

National Science Foundation (NSF) on track to double its budget in five years

Washington, D.C., November 15, 2002 – The House and Senate passed historic legislation that would put the National Science Foundation (NSF) on track to double its budget in five years. The National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (H.R. 4664) passed the House of Representatives by unanimous consent at 2:59 a.m. on November 15, 2002. The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent on November 14 after a compromise was reached between Congress and the White House. The bill will now be sent to the President for his signature. The National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) worked with other scientific organizations to inform Congress about the need for this legislation.

The bill authorizes an increase of 105 percent or \$5.0 billion for the National Science Foundation over the next five years, from \$4.8 billion in FY 2002 to \$9.8 billion in FY 2007. Authorization for funding in FY 2006 and FY 2007 would be contingent on NSF's "successful progress" toward meeting management goals as determined by Congress and the Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget.

The final NSF authorization bill incorporates provisions from four other bills:

- The National Mathematics and Science Partnerships Act (H.R. 1858), which seeks to establish math and science education programs to improve elementary and secondary science education instruction.
- The Technology Talent Act (H.R. 3130), which requires the NSF Director to award competitive, merit-based grants to increase the number of undergraduate students studying within the fields of engineering, math, science, and technology.
- The National Science Education Act (H.R. 100), which requires the NSF Director to establish education programs, award competitive grants to train master teachers, and award grants to implement master teacher programs.
- The Plant Genome and Gene Expression Research and Development Act (H.R. 2051), which requires the NSF Director to award grants to nonprofit organizations or institutions of higher education with experience in plant biotechnology research to establish plant genome and gene expression research centers.

House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) said, "This version of the bill is a well crafted, bipartisan compromise that has been agreed to by the Administration... We turn to NSF to solve some of our most pressing problems; we can't turn from NSF when we decide where to invest federal funds. It's time to give NSF the money it needs."

Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Ranking Member of the House Science Subcommittee on Research, said, "This is truly an historic piece of legislation for science policy in the United States that will have profound and lasting effect on the future prosperity of our nation."

An extended version of this article, including a budget table, will be posted at <http://NCSEonline.org/Updates>. For further information, please contact Dr. Craig Schiffries (E-mail: schiffries@NCSEonline.org).

The National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) is a non-profit organization working to improve the scientific basis for environmental decision-making. NCSE is supported by nearly 500 academic, scientific, environmental, government and business organizations.
