

Senate Appropriations Committee approves NSF, NOAA, NASA, NIST, and OSTP funding

June 14, 2018

A month after the House Committee on Appropriations [approved](#) the Science Appropriations Act of 2018 ([H.R. 5952](#)), the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved their Commerce, Justice, and Science fiscal year (FY) 2019 appropriations bill. Similar to the House bill, the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019 ([S. 3072](#); [S. Rept. 115-275](#)) would increase funding for the National Science Foundation ([NSF](#)) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration ([NASA](#)) compared to FY 2018 levels, but decrease funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology ([NIST](#)).

The committee-approved bill provides \$8.1 billion for NSF, which is \$301 million more than the amount provided in FY 2018. This includes \$6.49 billion to support Research and Related Activities, which encompasses research activities of the Geoscience Directorate (GEO). The committee directed NSF to maintain core research at levels no lower than FY 2017 and continue pursuing the [10 Big Ideas](#) using the increase in appropriations for FY 2019. The committee encouraged NSF to transfer the [USArray monitoring stations](#) to the U.S. Geological Survey and to brief the committee on future plans to maintain access to marine seismic research following the divestment of the *R/V Langseth*. The Committee approved \$249 million for Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction, including support to complete construction of three Regional Class Research Vessels and to continue the Antarctic Infrastructure Modernization for Science project. The Education and Human Resources account would increase by \$13 million.

The Senate FY 2019 appropriations bill would fund NOAA at \$5.48 billion, a smaller reduction of \$426.4 million compared to the \$750 million cut approved by the House committee. The bill includes \$588 million for the National Ocean Service (NOS), an increase of \$23 million. The committee expressed concern with NOAA's slow progress in reducing the backlog of hydrographic survey work, especially in the Arctic. The bill would increase funding of the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) and Marine Debris programs by \$1 million each and directed an additional \$2.5 million to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. It provides nearly flat funding at \$549 million for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), but preserves many programs targeted for elimination in the President's FY 2019 request. The bill would appropriate \$100 million more than the President's requested amount of \$1.74 billion for the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS). Similar to the House, the Senate committee rejected the administration's proposal to [decrease](#) staff at the National Weather Service (NWS) and eliminate NOAA's Office of Education.

The committee approved an increase of \$587 million for NASA with overall funding at \$21.3 billion. The bill would increase funding for NASA Science by \$179 million, and the Earth Science sub-account would receive an increase of \$10 million instead of cutting the program as [proposed](#) by the administration. Similar to the House report language, the committee directed NASA to follow recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences Earth Science and Applications from Space Decadal Survey [report](#). The committee recommended \$162.4 million for Landsat 9 to maintain a 2020 launch, \$161 for the Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem mission, and \$10 million for the [Climate Monitoring Program](#). The bill would increase NASA Education funding by \$10 million compared to FY 2018 in order to educate and inspire the next generation of explorers and innovators. The bill funds NIST at \$1.04 billion, which is a decrease of \$161 million from FY 2018 levels, but a slight increase compared to previous fiscal years. The National Space Council and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) would receive flat funding as requested by the administration.

Sources: Library of Congress; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; National Institute of Standards and Technology; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Science Foundation; U.S. Senate, Committee on Appropriations; White House, Office of Science and Technology Policy.
