

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

Home > Science Chairman authors draft legislation for NSF grant approval process

Science Chairman authors draft legislation for NSF grant approval process

On November 13, the House Research and Technology Subcommittee held its first public hearing to examine the discussion draft of Frontiers in Innovative Research, Science, and Technology (or FIRST) Act unveiled by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX). If approved, the FIRST Act would replace the America COMPETES Act and offers controversial changes to the system of peer review at the National Science Foundation (NSF). Democrats and witnesses expressed concern that the FIRST Act proposes unreasonable changes to the NSF grant approval process, including requiring the NSF Director to approve all grants. The Director would also have to post a description of each pending award, along with the names of the relevant program managers who made the decision. Written justification of the projects funding approval would be required for each grant.

NSF projects would also have to adhere to at least one of the following criteria: increase U.S. economic competitiveness; advance the health and welfare of the U.S. public; develop STEM workforce and increase U.S. public scientific literacy; increase partnerships between academia and industry; promote U.S scientific progress; or support national defense. The draft discussion document was criticized for excluding funding levels and but Republicans noted that funding details will be added after the current budget negotiations are finalized. Click [here](#) for more information and to view the video webcast of the hearing.

Sources: House Committee on Science, Space & Technology, E&E News
