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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 <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](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org).

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### **Congress Averts Government Shutdown**

Congress has approved and the President has signed a \$853 billion spending package, which includes a stop-gap spending measure to avert a partial government shutdown. The short-term funding measure provides level funding for the government programs for which an appropriations bill had not been passed and signed into law prior to October 1.

The House approved this spending package by a 361-61 vote on September 26. The Senate had approved it a week earlier. President Trump signed the package on September 28 saying, “We’re going to keep the government open.”

The spending package includes fiscal year (FY) 2019 Defense, Labor-Health and Human Services, and Education spending bills along with the stop-gap continuing resolution (CR). The CR provides funding for Interior-EPA, Transportation-Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Financial Services, Commerce-Justice-Science, State-Foreign Operations, and Homeland Security at FY 2018 levels until December 7. There will be a lame-duck session after the November elections to finish work on FY 2019 appropriations.

This is the second spending package that Congress has sent to the President. The first included the Energy-Water, Military Construction-Veterans Affairs, and Legislative Branch spending bills for FY 2019 and was signed into law by President Trump on September 21.

## **Interior Announces “Open Science” Policy**

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has adopted a new policy it contends will improve transparency and public access to scientific research. The “open science” [order](#) was signed by Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt on September 28, 2018. Similar to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) proposed rule “Increasing Transparency in Regulatory Science,” DOI’s order requires that scientific data used in policy decisions be reproducible and made publicly accessible.

“Any decision that is based on scientific conclusions that are not supported by publicly available raw data, analysis, or methodology, have not been peer reviewed, or are not readily reproducible should include an explanation of why such science is the best available information,” states the order. Interior officials said that the policy would boost public confidence in the agency’s decision-making and increase accountability.

“This order came about in response to perennial concerns that the department has not been providing sufficient information to the public to explain how and why it reaches certain conclusions, or that it is cherry picking science to support pre-determined outcomes,” said Interior spokesperson Faith Vander Voort. “The goal is for the department to play with its cards face-up, so that the American people can see how the department is analyzing important public policy issues and be confident that it is using the best information available to inform its decisions.”

The order could restrict how DOI agencies use certain research findings and will set new data disclosure requirements for Interior grant recipients.

The new order allows for exceptions and states that the data requirements may be “waived, in whole or in part, by the Deputy Secretary upon a written determination that a waiver is necessary and the least restrictive means of protecting privacy, confidentiality, including confidential business information and trade secrets; national security, and homeland security.”

The order has been criticized as a move to restrict the use of scientific findings in decision-making at Interior. “The ‘Promoting Open Science’ order signed on Friday should be named the ‘Removing Science from DOI’ order, as it simply slashes agencies’ ability to rely on, conduct and analyze science under a pretense of increased transparency,” said Tina Swanson, Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s Science Center.

“They want everything publicly accessible, including the raw data, and that just doesn’t happen with peer-reviewed science, because that just doesn’t tell you anything,” said Charise Johnson, a researcher at the Union of Concerned Scientists. “It also makes it look like they don’t trust their own scientists’ work.”

Unlike the EPA’s proposed “secret science” rule, which involved a public comment period, DOI’s order became effective immediately.

## UN Issues Warning on Climate Change

The United Nation's (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have issued a new climate change report that warns about unprecedented temperature increase between 2030 and 2052 if global warming continues.

IPCC is an international consortium of leading scientists from 40 countries that assesses the science related to climate change. These assessments are intended to provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate-related policies.

The [IPCC report](#) was mandated after a 2015 U.N. summit, where the Paris climate accord was signed. The agreement set a goal of keeping global warming to less than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to further limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The new report sets a more ambitious 1.5 degrees as the safe limit.

For this report, the IPCC reviewed 6,000 scientific studies to assess the difference between a 1.5 degrees Celsius increase in global temperatures and a two degree increase. According to the findings, a two degrees Celsius increase could have significantly larger impacts on ecosystems, human health, and well-being, with small islands and developing countries being the most vulnerable. The report predicts that there could be global food shortages, significant flooding of coastal areas, and an unprecedented refugee crisis by 2040.

“Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees compared to 2 degrees would reduce the number of people exposed to climate-related risks and susceptible to poverty by up to several hundred millions by 2050,” said Hans-Otto Portner, a co-author of the report and co-Chair of the IPCC's Working Group II.

The report suggests that it is still possible to avoid the disastrous consequences of warming if immediate and aggressive action is taken. Earth is currently one degree Celsius above the baseline and maintaining safe levels would require “rapid and far-reaching transitions” to the world economy. The global greenhouse gas emissions would need to be cut by 45 percent by 2030 and the world would need to become carbon-neutral by 2050.

The report's warnings have been dismissed by Republican lawmakers. Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso (R-WY) suggested that the findings are misinterpreted and exaggerated. “I think that they continue to use scare tactics — those efforts are what we see in this report,” said Barrasso. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK), a known climate-science denier, called the IPCC “prejudiced.” He added that the U.N. was “formed to sell this in the first place.”

The White House also brushed aside the report's findings with the assertion that the country's emissions have dropped since 2005. “From 2005 to 2017, U.S. CO<sub>2</sub>-related emissions declined by 14 percent while global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rose by 21 percent during the same time... This has been possible through the development and large-scale deployment of new, affordable, and cleaner technologies to capitalize on our energy abundance,” said White House spokesperson Lindsay Walters.

## **National Museum and Library Services Board Meeting Announced**

The National Museum and Library Services Board will be meeting on November 1, 2018 to advise the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on duties, powers, and authority of IMLS relating to museum, library, and information services. The Board will also discuss coordination of activities for the improvement of these services.

The first half of the meeting is open to the public and will begin at 9:00 AM Eastern Time. This will be followed by a closed Executive session. The location for the meeting is 955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20024. Please contact Katherine Maas at [kmaas@imls.gov](mailto:kmaas@imls.gov) if you would like to attend the public session of the meeting.

For more information visit <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-10-17/html/2018-22618.htm>.

## **NSF Announces New Sexual Harassment Policy**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) announced a policy on September 19, 2018 that requires its 2,000 awardee institutions to report any sexual harassment findings starting October 21, 2018. Under the new policy, universities would be required to notify the agency if any NSF-funded principal investigators or co-principal investigators have committed harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, or have been placed on administrative leave due to such actions.

NSF will work with the awardee institution to determine the agency's action, which could include "substituting or removing principal investigators or co-principal investigators, reducing award funding, and -- where neither of those options is available or adequate -- suspending or terminating awards."

NSF proposed the policy earlier this year in February and invited public comments in an attempt to address rising concerns over sexual harassment in science. Dr. France A. Córdoba, Director of NSF, said: "The NSF is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the people our awards support. We are committed to a nurturing research environment. One that is encouraging and supportive of all researchers. We have heard the voices of the wider community and have responded. We will continue to listen and to take action as a federal granting agency. NSF has no tolerance for harassment."

More information on the new policy can be found here:  
<https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/harassment.jsp>

## **Enhance your Interdisciplinary and Team Science Skills**

Reports abound from professional societies, the Academies, government agencies, and researchers calling attention to the fact that science is increasingly an inter-disciplinary, transdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and international endeavor. In short, science has become a “team sport.”

There is a real and present need to better prepare scientists for success in this new collaborative environment. The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) is responding to this call with a new program for scientists, educators, and individuals who work with or participate in scientific teams.

Team science is increasingly common in 21st century biological, life, and environmental sciences. Collaboration is no longer limited to sharing ideas with the biologist in the lab next door. The questions confronting science often require teams that may include a mix of computer and information scientists, physical and social scientists, mathematicians, ethicists, policy and management experts, as well as community stakeholders and citizen scientists. Adding to this complexity, teams span programs within organizations, cross organization boundaries to form institutional consortia, and often include international partners.

This intensive, two-day, interactive, professional development course was designed by scientists and experts on collaboration and teamwork to provide participants with the knowledge and skills required to become productive and effective members of scientific teams. From its first offering the course has evolved to include a greater focus on team planning and teamwork, and less time allocated to university administration of interdisciplinary teams.

Nothing teaches collaboration like practicing collaboration. This is not a course that asks you to learn in isolation. It is a microcosm of scientific collaboration, with extensive hands-on learning as part of a scientific team, with scientific case studies and examples.

This course is designed for anyone involved in collaborative scientific endeavors. Team leaders will find the course especially helpful. Because participants will work on “real-world” team science concerns, we encourage multiple members of a team to attend together. We can also customize the course and bring it to your university, department, lab, or research team. This course provides the right foundation from which your team can successfully accomplish your goals.

The program will be held on January 14-15, 2019 in Washington DC. NSC Alliance members are eligible to register for the program at a significantly discounted registration rate. Learn more at [https://www.aibs.org/events/team\\_science\\_event.html](https://www.aibs.org/events/team_science_event.html).

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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](http://www.NSCAlliance.org).

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