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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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**Action Alert: Ask Your Senators to Support Investment in NSF**

Congress is working to determine funding levels for federal programs for fiscal year (FY) 2020. On May 22, 2019, the House Appropriations Committee approved \$8.6 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), an increase of 6.9 percent. Please show your support for the NSF by asking your Senators to provide the NSF with at least \$9 billion in FY 2020.

NSF is the primary federal funding source for discovery-driven biological research at U.S. universities and colleges. The agency provides approximately 69% of extramural federal support for non-medical biological and environmental research at academic institutions.

The President's budget request for FY 2020 proposes a 12.5 percent cut to NSF, including a 13 percent reduction to its research activities. This budget hurts research and undermines the nation's ability to address national challenges.

If funded at \$9 billion, NSF could accelerate progress on its 10 Big Ideas, expand support for early career researchers, and create new interdisciplinary research programs. Moreover, this investment will sustain core research and education programs that are vital to U.S. competitiveness.

Please take a moment to ask your Senators to support \$9 billion in funding for NSF. Interested individuals can send a letter to their Senators from the [AIBS Legislative Action Center](#).

### **NSC Alliance Recognized for Museum Advocacy**

The Natural Science Collections Alliance was honored to receive a Special Service Award from the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) for its advocacy on behalf of museums. The NSC Alliance President Dr. John Bates accepted the award during the annual SPNHC business meeting which was held at The Field Museum of Natural History on May 31, 2019.

The NSC Alliance greatly appreciates this recognition and looks forward to further collaborations with SPNHC in the future.

The Natural Science Collections Alliance has worked collaboratively with its member institutions, SPNHC, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, and other scientific organizations to increase the profile of natural history museums, botanic gardens, and other organizations that hold natural science collections. In recent years, NSC Alliance advocacy and outreach has restored funding for federal programs that support collections-related care, research, and education, articulated forward-looking national agendas that leverage the resources of collections, and ensured that orphaned collections are not lost. The NSC Alliance has briefed members of Congress, as well as federal and international program officials.

The NSC Alliance invites all scientific collections to participate in its campaigns by becoming a member.

### **Science, Environment Slated for Funding Boosts by House**

The House Appropriations Committee has approved fiscal year (FY) 2020 appropriations legislation for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS), Interior, Environment related Agencies, and Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, rejecting the President's proposed budget cuts for science. The measures must still navigate the full House, Senate, and secure the President's signature.

On May 22, 2019, House appropriators approved funding increases for most science agencies that fall under the jurisdiction of the CJS appropriations:

- The National Science Foundation would receive \$8.64 billion, \$561 million above the FY 2019 enacted level. President Trump had requested a \$1 billion (-12.5 percent) cut to the agency. The Research and Related Activities Account, which includes the Biological Sciences Directorate, would receive \$7.1 billion, an increase of \$586 million or 8.9 percent.
- The National Institute of Standards and Technology would receive \$ 1.04 billion (+\$54.7 million), with \$751 million (+3.7 percent) targeted to core research activities.

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, slated for a nearly \$1 billion budget cut under the President's proposal, would receive a flat budget of \$5.4 billion under the House bill. Funding would be targeted to priorities such as climate research, improvements in weather forecasting, reduction of harmful algal blooms, and fisheries management.

The House Interior-Environment appropriations bill would boost funding for the Department of the Interior by \$833 million to \$13.79 billion in FY 2020. The bill does not provide funding for Interior's reorganization efforts and includes standard language requiring the department to submit a more detailed plan for the overhaul. Congress had provided Interior with \$14 million in FY 2019 for the reorganization and the department had requested \$28 million for the effort in FY 2020. Funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) would be augmented by \$75 million (+6.5 percent) to \$1.24 billion. The Administration had proposed to cut USGS funding by 15 percent in FY 2020. Other agencies covered by the Interior-Environment bill would also see funding boosts:

- \$1.4 billion (+\$66 million) for the Bureau of Land Management
- \$1.7 billion (+\$79 million) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- \$3.4 billion (+\$168 million) for the National Park Service
- \$1.07 billion (+\$28 million) for the Smithsonian Institution

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would be funded at \$9.5 billion (+\$672 million) in FY 2020, with its core science and environmental programs receiving \$3.41 billion, an increase of \$105 million above FY 2019. The bill includes language urging EPA "to continue its support for the Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers." The agency had announced plans on May 20 to end funding for the network of 13 research centers across the country focused on studying the impacts of pollution and other environmental threats on children.

The Energy-Water spending bill, approved by the House Appropriations panel on May 21, would fund the Department of Energy Office of Science at \$ 6.87 billion, an increase of \$285 million or 4.3 percent above the FY 2019 level and \$1.3 billion above the President's request for FY 2020.

Congressional leadership are still negotiating a two-year budget deal with the White House and the fate of budget caps remains unclear. Despite the lack of a budget agreement, House appropriators are continuing to push forward with their own spending bills. The full House is scheduled to consider next week a spending package, or minibus, which includes the Interior-EPA, Commerce-Justice-Science, Agriculture, Transportation-Housing and Urban Development, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs spending bills.

### **NSF Seeks Input on 2026 Idea Machine Competition**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is soliciting public input for its NSF 2026 Idea Machine competition. After receiving more than 800 idea submissions, 33 ideas have been shortlisted for the grand prize. NSF is inviting the public to help determine which entries advance by commenting on the importance and potential impact of their Big Ideas and providing suggestions

on how their ideas can be improved. Watch the entrants' video pitches and submit comments by June 26, 2019 at <http://nsf2026imgallery.skild.com/>

### **NSF Principal Investigator Survey**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is inviting Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators, or Sponsored Project Offices (SPO), who recently submitted a proposal to NSF, to provide feedback on existing FastLane and Research.gov business functionalities. This survey is a part of the NSF's multi-year initiative to help PIs/co-PIs and SPOs more efficiently and effectively prepare and submit NSF proposals, manage NSF awards, and conduct business with NSF.

The anonymous survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and will close on July 1, 2019. Complete the survey by visiting: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019\\_PI\\_SPO](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019_PI_SPO)

### **2019 National Fossil Day**

The National Park Service (NPS) is planning for the 10th annual celebration of National Fossil Day, which will take place on October 16, 2019. National Fossil Day is a nationwide celebration that will include paleontology activities planned by partner organizations across the United States. NSC Alliance has once again partnered with the National Park Service to promote the event.

NPS and National Fossil Day partners are sponsoring an art contest as a part of the celebration. The contest theme is "Extinct Giants and Survivors of the Last Ice Age." For details about participating, go to: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fossilday/art-contest-2019.htm>

If your institution or organization is planning to host a National Fossil Day event or is interested in joining NPS as a partner, visit <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fossilday/index.htm>.

### **Legislation Responds to UN Biodiversity Report**

House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) has introduced legislation to protect the nation's most threatened wildlife in response to a recent U.N. [report](#) by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The report warns that about a million species of plants and animals worldwide face extinction within the next few decades.

Representative Grijalva said the [bill](#) is intended to respond to the report's call for immediate action to protect sensitive species and their habitats. The "Extinction Prevention Act of 2019" would provide \$5 million annually for conservation projects for each of the threatened species groups in the bill, namely North American butterflies, Pacific island plants, freshwater mussels, and Southwest desert fish.

## **USFWS Extends Comment Period on Proposal to Remove Protections for Gray Wolves**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has [extended](#) the comment period for a proposal to delist gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act list of protected plants and animals after receiving a record number of comments opposing the proposal. The proposed rule to remove federal protections for gray wolves was published in the Federal Register by USFWS on March 15 citing success in reviving the species first listed as endangered decades ago.

## **NSC Alliance Board to Meet in June**

The next meeting of the NSC Alliance Board of Directors will be held on June 20, 2019. The meeting will be convened virtually. NSC Alliance members who wish to learn more about the meeting or suggest topics for Board consideration should contact Dr. John Bates at the Field Museum of Natural History.

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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).

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](mailto:dbosnjak@aibs.org).