The much talked about March for Science (www.marchforscience.com) takes place in a few weeks, on 22 April, which is also Earth Day. Its Facebook group has more than 800,000 members, and thousands of participants are expected to attend not only the March in Washington, DC, but also the satellite marches in more than 360 cities worldwide.

As you can imagine, the March for Science has garnered significant buzz within the scientific community. There are varied opinions on it, and the question of whether a march is the most effective way for scientists and science enthusiasts to make their voices heard is still widely debated.

While ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are not formally affiliated with the March as a partner organization, that in no way means we oppose the March. If Society members want to participate in the March for Science in DC or one of the satellite locations, we encourage them to do so. We hope it will be a positive experience.

When the Societies Engage

As nonprofit scientific Societies, our goal is to engage with policymakers but remain nonpartisan. It can be a difficult line to walk.

One of the primary goals of the Science Policy Office is to build relationships with policymakers in order develop science-informed policy decisions. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this goal is to engage on specific issues like research funding, climate science, or science communication.

Earlier this year, the Societies spoke out on scientific integrity for federal researchers and the impact of the president’s 27 January executive order to limit immigrants from certain countries from entering the U.S. Both of these were issues that could impact our members and our sciences, and the role of the Societies to engage was clear.

We also signed on to a large coalition letter opposing the cuts President Trump has proposed to make to discretionary spending (i.e., federal research). In mid-March, the Societies had more than 70 students, faculty, and Certified Crop Advisers attend Congressional Visits Day where they advocated for USDA research funding. It’s an annual event that provides policymakers with face-to-face interactions with researchers and stakeholders and the issues that are important to us. It’s a tremendously successful event that helps build champions for food, agriculture, and natural resources research. We will continue to represent the Societies, our members, and our certificants through efforts like these.

Find Your Cause

Some of our members are excited to participate in the March for Science and welcome the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their enthusiasm for science. Others choose to engage in individual conversations with policymakers while still others would prefer to simply represent science and science-based decision making in their communities and with neighbors. All of these are valuable and meaningful ways to engage, and we encourage our members to find the way with which they feel most comfortable.

We are committed to representing our members and our sciences and encourage our members to find ways that best suit them to engage with policymakers and the public. Whether it’s writing letters, meeting with policymakers, or marching, we will support our members’ ability to express their opinions and make their voices heard. We can all agree that the more scientists are active participants, the better off science and our society will be.