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At an executive session on December 13, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (S.2200) and the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Reauthorization Act of 2017 (S.1768) by voice vote.

Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL) introduced S.2200 on December 6 to reauthorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) NIDIS program through FY 2023; it is currently due to expire after fiscal year (FY) 2018. The bill aims to improve the program by directing the National Weather Service (NWS) to develop a strategy for a national coordinated soil moisture monitoring network, and to partner with the private sector, academia, and citizen scientists for improved drought monitoring, forecasting, and communication. The bill also reauthorizes 15 U.S.C. 8521, enacted law for weather and climate information in agriculture, through FY 2023 for the NWS to provide and improve foundational forecasts of subseasonal and seasonal temperature and precipitation to the public.

While Senator Dianne Feinstein's (D-CA) NEHRP reauthorization bill omitted details on appropriations, the committee-approved legislation included an amendment in the nature of a substitute, proposed by Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO), to authorize funding for the program through FY 2022, rising from \$8.67 million in FY 2018 to \$9.39 million in FY 2022.

During the session, the committee also voted on partisan lines (14-13) to advance the nomination of Barry Myers as Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to the Senate calendar.

Sources: Library of Congress, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
