House and Senate Committees pass FY 2017 Interior and Environment appropriations bills

16 June 2016

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees each passed their fiscal year (FY) 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bills this June. The bills allocate funding for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Park Service (NPS), the Smithsonian Institution, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017. Both chambers must agree on a single version of the bill before sending it to the President for his signature.

Both versions of the bill provide modest increases for the USGS. The House version of the bill would allocate $1.08 billion; a 1.7 percent increase over the FY 2016 enacted level. All mission areas within the USGS would see slight increases under the House version of the bill except for the Energy, Minerals, and Environmental Health mission areas, which would be flat funded at $94.5 million. The Senate version of the bill would allocate $1.068 billion; a 0.6 percent increase over the FY 2016 enacted level. Within the Senate bill, the Water Resources and Ecosystem mission areas within USGS would see slight decreases to their funding: 0.8 and 0.3 percent decreases, respectively.

Both versions of the bill would decrease funding for BLM, BOEM, BSEE, and NPS.

Funding mechanisms for fighting wildfire were included in each bill. In the Senate, Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) successfully secured a bipartisan agreement to boost wildland firefighting by over $600 million, increasing the funding to meet President's request.

Sources: E&E Daily, House & Senate Appropriations Committees, U.S. Forest Service, Whitehouse.gov