

Report from Washington

(From Ben Kallen)

Neither Ben or Leland are available this week to give the update due to travel/meetings, so they were so kind to send a detailed email update!
(including a hot off the press positive news)

FY2018 Appropriations

- For the past month, Congress has been primarily focused on tax reform. Both the House and the Senate have been drafting competing tax reform bills. Republican leaders in Congress hope to have a final bill passed by early December, but negotiations are complex because the two bills differ from one another substantially.
- Meanwhile, congressional leaders have started negotiating on a budget deal that would lift the budget caps in anticipation of a final FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill. An increase for the non-defense discretionary portion of the budget, which includes the Department of Energy and thus High Energy Physics, is still part of the discussions. It is unlikely that these negotiations will be completed before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on December 8, so another short-term CR will likely be needed to give Congress additional time to complete negotiations and pass an omnibus.

Scientific Infrastructure Bill

- The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology continues to work on a scientific infrastructure bill designed to streamline the construction of large-scale scientific facilities. The Office of Science is a major focus of the legislation, and the bill text includes the optimal funding profile for LBNF/DUNE. While the bill itself does not appropriate actual funds, it is a strong statement of congressional support for the project.

Hot off the press update on this

- Yesterday, the House Science Committee unanimously approved three bills advancing DOE basic research and infrastructure programs: The Department of Energy Research Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4376](#)), introduced by Rep. Steve Knight (R-Calif.), vice chairman of the Energy Subcommittee; the Accelerating American Leadership in Science Act ([H.R. 4377](#)), introduced by Rep. Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.), a member of the Energy Subcommittee; and the Nuclear Energy Research Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4378](#)), introduced by Rep. Randy Weber (R-Texas), chairman of the Energy Subcommittee.

Scientific Infrastructure Bill

- The one we care about is the Accelerating American Leadership in Science Act because it includes authorization and funding for LBNF/DUNE.
- Lewis-Burke worked with Committee staff to incorporate specific language and the most optimal funding levels for construction of the LBNF/DUNE into the bill.

Prospects:

- Even if the bill is passed by the full House, which is likely, there is no companion bill on the Senate side and will not be passed and enacted this year.
- However, this bill shows bipartisan support for Office of Science facilities and infrastructure and LBNF/DUNE specifically. We will also explore options for reintroduction and passage next year with an emphasis on finding a vehicle for passage in the Senate.

Administration Updates

- The Senate confirmed Paul Dabbar, an energy investor with JP Morgan/Chase & Co., to be the Under Secretary for Science at DOE. In this position, Dabbar is now responsible for overseeing the Office of Science but not the applied energy programs.
- This is a contrast to DOE's management structure during the Obama Administration, which had former Under Secretary Lynn Orr overseeing both the energy and science portfolios in an effort to facilitate greater synergy between them.
- The Senate also confirmed Mark Menezes, former Vice President for Federal Relations at Berkshire-Hathaway Energy, to be Under Secretary for Energy.
- Steve Binkley is still Acting director of the Office of Science, and the Administration still has not nominated anyone to the position of Director.