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Through the NSC Alliance partnership with the American Institute of Biological Sciences, we are pleased to provide NSC Alliance members with the following public policy update. With proper attribution to NSC Alliance, all material from these reports may be reproduced or forwarded. We encourage you to share this report with colleagues at your institution. Anyone interested in receiving copies of the NSC Alliance Washington Report may subscribe at www.NSCAlliance.org -- it's free!

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding any of the following items, please contact NSC Alliance director of public policy Dr. Robert Gropp at 202-628-1500 x 250 or at rgropp@aibs.org.

Legislation Introduced on Museums, Libraries

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) could get a minor overhaul if a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate is enacted. “The Museum and Library Services Act of 2016” is sponsored by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and is co-sponsored by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Gary Peters (D-MI), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT).

S. 3391 would reauthorize funding levels for IMLS for six years. IMLS is the primary federal agency that supports museum education programs, collections curation, and professional development.

This legislation would bolster the agency’s research and data collection, maintain an emphasis on state and regional collaboration, expand interagency partnerships, and highlight the importance of access to high-quality museum services for every American. The bill would also emphasize recruiting and training museum professionals, especially those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, by formally authorizing the 21st Century Museum Professional Program.

“Libraries and museums are rich centers of learning, woven into the fabric of our communities and they contribute to our quality of life and economic development,” said Senator Reed. “The

Museum and Library Services Act represents our national commitment to ensuring these institutions are funded, staffed, and accessible to all. Through a relatively modest federal investment, this law helps build capacity to support and expand access to library and museum services at the state and local level. It will help fully leverage the role of libraries and museums in supporting the learning, educational, and workforce development needs of Americans nationwide.”

The American Alliance of Museums reports that there are nearly 850 million visits per year to American museums, and that U.S. museums inject approximately \$21 billion into the economy each year.

IMLS was last reauthorized in 2010.

Lawmakers Enact Temporary Spending Bill Just in Time

In late September, President Obama signed into law a spending measure that will keep the federal government open through December 9. H.R. 5325 was passed by Congress and enacted just two days before the end of the fiscal year. After clearing the measure, many members of Congress left Washington, DC to return to their districts to recommence campaigning. One third of Senators and all members of the House of Representatives are up for re-election on November 8. Congress will reconvene in mid-November.

The legislation was required as an interim measure until the 12 appropriations bills that collectively fund the federal government are enacted. To date, only one of the appropriations bills has been enacted; it was included in the law funding the government for the next 10 weeks.

The stopgap spending bill passed overwhelmingly in both chambers. It passed the Senate 72 to 26, with dissenting votes coming nearly equally from Republicans and Democrats. In the House, H.R. 5325 passed 342-85; 75 of the ‘no’ votes came from Republicans.

H.R. 5325 funds nearly all government programs at 2016 levels for the next two and half months. A few programs, including military construction and veterans affairs programs, received additional funding. The legislation also includes \$1.1 billion to combat Zika virus and \$500 million in aid for three states impacted by recent floods.

News from the NAGPRA Program

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Program will be holding several meetings in the near future.

On October 25th at 2 pm (Eastern), a webinar will be held for NAGPRA grants administrators. This webinar is for new recipients of a Consultation/Documentation Grant or a Repatriation Grant, and for NAGPRA grantees who currently are managing NAGPRA grants. The National NAGPRA Program strongly recommends that these grantees, and especially their grant administrators, attend this webinar to familiarize themselves with the tools used to administer

grants. This webinar will cover the basics of reporting requirements for a NAGPRA grant and instructions on how to modify or alter their grant. Register at <https://doilearn.webex.com/mw3000/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=doilearn> with session number 642 726 215.

On December 6, the NAGPRA Review Committee will meet by telephone at 2 pm (Eastern). Written comments from stakeholders and the public must be submitted by November 1. Register for the call at <https://docs.google.com/a/aibs.org/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFnRVS2HTCrrlftSMEEGjZnLeIPS E7iHDNIzjJz4A0EkFoA/viewform>.

Participate in WeDigBio This Week

The Worldwide Engagement for Digitizing Biocollections (WeDigBio) Event kicks off this week from October 20-23. Citizen scientists are teaming up with researchers and other participants around the world to capture biodiversity specimen data—digitizing the information for scientific research, education, and policy. Participants can pick a project in which to participate online (<https://www.wedigbio.org/find-a-project>) or find an in-person event at museums and universities around the globe (<https://www.wedigbio.org/event-list>).

Last year, thousands of participants from more than 150 countries completed more than 50,000 transcription tasks. Specimens include a wide range of taxa (insects, plants, birds, marine inverts, paleo), time periods, and geographies.

Learn more at <https://www.wedigbio.org>.

A Celebration of European Natural History Collections

The Royal Botanic Garden of Madrid will be hosting the 20th anniversary of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) on October 20. The event will engage a diverse audience of researchers, science communicators, international policymakers and industry representatives about the importance of natural history collections in today's global economy and the challenges of the future.

CETAF is an umbrella organization representing 59 natural history institutions from 20 countries across Europe.

To register, contact ana.casino@cetaf.org. More information is available at <http://cetaf.org/why-do-natural-history-collections-matter-cetaf-20th-anniversary>.

iDigBio Receives Additional Five Years of Support from NSF

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a five year grant to iDigBio to continue leading the national effort to digitize biodiversity collections and make them available online. The award of \$15.5 million will continue the initiative, which is housed at the University of Florida and started in 2011. More than 64 million specimen records are now online as a result.

“There are probably a billion specimens in the U.S., but the information about them isn’t easily accessible,” said Larry Page, iDigBio director and ichthyology curator at the Florida Museum of Natural History. “If it’s online, you can find in seconds what it might have taken you weeks or even months to find before.”

Page said the project could double the number of specimen records in the database during the next five years.

“Some people think it’s going to slow down because we have the really big institutions in the database already, but most of the records are for plants, fungi, fossils and vertebrate groups,” Page said. “A lot of the really big collections are invertebrates, and I’m hoping the Florida Museum and other institutions with large insect and marine invertebrate collections start flooding us with specimen records.”

Upcoming NSC Alliance Board Meeting

The NSC Alliance Board will meet in conjunction with the annual Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections meeting this November in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The meeting will be held beginning at 1:00 p.m. on November 1. Any NSC Alliance member with an interest in the Board meeting or with suggestions for the Board should direct them to Joe Cook (cookjose@unm.edu) or Robert Gropp (rgropp@aibs.org).

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit association that serves as an advocate for natural science collections, the institutions that preserve them, and the research and education that extend from them for the benefit of science, society, and stewardship of the environment. NSC Alliance members are part of an international community of museums, botanical gardens, herbariums, universities, and other institutions that house natural science collections and utilize them in research, exhibitions, academic and informal science education, and outreach activities. Website: www.NSCAlliance.org.

The NSC Alliance Washington Report is a publication of the NSC Alliance. For information about membership in the NSC Alliance, please contact spotter@aibs.org.