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On June 11, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) funding bill for fiscal year (FY) 2016, one week after the House passed its own CJS bill. The Senate bill would flat-fund the National Science Foundation (NSF) from FY 2015 levels at \$7.3 billion, and would appropriate \$5.4 billion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), \$600 million below the Administration's request.

The bill includes a \$23 million increase to NOAA's National Weather Service's \$1.1 billion budget for weather and storm predictions. It would also fully fund NOAA's main satellite programs, but would provide only \$150 million, \$245 million less than the President's request, for the Polar Follow-On satellite program to fill future gaps in weather data as satellites need to be retired. The bill appropriates an additional \$2.3 million for construction of a new icebreaker vessel; however, that amount is \$147 million less than the amount required to actually build the vessel, which is a necessity for charting Arctic waters, according to Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

Democrats continued to push for an end to the sequester, which caps government spending in an effort to mitigate federal spending, and Ranking Member Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) pushed for an amendment that would function as an entirely new bill to provide greater funding for the NSF, NASA, NOAA, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology; the amendment failed to pass a voice vote. The bill passed the committee by a vote of 27-3.

Sources: E&E News, Senate Appropriations Committee
