



Alternative Fuels & Chemicals Coalition

Advocating for Public Policies to Promote the Development & Production of Alternative Fuels, Renewable Chemicals, Biobased Products, and Sustainable Aviation Fuels

AFCC's September 2019 Capitol Hill Round Up: Congress Approves a Continuing Resolution that will Fund the U.S. Government through November 21

The Senate Committee on Appropriations on September 26, 2019 approved the *FY2020 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, S.2581*. The 82-15 vote came just days before the September 30th deadline when government funding would have expired. The House passed the same measure the week before.

President Trump signed the stopgap bill into law, which prevents closing the government until November 21, 2019. The Senate bill provides \$3.593 billion in discretionary budget authority, and an additional \$1.499 billion is reserved for the House-only items, bringing total funding to \$5.092 billion, which was approved.

The Senate appropriators almost matched up with the House counterparts on EPA budget providing a \$9 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2020, which is slightly less than the \$9.5 billion the House has already approved.

Senators ignored deep budget cuts President Trump proposed for EPA, and made it clear that they do not support reductions proposed by President Trump's budget plan. And, the Senate committee does not expect EPA to close or consolidate any of its regional offices in FY2020, similar to the House legislation, H.R. 3055. Unlike the House, Senate appropriators have not provided a budgetary boost for EPA's Inspector General (IG).

Under the bill, state and local air quality management grants would receive \$220.8 million, equal to the amount in EPA's FY2019 operating plan, although it's less than the \$228.2 million that Congress actually appropriated for this year. The House has proposed a funding boost to \$238.2 million for FY2020.

Unlike its House counterpart, however, the Senate measure would keep FY2020 spending on two popular grant programs at close to this year's levels. Funding for Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grants, which support replacement or retooling of older diesel-powered vehicles and equipment, would slip slightly from \$87 million to about \$85.2 million.

A Collaborative Government Affairs Effort

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The other program is Targeted Airshed grants, for helping areas with severe ozone or particulate matter pollution, which would rise from \$52 million to \$56.3 million.

The House bill would slash DERA funding to \$50 million in FY2020 and Targeted Airshed grants would drop to \$30 million.

The Senate bill would also award \$24 million in "multipurpose" grants for states and Indian tribes to steer toward priorities of their choosing. This year, that program is getting \$11 million. The House legislation zeroed it out.

Senate Republicans backed President Trump's proposed \$5 billion border wall spending request. The House Democrats rejected any funding for the controversial U.S.-Mexico barrier. The move came as the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee passed its \$53.2 billion FY2020 bill. Senate Democrats and environmentalists achieved a modest victory by making sure the bill continued to block funds for building the wall on five environmental and historical areas along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas.

Border wall clashes in September derailed Senate GOP hopes of advancing a legislative package to include the Defense and Energy-Water spending bills.

The House and Senate have about seven weeks from September 26, to negotiate a FY2020 omnibus funding package for all of the government with hopes of passing it before Congress' Thanksgiving break. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are hopeful a resolution will be achieved, and do not want a yearlong Continuing Resolution (CR) which could occur if Congress cannot reach a spending deal, particularly with the border wall obstacle.

IN OTHER NEWS: The Alternative Fuels & Chemicals Coalition (AFCC) will be having its first Governing Board of Directors (BOD) meeting on Tuesday, December 10th, which will be held at the Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP offices in Washington, D.C. Prior to that, AFCC will be announcing its Governing BOD of Directors on Tuesday, October 15, 2019.