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# AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

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## CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

The House was in session today, with a vote anticipated on climate change legislation (H.R. 2454). Earlier today the chamber approved the FY10 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (H.R. 2996). The Senate was not in session.

Congress will be out of session next week for the July 4 recess. The Senate will reconvene on Monday, July 6, when it is expected to consider the FY10 Legislative Branch appropriations bill (S. 1294). The House at this writing has not announced its schedule for the week of July 6.

## BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

### HOUSE APPROVES FY10 INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL *NEW*

The House of Representatives today approved the FY10 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (H.R. 2996) by a vote of 254 to 173. It was the fourth of 12 FY10 funding bills approved by the House this year. The measure includes \$170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which is \$15 million above the FY09 level and about \$1 million less than the Administration's FY10 request. As discussed below, the Senate Appropriations Committee yesterday approved its companion legislation with \$161.3 million for NEH.

### FY10 INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL APPROVED BY SENATE COMMITTEE

The Senate Appropriations Committee on June 25 approved its [version](#) of the FY10 Interior-Environment appropriations bill. The measure includes \$161.3 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which is \$6.3 million above the FY09 enacted level but below both the FY10 request of \$171 million and the House level of \$170 million. (The National Endowment for the Arts received the same funding level and increase.)

### **SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES FUNDING BILL FOR NSF, NASA**

The Senate Appropriations Committee on June 25 [approved](#) the FY10 Commerce-Justice-Science funding bill, working with about \$200 million less than the President's FY10 request for programs in the bill, but more than \$7 billion above the FY09 level.

**National Science Foundation (NSF):** The measure includes \$6.917 billion for NSF. This is an increase of \$426 million above the FY09 level but \$128 million below the President's request, and \$20 million below the House committee-approved level of \$6.937 billion.

Within the NSF portfolio, the bill includes \$5.55 billion for Research and Related Activities, \$122 million for major research equipment and facilities, and \$857 million for Education and Human Resources. (This compares to the House figures of \$5.64 billion, \$114 million, and \$863 million, respectively.)

To provide some context, NSF received \$3 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to be spent over FY09 and FY10. From these funds, \$2.5 billion was allocated to Research and Related Activities; \$100 million to Education and Human Resources; \$400 million to Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction; and \$2 million to the Office of Inspector General. These amounts are not reflected in the FY09 figures cited above.

**NASA:** The Senate bill would provide \$18.68 billion for the space agency, the same as the President's FY10 request and about \$60 million above the FY09 level. The House provided \$483 million less for NASA than the FY10 request because, lawmakers said, they were awaiting recommendations from the group led by former Lockheed Martin CEO Norman Augustine that is studying the future of manned space flight.

Within the NASA portfolio, the Senate bill would provide \$4.5 billion for the Science Mission Directorate (which appears to be higher than the Administration's request of \$4.4 billion and the House level of \$4.49 billion) and \$507 million for Aeronautics, which is the same as the Administration's request and above the House level of \$501 million.

Additional details will be provided when they are available.

NASA received \$1 billion in ARRA funds to be spent over FY09 and FY10, of which \$400 million was allocated to the Science Mission Directorate to support Earth Science missions and climate change research, \$150 million to the Aeronautics Mission Directorate, \$400 million to the Exploration Mission Directorate, and \$50 million to Cross-Agency Support.

### **FY10 ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS BILL APPROVED BY HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE**

The House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee on June 25 [approved](#) its FY10 funding bill, but few details are available about funding choices within the Department of Energy accounts.

A [chart](#) on the Committee website indicates that the bill would provide \$4.944 billion for the Department of Energy Office of Science, which is \$2 million more than the Administration's FY10 request and \$186 million above the FY09 level. The Chairman's summary indicates that the total includes an additional \$20 million for Fusion Energy Sciences. (It is worth noting that the Office of Science also received \$1.6 billion in Recovery Act funds, to be spent over FY09 and FY10.)

For Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, the bill would provide \$2.250 billion, which is \$69 million below the request and \$321 million above the FY09 level.

CongressDaily reports that the full committee is expected to mark up the bill on Tuesday, July 7.

## **OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES**

### **FOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS REQUEST NATIONAL ACADEMIES' STUDY OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES *NEW***

Four Members of Congress on June 22 asked the National Academies to conduct a study of the competitive position of American research universities, public and private. In a [letter](#) to the Academies, Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Reps. Bart Gordon (D-TN) and Ralph Hall (R-TX) characterized the request as a follow-up to the congressional request to the Academies that resulted in the seminal 2005 report on the nation's competitiveness, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm."

The request was based, in part, on a proposal that AAU President Robert Berdahl made to Senator Alexander, which the Members of Congress further developed. Senator Alexander discussed the proposal with the AAU membership at its April meeting in Washington. Dr. Berdahl's proposal called for the Academies to:

“...undertake a study of the competitive position of the U.S. research universities, public and private, and assess their ability to maintain the quality work needed to drive economic growth and competitiveness and advance the nation's goals in health, environmental quality, technological leadership, energy, and national security.”

The proposal added that such a study could help the U.S. develop a national strategy “for sustaining the long-term viability of its research universities, which are exposed to the fluctuations of the market, declining availability of state dollars, and increased competition from abroad.” Without taking a position, the proposal suggested that the study address such questions as the relative global position of U.S. research universities, the impact of reduced state support on public research universities, how many research universities the nation needs, and the role of the federal government in maintaining the research capacity of American research universities.

## **CONGRESS APPROVES HEA TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS BILL**

The House and Senate voted final approval on June 24 of the technical corrections bill (H.R. 1777) for last year's reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which, among other provisions, will extend for one year the Department of Education's "experimental site" program. The program allows participating campus financial aid offices to experiment with ways to award student aid with lower administrative costs and improved student services.

The Chronicle of Higher Education reports that the measure, which passed both houses unanimously, also corrects a glitch in veterans' educational benefits which would have required some veterans to return federal student aid funding; enables a student with a parent who has died on active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan to receive a full Pell Grant award, and allows loan guarantee agencies to sell rehabilitated student loans back to the federal government. The latter change would allow many borrowers in default to "escape from their debt and clear their credit histories."

## **EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS**

Education Secretary Arne Duncan on June 24 [unveiled](#) the Department of Education's proposal for simplifying the application process for federal student aid. Over the next few months, the Department expects to streamline the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and work with Congress to eliminate dozens of questions on the form related to family income and assets. (The latter steps require changes in federal law.)

The Department is working with the Treasury Department on a pilot program that will allow students and families applying for aid for the 2010 spring semester to retrieve their tax information from the Internal Revenue Service for easy completion of nearly a dozen FAFSA questions.

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