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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Kaul Sues to Block National Science Foundation
Funding and Program Cuts**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul announced today that Wisconsin has joined a coalition of 15 other attorneys general in filing a [lawsuit](#) to stop the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) attempt under the Trump Administration to gut funding for critical scientific research and education at universities in Wisconsin and across the nation.

“The Trump administration is wreaking havoc on progress in science, technology, engineering, and math—fields that are major engines for innovation and economic growth,” said AG Kaul. “These devastating and unlawful cuts should be enjoined.”

The lawsuit, filed on Wednesday in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, seeks to block the implementation of two NSF policy directives that jeopardize cutting-edge scientific research at Wisconsin universities and threaten the prominent global role of Wisconsin and U.S. public universities in scientific innovation.

One directive, issued in early May, threatens millions of dollars in NSF funding used by Wisconsin’s public universities to pay for the infrastructure necessary to carry out federally funded research, including laboratory facilities, administrative support, data security, regulatory compliance, and other shared institutional resources. These expenditures are known as “indirect costs.”

The NSF directive imposes a 15% cap on indirect cost reimbursements for all NSF-funded research at higher education institutions. At UW-Madison, where negotiated indirect cost rates for on-campus research typically range between 50 to 60%, this cap is expected to result in an annual loss approaching \$38 million by fiscal year 2028.

UW-Milwaukee faces a loss of \$1.5 million annually in indirect cost recovery as a result of NSF's planned cap.

Indirect cost funding is critical to the sustainability of university research. Without it, numerous critical programs and facilities at UW-Madison could be negatively impacted, including the Wisconsin Materials Research Science and Engineering Center, which has advanced the science and engineering of materials; the IceCube Neutrino Observatory, a particle detector built deep inside the Antarctic ice sheet that measures events happening in the cosmos; the Partnership to Advance Throughput Computing, which is aimed at increasing the national return on investment with respect to computing resources used to advance science, medicine, and technology; the North Temperate Lakes Long-Term Ecological Research, a program established to study the long-term dynamics of lakes and their surrounding landscapes; and the NSF Center for Sustainable Nanotechnology, which investigates how extremely small particles interact with different life forms in the environment.

The other directive, issued in April, has resulted in the targeted termination of NSF-funded projects directed at expanding participation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) by underrepresented populations. Such projects are intended to maintain the nation's competitive edge by harnessing previously untapped potential and expanding the domestic STEM-capable workforce.

At UW-Madison, the NSF has terminated 16 such grant programs whose estimated award amounts are approximately \$14 million. Of that amount, UW-Madison had drawn approximately \$8.2 million, with an anticipated additional disbursement of approximately \$5.9 million over the life of the awards. This includes the termination of a project at UW-Madison aimed at advancing math and science learning opportunities in indigenous communities. Its termination disrupted efforts to expand access to science education and support economic development in underserved rural areas.

The terminations also ended a project designed to promote increased participation in STEM fields by Native American scientists and cut a program at UW-Madison designed to encourage participation in physics by researchers with disabilities. The terminations occurred without individualized review or notice and were deemed "final agency decisions not subject to appeal."

The NSF additionally terminated projects related to guidance against misinformation, advancing middle school math education for students and families of color, and others intended to address disparities in STEM fields.

The lawsuit asserts that both NSF directives violate the Administrative Procedure Act and are contrary to multiple federal statutes that require NSF to support increased participation in STEM by underrepresented populations. The complaint also alleges that the directives exceed NSF's statutory authority and violate constitutional separation of powers by overriding congressional mandates and funding decisions.

Joining AG Kaul in filing this lawsuit are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington.

A copy of the complaint is available [here](#).