Association of Geographers
*American Chemical Society
American Fisheries Society
American Geophysical Union
*American Geosciences Institute
*American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Professional Geologists
American Rock Mechanics Association
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists
American Society of Mammalogists
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
Association for Women in Geosciences
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers
Automation Federation
*Biophysical Society
Botanical Society of America
Carnegie Institution for Science
Conservation Lands Foundation
Crop Science Society of America
Duke University
Ecological Society of America
Geological Society of America
*IEEE-USA
International Committee Monitoring Assisted Reproductive Technologies
Materials Research Society
NACE International, The Worldwide Corrosion Authority
*National Academy of Engineering
*National Academy of Medicine
*National Academy of Sciences
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
*National Center for Science Education
National Ground Water Association
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Northeastern University
Organization of Biological Field Stations
Paleontological Society
*Research!America
Scientific American magazine
Seismological Society of America
*Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections
Society of Fire Protection Engineers
Society of Wetland Scientists
Society of Women Engineers

continued

Soil Science Society of America
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Tufts University
*Union of Concerned Scientists
University City Science Center
*U.S. Council on Competitiveness
The Wildlife Society
World Endometriosis Research Foundation America

*Codeveloper of the questions
**Lead partner organization