

President's FY 2018 budget blueprint cuts science agency funding

March 16, 2017

Today, President Trump released his fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget blueprint outlining funding priorities and top-line spending levels for federal agencies. The request decreases Federal research agencies' funding. The total proposed discretionary budget for FY 2018 is \$1.151 trillion, which is a 1.2% reduction from the 2017 continuing resolution (CR) funding level. This request increases defense spending by \$54 billion and cuts non-defense discretionary spending by \$54 billion.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is allocated "greater than" \$900 million in the budget request, which is a decrease of approximately 7-15% from their current funding level of \$1.06 billion. The request includes funding for the Landsat 9 ground system, energy development research, natural resource management practices, and natural hazard risk reduction practices at the USGS. Overall, the budget request allocates \$11.6 billion for the Department of Interior (DOI), a \$1.5 billion cut, or 12% reduction from FY 2017 CR levels. The request removes several DOI initiatives, including the Abandoned Mine Land grants and National Heritage Areas programs. The request prioritizes the National Parks Service's deferred maintenance projects, and reduces funding for large federal land acquisitions, construction, and major maintenance programs.

The request funds the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Earth Sciences Division portfolio at \$1.8 billion, a decrease of \$102 million below FY 2017 CR levels. The budget request would end the PACE, OCO-3, DSCOVR, and CLARREO Pathfinder missions. It also reduces funding for NASA Earth Science research grants. The request completely eliminates NASA's Office of Education, citing that this will save \$115 million annually. Overall, the budget request funds NASA at \$19.1 billion for FY 2018, a 0.8% reduction from current FY 2017 CR levels.

The Department of Commerce's (DOC) budget request is funding at \$7.8 billion for FY 2018, and with a budget reduction of \$1.5 billion when compared to FY17 CR. This represents a larger than 16% reduction in core DOC operations because of a \$1.5 billion request for the 2020 census. The budget request cuts several research programs funded by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). Over \$250 million in NOAA grants and programs, including Sea Grant, would be eliminated. The request also directs a reduction of the Polar Follow On satellite program. However, this request maintains NOAA's polar/geostationary operational environmental satellite programs.

The request for the Department of Energy (DOE) is \$28 billion, which is a \$1.7 billion, or 5.6% reduction from FY 2017 CR. The budget requests \$120 million to restart the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository program. The DOE Office of Science would receive cuts equaling \$900 million. The request cuts \$2 billion from programs such as the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Fossil Energy, and Nuclear Energy. The request eliminates the DOE's Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), State Energy Program, and Weatherization Assistance Program.

At a 31% budget reduction, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receives the largest cut in percentage terms of any agency under this request. The request funds the EPA at \$5.7 billion, a \$2.6 billion reduction from current levels. It proposes eliminating over 50 EPA programs. Notable cuts include the Clean Power Plan, international climate change programs, climate change research, Energy Star, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and the Chesapeake Bay program. The EPA Superfund program funding request is \$762 million, a \$330 million reduction. The budget request reduces the Office of Enforcement and Compliance by \$120 million, and the Office of Research and Development by \$233 million. Categorical grants would be cut \$482 million. These cuts would result in eliminating 3,200 employees.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is not listed in the President's top-line budget request. It is included under the "Other Federal Agencies" section of the request. Collectively, these agencies would receive \$26.5 billion, a \$2.9 billion, or 9.8% reduction from FY 2017 CR levels. The NSF is currently funded at \$7.96 billion. A proportional reduction would represent approximately \$750 million in reduced NSF funding.

Sources: Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, Office of Management and Budget, U.S. Geological Survey
