

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

Home > House approves bill to reform NSF facilities management

House approves bill to reform NSF facilities management

June 17, 2016

The House Committee on Science Space and Technology voted overwhelmingly to pass the NSF Major Research Facility Reform Act of 2016 (H.R. 5049). The bill, which passed 412 to 9, increases the National Science Foundation's (NSF) oversight of large research facilities.

Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-GA) introduced the bill after a series of hearings uncovered mismanaged funds at some NSF research facilities, including the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). According to Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX), the \$433 million project, which aims to build dozens of ecological stations across the U.S., is "\$80 million over budget and 18 months behind schedule."

If enacted, the bill would increase NSF's control over research facility contingency funds, require cost proposals and audits for projects over \$100 million, restrict how facilities spend their money, and establish a permanent office to oversee facilities.

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) also supported the bill. She recognized that proper management is "critical," but cautioned against imposing too rigid rules on an agency that has already taken "aggressive steps" to address the issues.

The bill must still be considered on the House floor before it can proceed to the Senate.

Sources: Congress.gov, National Ecological Observatory Network, National Science Foundation

Updated 7/11/16
