

In this Issue:

- Several Appropriations Bills Advance in Congress
- White House Sends Budget Rescissions Proposal to Congress
- White House Weighs Imposing Restrictions on Researchers from China
- Meet with Your Lawmakers this Summer and Help Inform Science Policy
- Expand Your Broader Impact Skills: AIBS Communications Boot Camp for Scientists
- Stay Up-to-Date on Biodiversity Collections: BCoN 2018 Webinar Series
- Share Your Outreach Experiences with the NSC Alliance Community

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 <http://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.

Several Appropriations Bills Advance in Congress

Multiple spending bills for fiscal year (FY) 2019, including the Commerce, Justice, and Science, the Interior-Environment, the Energy and Water, and the Agriculture, have been swiftly advancing in the House.

The House Appropriations Committee approved a \$62.5 billion Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) spending bill on May 17, 2018, which provides funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The bill would increase funding by \$2.9 billion in FY 2019.

The CJS appropriations would provide NSF with \$8.2 billion in FY 2019, \$408 million above FY 2018. Research and related activities, which includes the biological sciences directorate, would be funded at \$6.7 billion, \$317 million above the current level. The bill also supports infrastructural investments such as modernization of Antarctica facilities, telescopes, and research vessels.

The bill would fund NOAA at \$5.2 billion, \$751 million below FY 2018 and make deep cuts to climate change programs at the agency. The funding would be targeted to priorities such as the National Weather Service, the reduction of harmful algal blooms, fisheries management, weather

research, and ocean exploration. The bill would eliminate NOAA's coastal resiliency grants, a program that helps communities address the effects of rising sea levels, erosion and flooding caused by storms.

During the bill markup, Representative Matt Cartwright (D-PA) expressed his concerns over the budget for NOAA and said he was “disappointed and troubled” by the large cuts for climate change research. “This mark proposes to cut climate work at NOAA by nearly 40 percent,” he said and urged the panel to “find additional funding for these critical climate programs that will save lives and money.”

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies approved a \$35.25 billion spending bill, \$7 billion above the President’s request. The bill would provide the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) \$7.95 billion in FY 2019, \$100 million below FY 2018. The bill ignores the \$2 billion cut for the agency proposed by the President. However, the bill supports the “workforce reshaping” initiative proposed by the Administration by providing resources requested to offer buyouts and voluntary separation agreements to employees. The initiative, also proposed by the President for FY 2018, was not funded by Congress in the recently approved omnibus spending package. The FY 2019 spending bill would slash regulatory programs at EPA by \$228 million.

The Department of Interior would receive flat funding at \$13.1 billion in FY 2019. The U.S. Geological Survey would be funded at \$1.2 billion in FY 2019, \$19 million above FY 2018, with funding targeted to critical infrastructure investments in natural hazards programs, streamgages, the groundwater monitoring network, and mapping activities. The bill would fund the U.S. Forest service at \$6.1 billion, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at \$1.6 billion (-\$11 million), the National Park Service at \$3.25 billion (+\$53 million), the Bureau of Land Management at \$1.4 billion (+\$55 million), and the Smithsonian Institution at \$1 billion (+\$12 million). House Appropriators will be marking up the bill after returning from the congressional Memorial Day recess.

The House Appropriations Committee also advanced a spending bill, approved earlier by the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, that would fund the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science at a record level of \$6.6 billion, \$341 million above FY 2018. The bill ignored the President’s request to eliminate the DOE’s Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program, funding it at \$28 million below FY 2018. Budget for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy would decline from \$2.3 billion in FY 2018 to \$2.1 billion.

House Appropriators approved a spending bill for agricultural programs on May 16 that would reject the 16 percent cut across agricultural programs proposed by President Trump. The bill provides \$23.3 billion in discretionary spending, a \$14 million increase over FY 2018. Overall the bill would provide \$145 billion in combined discretionary and mandatory funding, \$922 million less than FY 2018.

The agriculture bill would provide \$3.1 billion to agricultural research, \$72 million above FY 2018. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) would be funded at \$1.4 billion in FY 2019,

\$51 million above FY 2018. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) would receive \$1.46 billion in FY 2019, an increase of \$38 million relative to FY 2018.

The Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to begin marking-up the spending bills at the end of May.

White House Sends Budget Rescissions Proposal to Congress

The White House sent a \$15.4 billion budget [rescissions proposal](#) to Congress on May 8, 2018, targeting spending cuts from ‘unobligated funds’ within several federal agencies and programs. The proposal does not propose any reductions from the fiscal year (FY) 2018 spending.

The plan proposes to rescind \$4.8 billion in unused funding from Department of Energy (DOE) loan programs that have not made any loans since 2011. These include the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) loan program, an Obama-era initiative to help domestic automakers, and another DOE innovative technology loan program for large renewable energy projects.

Other proposed cuts include \$252 million from funds to address the Ebola outbreak; \$148 million from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to fight outbreaks of diseases; \$16 million from Forest Service land acquisition program; \$10 million from Environmental protection Agency (EPA) water quality research and support grants; \$107 million from the Superstorm Sandy aid for developing emergency watershed management plans; and \$7 billion from the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The proposal claims that these funds are “no longer needed for the purpose for which it was appropriated by Congress.”

House Republicans introduced a spending cuts package to codify the President’s plan on May 9. “Returning this money to the treasury is the type of budgetary spring-cleaning that ensures our government practices prudence with hard-earned taxpayer dollars,” said Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) in a statement.

The proposal is gaining support among Republican lawmakers in the House and Senate, who were relieved that the White House did not call for cuts to the FY 2018 spending bill that raised both military and domestic accounts. “To be sure, cutting wasteful spending should not be a partisan exercise,” said McCarthy. He added that rescissions have eliminated \$25 billion in wasteful spending under both Republican and Democratic presidents since the 1970s.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) had previously expressed that he was uninterested in revisiting the budget deal. After the plan was unveiled, he said that the Senate would “take a look at the package” if the House passes it, emphasizing that it would not violate the recent budget agreement.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) said that she was not against rescinding the ATVM loan program but questioned the effort to rescind \$7 billion from the children's health programs.

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, did not completely dismiss the package, saying that there would be a “period of negotiations” regarding what cuts might be possible.

According to budget rules, the package could advance by a simple majority in both the House and the Senate. Congress now has 45 days, or until June 23, to approve the package. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have 25 days to act on the request.

Although this initial request does not draw on funds from the \$1.3 trillion FY 2018 omnibus spending bill, recent reports suggest that there might be another proposal from the White House later in the year that targets current spending.

Rescissions are not uncommon in the federal budget process, but the funds rescinded are usually reallocated to other urgent priorities. With this proposal, the White House aims to save money, a move that has not been approved by Congress since the Clinton Administration.

White House Weighs Imposing Restrictions on Researchers from China

The Trump administration is considering measures to restrict Chinese citizens from engaging in sensitive research at American universities. According to a report by the New York Times, the Administration cites concerns that Chinese researchers may be acquiring American intellectual secrets and sharing them with the Chinese.

American officials suspected espionage when China reportedly tested an “invisibility cloak” that would allow fighter planes to become undetectable under radar screens – an advancement that is believed to be aided by American intellectual knowledge. A Chinese researcher, after working on a similar technology at Duke University in 2008, returned to China and started a research institute that worked on related projects. While studying in the U. S., the researcher was investigated by the FBI but never charged with a crime, after his supervisor became suspicious that he was trying to share the technology he was studying with his colleagues in China.

The White House, concerned about China’s growing technological capacity, is considering measures such as limiting access of Chinese citizens to the U. S. by restricting certain types of visas and expanding rules related to Chinese researchers working on military or intelligence related projects at American companies and universities. This proposal could be part of a larger package of measures that target China economically and, according to the Administration, are necessary to address a growing national security threat from China.

Details about the measures are still emerging and it is currently unclear what types of projects would be subject to restrictions. It is likely that the measures would target research on advanced materials, software, and other technologies such as artificial intelligence and electric cars, which are prioritized under China’s “Made in China 2025” plan.

The restrictions may have large consequences for American industry and could potentially disrupt American innovation, which relies considerably on researchers from around the world. The restrictions are likely to significantly impact graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and employees of technology companies from China who are on temporary visas. Of the one million international students who study in the U.S., roughly one-third come from China.

Meet with Your Lawmakers this Summer and Help Inform Science Policy

Registration is now open for the 2018 Biological Sciences Congressional District Visits event.

This national initiative, organized by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), and co-sponsored by NSC Alliance, is an opportunity for scientists from across the country to meet with their federal or state elected officials to showcase the people, facilities, and equipment that are required to support and conduct scientific research and education.

Now in its tenth year, the event enables scientists, graduate students, representatives of research facilities, and people affiliated with scientific collections to meet with their federal or state elected officials without traveling to Washington, DC. Participants may either invite their elected officials to visit their research facility or can meet at the policymaker's local office. AIBS works with participants to schedule the meetings with lawmakers and prepare participants through online training and one-on-one support.

“Participating in the Biological Sciences Congressional District Visits event was an invaluable experience to have as a graduate student,” said 2016 participant Erin Larson. “The training provided by AIBS made me feel confident and ready to go have a conversation with Representative Reed’s District Director about federal funding, especially how it’s benefitted me during my Ph.D. I was struck during our meeting by how meaningful it is to ‘show up’ and participate in the political process, especially as it relates to federal funding for the biological sciences. We scientists take the importance of federal funding to do our research to be a given, but it’s important for us to be able to communicate that effectively, especially with policymakers, to ensure that federal funding is maintained in the future.”

The event is made possible by AIBS, with the support of event sponsors Botanical Society of America, Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, Helminthological Society of Washington, Natural Science Collections Alliance, Paleontological Society, Society for the Study of Evolution, and Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections.

Participation is free, but registration is required. Registration will close on July 19, 2018. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressional-district-visits.html>.

Expand Your Broader Impact Skills: AIBS Communications Boot Camp for Scientists

The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) is offering a professional development program designed to enhance the communication skills of scientists, particularly those interested in communicating with decision-makers and the news media. The program is an excellent way to develop new communication skills and identify effective methods for broadening the impact of research and education programs.

Individuals affiliated with NSC Alliance member institutions receive a significant discount on registration, but most provide documentation of their affiliation with an NSC Alliance member institution to receive the reduced rate.

The AIBS Communications Training Boot Camp for Scientists expands on AIBS' highly successful media and science policy training workshops. The Boot Camp meets the needs of everyone from graduate students to senior researchers and program administrators to newly elected professional society leaders.

The Boot Camp is an intensive, two-day, hands-on training program that will be held in Washington, DC on October 15-16, 2018.

Participants will learn:

- How to translate scientific findings for non-technical audiences
- How to tell a resonant story that informs decision-makers
- How to prepare for and participate in a news interview
- How to prepare for and engage in a meeting with a decision-maker
- How to protect your scientific reputation
- How to identify and define the audience you need to reach
- What decision-makers want to hear from a scientist
- What reporters are looking for in an interview
- How to leverage social media
- How the nation's science policy is developed and implemented

Participants will also have the opportunity for formal and informal discussions with science policy and communications experts working in Washington, DC.

AIBS Individual Members and individuals nominated to participate by an AIBS Member Society/Organization (including NSC Alliance members) receive a \$55 discount on registration.

Learn more about the program and register now at https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/communications_boot_camp.html.

Stay Up-to-Date on Biodiversity Collections: BCoN 2018 Webinar Series

The Biodiversity Collections Network (BCoN) will convene a series of webinar programs in 2018 to share information about BCoN activities with the community and to receive community input on prior and pending BCoN programs. These webinars will include a formal presentation

followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions and share information. All programs will be recorded and posted to the BCoN website.

The next program will be on May 23 and will focus on a recent BCoN workshop on data integration and attribution.

Click [here](#) for more information regarding the webinar series and to register.

Share Your Outreach Experiences with the NSC Alliance Community

The NSC Alliance would like to help members share insights about their community outreach initiatives. If your organization has materials or information it would like to share with fellow community members, please do so via Twitter at #NSCAEngagement. We also encourage your organization to share insights about how your collections have been used to advance research and solve problems via #CollectionsCount.

Follow NSC Alliance on Twitter @NSCAAlliance.

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 dbosnjak@aibs.org.