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On July 29, the House passed H.R. 6147, a so-called “minibus” combining appropriations bills for Interior and Environment and for Financial Services and General Government. The Senate passed the same bill on August 1, with amendments to include Senate versions of the Interior and Environment and the Financial Services and General Government appropriations bills, as well as the Senate appropriations bills for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. Continuing to work through August, the Senate amended the House-passed Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2019 (H.R. 6157) to advance two more Senate appropriations bills, with the final bill including appropriations for the Defense, and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

The Senate has now passed nine of their 12 appropriations bills, while the House – on recess in August – has passed six. The two chambers must conference to negotiate mutually agreeable final language, then pass reconciled versions of the appropriations packages.

Neither chamber has yet passed their Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bills (H.R. 5952, S. 3072), which fund the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). If Congress does not complete the appropriations process by the fiscal year (FY) deadline of September 30, the chambers must again pass a short-term continuing resolution to continue funding federal agencies at FY 2018 levels and avoid a government shutdown. On August 28, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said that the Senate hopes to reconcile all nine of the spending bills they have passed with the House before the fiscal year deadline.

Sources: E&E News, Library of Congress
