

## President approves two minibus appropriations bills, continuing resolution for FY 2019

September 28, 2018

President Donald Trump signed two spending bill packages into law this month, allocating funding for parts of the federal government through fiscal year (FY) 2019 and providing short-term funding for other agencies at FY 2018 levels until December 7, giving Congress more time to agree upon the final FY 2019 appropriations for those remaining agencies while avoiding a government shutdown before the start of the fiscal year on October 1.

The first of the so-called "minibus" packages, H.R. 5895, combines funding for three appropriations bills: Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs. The \$147 billion package was signed into law by the president on September 21.

One week later, on September 28, President Trump approved H.R. 6157 – an \$855 billion minibus containing two appropriations bills for the Department of Education and the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Health and Human Services. This two-bill package also includes a continuing resolution (Division C) to provide short-term funding at FY 2018 levels for the projects and activities of agencies not otherwise covered by Divisions A and B of H.R. 6157 or by H.R. 5895.

FY 2019 appropriations for the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency will likely have to wait until after the midterm elections.

Included in H.R. 5895, the Department of Energy (DOE) will receive a boost for basic research efforts. The DOE Office of Science will see their funding increase by 5.2 percent relative to FY 2018; the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) received a 2.5 percent budget increase; and the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) received a 3.7 percent increase. These funding increases contrast with the Trump administration's budget, which proposed decreasing the Office of Science budget by 13.9 percent, decreasing the EERE budget by 70 percent, and eliminating ARPA-E.

Congress hopes to pass two more FY 2019 appropriations packages (H.R. 6147 and H.R. 5952) to provide funding for the remainder of the federal agencies not covered by H.R. 5895 and H.R. 6157.

Both chambers have passed their own versions of H.R. 6147, a minibus including appropriations for Interior and Environment, Financial Services and General Government, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development. Congress is now working on resolving differences between the House and Senate versions before sending the bill to the president for final approval.

The other remaining appropriations package, H.R. 5952, provides FY 2019 appropriations for the Department of Commerce, the Department of Justice, and various science agencies. H.R. 5952 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 House and Senate Committees on Appropriations have both approved their respective versions of the bill.

Traditionally, Congress passes twelve appropriation bills either individually, in small groups known as minibuses, or all together in one omnibus. Five of the twelve FY 2019 appropriation bills were passed in the two minibuses and Congress has until December 7 to pass the other seven bills or another continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown. The passages of H.R. 5896 and H.R. 6157 mark the first time in more than two decades that funding for this much of the federal government has been provided before the start of the fiscal year.

*Sources: E&E News; Library of Congress; Roll Call; Science Magazine.*

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