



The Academy of
Natural Sciences
of DREXEL UNIVERSITY

May 7, 2019

Biodiversity Collections Network (BCoN)
c/o American Institute of Biological Sciences
1201 New York Avenue NW
Suite 420
Washington, DC 20005
publicpolicy@aibs.org

Dear Sir or Madam,

As President and CEO of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the BCoN's community-informed vision document, *Extending U.S. Biodiversity Collections to Promote Research and Education*. The Academy of Natural Sciences, a member of the NSC Alliance, is the oldest and one of the largest natural history museums in the Americas, with more than 17 million specimens in 12 major collections, spanning the world's biodiversity from microbes to the largest animals and plants. The BCoN vision document emphasizes that the future of collections such as ours lies in an Extended Specimen Network of data needed to address many major environmental issues that we face: conservation and biodiversity loss through changes in climate and habitat destruction, maintenance of ecosystem services, environmental justice, and sustainable urban ecology, to name a few.

The Academy has numerous ongoing infrastructure projects to capture images and data from specimens in our collections, with the goal of employing them in research and community science projects that address the issues listed above. The Extended Specimen Network is a natural outgrowth of such efforts that, leveraged with similar initiatives at other museums large and small, will provide an invaluable resource for the nation. Through a network of extended specimen data, researchers can understand the rules of ecosystem assembly, organisms' health, and ecological interactions, all vital to our ability to sustain an increasingly threatened natural world. I strongly endorse the BCoN vision document as an important statement of guiding principles and future actions to mobilize the wealth of information housed in natural history collections.

Sincerely,


Scott Cooper, PhD
President & CEO