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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 Congress to Fund Science, Complete FY 2020 Appropriations**

Congress has yet to pass legislation providing fiscal year (FY) 2020 funding for science. Government agencies, including the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, have been operating under FY 2019 funding levels since FY 2020 began on October 1, 2019.

More than two months into FY 2020, Congress has passed two continuing resolutions to avert government shutdowns, but this stopgap approach expires on December 20 and stifles the government's ability to initiate new programs.

NSF is the primary federal funding source for fundamental biological research at our nation's universities and colleges. The agency provides nearly 69% of funding support for non-medical, fundamental biological and environmental research at academic institutions. Uncertainty in its funding allocations hinders scientific progress.

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

Scientists interested in the National Science Foundation (NSF) should consider contacting their U.S. Representative and Senators to ask that they complete work on FY 2020 appropriations bills and provide NSF with \$9 billion in FY 2020.

Individuals can send a letter to their members of Congress from the [AIBS Legislative Action Center](#).

### **Lawmakers Reach Agreement on Topline Spending Numbers for Appropriations**

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) and House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) have reached an agreement on topline spending numbers for each of the twelve appropriations bills that collectively fund the federal government. Congress recently passed a second stopgap funding bill in the form of a continuing resolution to keep the government funded until December 20, 2019 at fiscal year (FY) 2019 levels.

Appropriations subcommittees in the House and Senate are now negotiating details of the individual bills with the objective of completing all 12 bills before December 20 in order to avoid a government shutdown. However, continuing disagreements over border wall funding are likely to prevent some or all bills from being passed before the end of the year, in which case Congress will have to pass another continuing resolution. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) has suggested packaging bills into two or three “minibuses” since the President has said that he would not sign an “omnibus” or a package containing all 12 spending bills.

Earlier this year, the House passed ten and the Senate passed four of the twelve appropriations bills. Both chambers approved funding [increases](#) for the National Science Foundation but by different amounts.

### **White House Research Summit Tackles Research Security**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) held a closed-door summit of the recently established Joint Committee on the Research Environment (JCORE) on November 5, 2019 to hold discussions on topics of transparency, foreign influence in research, conflicts of interest, and sexual harassment.

JCORE was established by the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) in May 2019. In a September 16, 2019 [letter](#) to the U.S. research community, OSTP Director Kelvin Droegemeier announced that JCORE would focus on four major areas, namely research security, safe and inclusive research environments, research rigor and integrity, and coordinating administrative requirements for research – with each topic handled by a separate subcommittee. The research security subcommittee was tasked with establishing government-wide guidelines for appropriate information disclosure that researchers need to follow in order to receive federal research grants.

The panel's first summit was attended by more than 100 people from industry, academia, and the Federal Government, during which attendees discussed JCORE's "integrative approach" to developing "policy recommendations and best practices aimed at improving the collective safety, integrity, productivity, and security of our nation's multi-sector research environment." A summary [report](#) published by the White House outlined several takeaways from the discussions, such as those related to increasing transparency with respect to the processes for investigating claims related to security, harassment, and misconduct; improving research integrity and reproducibility; and harmonizing policies and processes across agencies to decrease administrative workload.

The summit was the first of many discussions on research security that Dr. Droegemeier plans to hold across the country in the coming months. He has urged the research community to engage in these discussions. "Working together, we will ensure that our research environments are safe and inclusive; operate with maximum integrity; protect our research assets in a manner balanced with the openness and international collaboration that have been so critical to our success; and do not encumber researchers, agencies, or institutions with unnecessary administrative work."

In related news, a new [report](#) by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs has concluded that U.S. federal research agencies have been slow to respond to China's efforts to recruit U.S.-based researchers, scientists, and experts through its talent recruitment programs and that "American taxpayer funded research has contributed to China's global rise over the last 20 years." The report warns, "These failures continue to undermine the integrity of the American research enterprise and endanger our national security." On November 19, 2019, the panel held a hearing on research security issues and discussed the findings of the report. Lawmakers expressed support for a standardized grantmaking process across government agencies as a means to address foreign security threats and praised JCORE's undertaking in trying to achieve that. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), who chairs the panel stated, "The first step is standardization... Doing that is simple, and it can be done administratively."

### **IMLS Seeks Comments on a Proposed Information Collection**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is soliciting public input on a Museums for America grant program, entitled "Museums Empowered: Professional Development and Capacity Building Opportunities for Museums--A Museums for America Special Initiative."

Museums for America (MFA) grants support efforts that strengthen the ability of museums to serve the public. This is a special MFA initiative with the goal of strengthening the ability of an individual museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum.

Written comments should be submitted on or before January 12, 2020. More information is available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-11-14/html/2019-24725.htm>

## **OSTP Requests Input on American Research Environment**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has requested information from the public on the American Research Environment. In a notice published in the Federal Register on November 26, 2019, OSTP has requested input on behalf of the National Science and Technology Council's (NSTC's) Joint Committee on the Research Environment (JCORE) on “actions that Federal agencies can take, working in partnership with private industry, academic institutions, and non-profit/philanthropic organizations, to maximize the quality and effectiveness of the American research environment.”

Comments should be submitted on or before 11:59 PM Eastern time on December 23, 2019.

Details of the Request for Information and instructions for submitting comments are available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-11-26/html/2019-25604.htm>

## **NIH Seeks Input on Proposed Data Management and Sharing Policy**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking public comment on a proposed NIH Policy for Data Management and Sharing and supplemental guidance. According to NIH, the purpose of this draft policy and guidance is “to promote effective and efficient data management and sharing to further NIH's commitment to making the results and accomplishments of the research it funds and conducts available to the public.” Deadline to submit comments is January 10, 2020. For more information, go to: <https://osp.od.nih.gov/scientific-sharing/nih-data-management-and-sharing-activities-related-to-public-access-and-open-science/>

## **Bipartisan Wildlife Legislation Approved by House Panel**

Legislation addressing wildlife conservation in the U.S., entitled “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act,” ([H.R. 3742](#)) has been approved by the House Committee on Natural Resources. The legislation, which has gained 162 co-sponsors, including 121 Democrats and 41 Republicans, will now be considered by the full chamber.

The bill, introduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) in July 2019, would provide \$1.4 billion annually to fund conservation and restoration efforts for more than 12,000 wildlife and plant species “of greatest conservation need,” including species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and their habitats. The bill would also fund a competitive grant program to catalyze innovation in recovery efforts.

## **Save the Date: Biodiversity Summit 2020**

iDigBio, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), and Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) have announced that the Biodiversity Summit 2020 will be held September 20-25, 2020 in Alexandria, Virginia, USA.

The Summit is an international event and will serve as host to GBIF's governing board meeting, the ADBC annual summit, and TDWG's annual conference. It will also provide opportunities for all federal and non-federal natural history collections worldwide to network and share successes in biodiversity data digitization, mobilization, standards development, and access.

The conference announcement page is available at <https://www.idigbio.org/content/biodiversity-summit-2020>. Please follow this page, which will be updated regularly as conference planning progresses.

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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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