

## **NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 2, Issue 3, March 7, 2011**

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### **Policy News from NSC Alliance**

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. 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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### **Register Now for the 2011 SPNHC/NSCA Annual Meeting in San Francisco**

Join the NSC Alliance and the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections for their fourth annual joint meeting, to be held May 23-28 2011 in San Francisco, California. This year, the meeting will focus on "Sustainable Museums—Sustaining Collections," and will be hosted by the California Academy of Sciences in their Platinum LEED certified museum. The [meeting website](http://research.calacademy.org/spnhc) (<http://research.calacademy.org/spnhc>) provides information on the meeting program, lodging and transportation, and travel assistance grants.

The NSC Alliance portion of the meeting is scheduled for 24-25 May 2011 and will include an NSC Alliance Board of Directors meeting, business meeting, and a plenary session (25 May) on federal policy and scientific collections.

Visit <http://research.calacademy.org/spnhc> for more information. The deadline for early bird registration is 18 March. The deadline for submitting a presentation abstract is 1 April.

## **Report Analyzes President's FY 2012 Budget for Biology**

President Obama released a \$3.7 trillion budget plan for fiscal year (FY) 2012 on 14 February 2010. On 28 February, the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) released a report providing a summary analysis of the President's proposed budget. According to the AIBS policy analysis, the budget proposal would trim deficits by \$1.1 trillion over the next decade. To help accomplish this goal, non-security discretionary spending would be held steady for five years. Additionally, civilian government workers would be subject to a two year pay freeze.

Innovation, education, and climate change are again pervasive themes in the President's budget. Despite the budget freeze, spending on non-defense research and development would increase by 6.5 percent. The budgets of the National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy Office of Science, and National Institute of Standards and Technology laboratories would collectively increase by 12.2 percent. Other agencies and programs would be cut to offset proposed increases. Although most science agencies are spared top-line cuts, the Environmental Protection Agency is slated for a \$1.3 billion reduction.

Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education would collectively receive \$3.4 billion in FY 2012 from various government agencies. Some of these funds would be used to train 100,000 new STEM teachers over the next decade.

The multi-agency U.S. Global Change Research Program would receive \$2.6 billion (+20.3 percent). New funding would be used to create a new National Climate Service within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NSF's Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability initiative would grow by 33.0 percent to advance climate and energy science and education.

To read the complete AIBS analysis, please visit [http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/AIBS\\_Budget\\_Report\\_FY\\_2012.pdf](http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/AIBS_Budget_Report_FY_2012.pdf).

## **House Passes FY 2011 Appropriations Bill, Cuts Funding for Science**

On 19 February, the House of Representatives passed legislation (HR 1) that would fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2011. If enacted, the bill would cut federal spending by \$61 billion relative to FY 2010 appropriations. The reductions affect nearly all portions of the federal government, although homeland security is less affected than other areas. HR 1 passed the House along party lines by a vote of 235 to 186. Three Republican and all Democratic members of the House voted against the measure.

Debate on HR 1 dominated the agenda of the House for days, with more than one hundred amendments offered to the bill. The debate went well past midnight for four successive nights. A summary of some of the amendments that relate to federal science agencies is presented below:

- Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) offered an amendment to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from regulating greenhouse gas emissions. The amendment was agreed to with the support of all but two Republicans.
- House Science Chairman Ralph Hall (R-TX) won his bid to stop the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from putting funding towards a planned climate service.
- The House agreed to an amendment from Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) that would bar the government from spending money on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) unsuccessfully offered an amendment to decrease funding for science and technology at EPA by \$64.1 million.
- Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA) offered a failed amendment to decrease funding for resource management at the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by \$7.5 million.
- An amendment offered by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) to increase funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture by \$5 million was not accepted.
- Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL) unsuccessfully offered an amendment to decrease funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) by \$50 million.

Additionally, conservative lawmakers pushed to cut spending even further. An amendment offered by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) would have cut an additional \$22 billion by reducing funding across the entire government by 5.5 percent, with some exemptions. The amendment was rejected by a vote of 147-281, with a minority of Republicans joining a unified Democratic party in opposition.

The spending cuts proposed in HR 1 could be very detrimental to federal science programs. One analysis of the impacts to the National Science Foundation (NSF) indicates that the agency's budget would be cut by 5.2 percent. Research and Related Activities would decrease by 2.6 percent, the net impacts of which could be 500 fewer awards and 5,500 fewer researchers, students, and teachers supported than in 2010. The Education and Human Resources Directorate would be reduced by 17 percent, which could result in 235 fewer awards and 4,400 less people supported. A 53 percent reduction is proposed for the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account. If enacted, the result could be schedule delays in the construction of networks of ocean observatories and environmental sensors.

The House passage of HR 1 is just the first step towards enactment of an appropriations bill for FY 2011. The Senate must still act on the measure. Although Democratic leaders in the Senate plan to reduce spending in FY 2011, some have called the House's cuts excessive. Leadership from the two chambers of Congress must now compromise to reach a level of spending that is agreeable to both parties, or face a shutdown of the federal government. As an interim measure, lawmakers have agreed to a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) that funds the government through 18 March.

### **OSTP Launches R&D Dashboard to Demonstrate Impacts of Federal Science Investments**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has launched a new online tool to help the public see the value of federal investments in research and development (R&D).

The R&D Dashboard presents data on grant awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to research institutions over the past decade. Information on awarded grants is linked to the outcomes of the funded research, such as publications, patent applications, and patents. Adding to its usefulness, the site can sort investments at the state, congressional district, and research-institution levels. In the future, the site will also include information from other federal science agencies. To access the R&D Dashboard, visit <http://rd-dashboard.nitrd.gov/home.html>.

## **USGS Seeks Input on Ecosystem Science Strategy**

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is requesting public input to inform the development of a new ecosystem science strategy. The new strategy will guide the research activities of the agency's new ecosystem activity, which was created when the USGS reorganized in 2010. Details for commenting on the plan are available in the following letter from Gary Brewer and Kenneth Williams, Ecosystems Science Strategy Planning Team Co-Chairs.

Dear USGS partners and collaborators:

Ecosystems worldwide are undergoing unprecedented change because of climate variability, changing land uses, and increasing demands for water, food, energy, infrastructure, and commodities. To better understand these trends, forecast future conditions, and inform management decisions, a team of USGS scientists is developing a 10-year science strategy for the new USGS Ecosystems Mission Area. This is part of an effort to create strategies for all of the new USGS Mission Areas.

This process will culminate in a final report to be delivered to USGS Director Marcia McNutt by October 31, 2011. The Ecosystem Team has begun to gather input from colleagues, partners, and collaborators at listening sessions and meetings, and now we would like your help in taking the next step.

We invite you to visit the [USGS Science Strategy site](http://www.usgs.gov/start_with_science/) ([http://www.usgs.gov/start\\_with\\_science/](http://www.usgs.gov/start_with_science/)) to answer several questions we have posed to stimulate thought and inform the creation of the Ecosystems strategy. The site also includes background material on this plan and the strategic science planning process for all of the USGS Mission Areas. Please help us create a compelling, comprehensive, and relevant strategy by [visiting the site to offer your input](http://www.usgs.gov/start_with_science/) ([http://www.usgs.gov/start\\_with\\_science/](http://www.usgs.gov/start_with_science/)).

Thank you.

Gary Brewer and Kenneth Williams, Ecosystems SSPT Co-Chairs

## **USGS Seeks Comments on Global Change Science Strategy**

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is requesting comments on the “USGS Global Change Science Strategy: A Framework for Understanding and Responding to Climate and Land-Use.” Details for reviewing and commenting on the plan are available in the following letter from Matt Larsen, Associate Director for Climate and Land Use Change at the USGS.

Dear USGS Stakeholder and Partner:

As you may know, in 2007 the USGS developed a Science Strategy outlining 6 overarching strategic science directions that we should focus on over the next 10 years. As part of implementing that strategy, we have aligned our management structure with Mission Areas that align with those strategic directions.

A team of scientists is now developing a 10-year science strategy for the new Climate and Land Use Change Mission Area. This strategy is being developed to further implement the USGS Science Strategy and will be used in setting priorities and implementation planning for future USGS climate and land-use change programs and activities. This is part of an overall effort to create strategies for all of the new Mission Areas.

We invite you to visit the USGS Science Strategy website ([http://www.usgs.gov/start\\_with\\_science/](http://www.usgs.gov/start_with_science/)) to review the draft “USGS Global Change Science Strategy: A Framework for Understanding and Responding to Climate and Land-Use” and provide your comments and feedback. The draft will be available for a 60-day period. Comments received will be taken into consideration in preparing the final document.

The website also includes background material on this plan and the strategic science planning process for all the USGS Mission Areas. Please help us create a compelling, comprehensive, and relevant strategy by visiting the site to offer your input.

Sincerely,

Matt Larsen Associate Director for Climate and Land Use Change

### **Senate Appropriations Committee Leadership, Membership Announced**

The Senate Appropriations Committee has announced its membership for the 112th Congress. With the retirement and defeat of several former appropriators, the committee had multiple openings for new members, including seven new Republican members. With the exception of Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), all of the new members are in their first term. Other new members include Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO), Daniel Coats (R-IN), John Hoeven (R-ND), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Jerry Moran (R-KS). The subcommittee Chairmen, Ranking Minority Members, and members are as follows:

*Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration Subcommittee*

The Chairman will be Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI). Freshman Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO) will assume the top Republican spot on the subcommittee. Members of the panel will be Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Susan Collins (R-ME), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and John Hoeven (R-ND).

#### *Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee*

Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) will continue to chair the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the National Science Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) will become Ranking Member; Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), who held that post in the 111th Congress, will become Ranking Member on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee. Members of the panel will be Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Richard Shelby (R-AL), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC).

#### *Interior and Environment Subcommittee*

Major leadership changes occurred on the Interior and Environment Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the United States Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and parts of the Forest Service. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) both decided to give up their top spots on the subcommittee in order to lead the Energy and Water Subcommittee. The new Interior and Environment Subcommittee Chairman will be Senator Jack Reed (D-RI). Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) will become Ranking Member; Murkowski is also ranking member on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Members of the panel will be Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Jon Tester (D-MT), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Susan Collins (R-ME), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Roy Blunt (R-MO), and John Hoeven (R-ND).

#### *Energy and Water Subcommittee*

The subcommittee will have completely new leadership this year after former Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) retired and former Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) was defeated in the Utah Republican primary. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) will assume the role of subcommittee chair. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) is the subcommittee's new Ranking Member. Members of the panel will be Senators Parry Murray (D-WA), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Jon Tester (D-MT), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Richard Shelby (R-AL), Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC).

### *Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee*

The Chairman will be Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), who also chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) assumes the position of Ranking Member. The subcommittee has jurisdiction over the Department of Education and the National Institutes of Health, among other agencies. Members of the panel will be Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Patty Murray (D-WA), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Jack Reed (D-RI), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Mark Kirk (R-IL), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Jerry Moran (R-KS).

### **Join Collection Colleagues on LinkedIn**

A new online group has formed to encourage networking among natural science collections leaders. This group offers an opportunity for individuals from collections across the nation to identify and discuss common public policy issues, or other common challenges they face as natural science collections professionals.

To join this group you must first join LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)). There is no cost for creating a profile on this site. Once you have registered, simply search the Groups function for “Natural Science Collections Leadership.” Membership in this group is limited to natural science collections professionals, but there is no cost to join or participate in group discussions or events.

### **NSC Alliance Showcase Importance of Science Collections**

A new series of special reports from the NSC Alliance provides an in-depth look at how scientific collections are being used to advance science and solve societal problems.

The first two publications are:

- Museum Specimens in the Service of Science: USGS and Smithsonian Partner to Advance Science
- Bees Are Not Optional: To Know How Bees Fare, You Must Know Who They Are

These documents may be downloaded for free at <http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/nsca-usgs-smithsonian-report.pdf> and <http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/nsca-usgs-bee-report.pdf>.

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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).

Note: You are receiving a copy of this electronic report as part of your membership in the NSC Alliance. Contact the Alliance office with any email address or member representative name changes send an email to [spotter@aibs.org](mailto:spotter@aibs.org).