

House and Senate committees approve FY 2019 Interior-Environment appropriations bills

June 14, 2018

Both the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies approved their fiscal year (FY) 2019 appropriations bills to fund the Department of the Interior (DOI), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other agencies. The House bill (H.R. 6147; H. Rept. 115-765) directs \$1.23 billion to DOI, an increase of \$64.5 million compared to FY 2018 enacted levels, and the Senate bill (S. 3073; S. Rept. 115-276) provides an increase of \$30 million to DOI for a total of \$1.20 billion.

While the Senate provides flat funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) at \$1.15 billion, the House bill includes \$19 million above the FY 2018 enacted level for USGS in FY 2019. Under Core Science Systems, both the House and Senate bills would provide funding increases for the 3D Elevation Program (3DEP), with a proposed increase of \$1.5 million from the House and \$1.8 million from the Senate. For the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP), the Senate provides flat funding while the House would provide \$1 million more in FY 2019 funding, directing the USGS to improve information on karst systems. Within the Mineral Resources Program, the new Three Dimensional mapping and Economic Empowerment Program (3DEEP) would receive \$10.6 million from the House and \$7 million from the Senate to improve the topographic, geological, and geophysical mapping of the United States. While the House bill matches the president's request to fund Energy Resources at \$25.9 million, the Senate would increase the program's funding to \$34.7 million in FY 2019. Both committees would preserve the Environmental Health Mission Area and provide full funding for the development of Landsat 9. The House bill would provide a \$12.5 million increase and the Senate would provide a \$2.5 million increase for the streamgauge network. Both bills decrease funding for the Earthquake and Volcano Hazards programs compared to FY 2018 enacted levels – considering that the steep budget increases provided by Congress for those programs last year were intended to be a one-time occurrence – but the FY 2019 bills would still provide higher funding than appropriated in previous fiscal years to continue support for Earthquake Early Warning, Seismic Networks, and EarthScope USArray. The House would also provide a \$150,000 increase to the Landslide Hazards program for post-wildfire debris flow hazard assessments and early warning, although the program would receive flat funding at \$3.5 million from the Senate.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would receive an increase of \$55 million from the House bill and \$11 million from the Senate bill for FY 2019. The House committee rejected the administration's proposal to consolidate accounts within Management of Land and Resources; however, the Senate bill accepted those proposed changes while maintaining funding of the programs at the FY 2018 enacted levels. The National Park Service would see an increase of \$50 million from the House and \$33 million from the Senate. Additionally, both bills would provide an increase for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management at approximately \$180 million and would decrease funding for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.

While the Senate bill once again proposes flat funding for the EPA, the House bill would decrease EPA funding by \$100 million in FY 2019. The Forest Service would receive an increase of \$364 million from the Senate and \$197 million from the House. The Smithsonian Institution would maintain the same level of funding as last year from the Senate, but would receive an increase of \$12 million from the House.

Sources: Library of Congress; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations; U.S. Senate, Committee on Appropriations.
