



Science Policy News

Entomological Society of America Science Policy News

May 31, 2016

ESA Seeks Applicants to Serve as Subject Matter Expert and Liaison with the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs

A tremendous opportunity is now available for a distinguished scientist interested in providing guidance on a broad range of issues related to pesticide safety regulation, efficacy testing of arthropod control methods, and advising the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on integrated pest management (IPM) in urban, medical, and agricultural situations.

The Subject Matter Expert (SME) represents the breadth of ESA's membership to EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) and provides critical input on topics such as the clarity of labels, efficacy testing guidelines for control of various arthropod groups, utility of label mitigations, spray drift, invasive arthropod species, insecticide resistance, and the role of insecticides in integrated pest management. The SME will provide EPA and ESA with brief [quarterly reports](#) of activity and maintains a network of entomological peers to consult on subject areas beyond the individual's expertise to provide a breadth of experience. Additionally, the SME sits on the ESA Science Policy committee. The Distinguished Scientist serves in an unpaid role as advisor and liaison. U.S.-based applicants only, please.

Applications are due June 17. More information can be found at <http://www.entsoc.org/SME-ESA-EPA-details>.

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ESA IN DC

ESA Science Policy Fellows Visit Washington, DC

On May 16-18, the first two cohorts of ESA Science Policy Fellows visited Washington, DC, and attended meetings on Capitol Hill to advocate for the entomological sciences. The Fellows promoted ESA priorities and federal research funding recommendations for key agencies and offered ESA as a resource to legislative staff. The 10 Fellows met with over 30 congressional offices spanning 11 states during their visit.

Launched in 2014, the ESA Science Policy Fellows Program accepts five new Fellows each year for a two-year term. During their time in the program, Science Policy Fellows engage in a variety of virtual and in-person educational events to learn about how science policy and science funding decisions are made on the federal level. Fellows are also provided the opportunity to engage with lawmakers, legislative staff, and federal agency leaders in Washington, DC. The objective of the Science Policy Fellows program is to develop a generation of scientists who are visible and effective advocates for entomology and entomological research.

Sources and Additional Information:

- More information on ESA's Science Policy Fellows program is available at <http://www.entsoc.org/sci-pol/esa-science-policy-fellows-program>.
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ESA Hosts Integrated Tick Management Symposium

On May 16-17, ESA hosted a meeting titled "Integrated Tick Management Symposium: Solving America's Tick-Borne Disease Problem" in Washington, DC, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the IPM Institute of North America, and the North Central IPM Center. Attendees included entomologists and public health officials from federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Defense (DOD), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), along with representatives from universities and other organizations.

The Symposium was well attended and generated robust discussion on topics like the importance of reducing deer populations to reduce tick populations as well as giving consideration to the many other tools in the IPM toolbox. Discussion also focused on the need for more medical entomologists. ESA President May Berenbaum provided closing remarks for the symposium

and emphasized the lack of a one-size-fits-all approach to solving the current challenges associated with ticks.

Following the symposium, 11 attendees participated in Capitol Hill meetings to discuss the outcomes of the meeting and advocate for increased funding for tick research and management.

Sources and Additional Information:

- Additional information can be found in an *Entomology Today* post at <https://entomologytoday.org/2016/05/20/a-report-from-the-integrated-tick-management-symposium-in-washington-dc/>.
 - More details on the Symposium are available at <http://entsoc.org/ITMS>.
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ESA Submits Letter to NSF on Collections Program

On May 16, ESA President May Berenbaum submitted a letter on behalf of the Society to Jim Olds, Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Biological Sciences Directorate, in response to the recent hiatus of the Collections in Support of Biological Research (CSBR) program. Collections from the CSBR program, which has been placed on hiatus for the second time in three years, contribute to research across a range of NSF directorates and government-funded programs including the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Partnerships for Enhancing Expertise in Taxonomy (PEET), and the Planetary Biodiversity Inventory (PBI). In a rapidly changing and increasingly high tech world, President Berenbaum advocates for the importance of data provided by physical specimens that cannot be captured or disseminated digitally, and urges Olds and NSF to reconsider the hiatus and continue vital support for this collections program. Olds responded to the letter thanking Berenbaum and the Society for their feedback and assured that it would be taken into consideration moving forward.

Sources and Additional Information:

- President Berenbaum's letter to Jim Olds is available at <http://www.entsoc.org/PDF/2016/EntSocAm-to-Olds-Final.pdf>.
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CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES AND NEWS

House and Senate Pass Dueling Zika Bills

Last month, the House and Senate considered and passed dueling legislation aimed at tackling the emerging threat of the Zika virus in the United States. On May 17, the Senate passed a \$1.1 billion package that includes funding for vaccine development and mosquito control as an amendment to the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs (MilCon VA) Appropriations

bill. The legislation is roughly \$800 million less than what President Obama proposed in his supplemental funding request in February.

One day later, the House passed a funding measure drastically lower than the initial request, totaling \$622 million. The smaller amount is due to the House accounting for emergency funds originally allocated to fight the Ebola outbreak last summer. Instead of approving a large amount of new funding as the Senate did, the House proposal relies on repurposing money provided for Ebola to combat Zika.

The differences in funding and policy in the competing legislation will still need to be resolved by Congress after they return from the Memorial Day recess. In response to passage of the House bill, President Obama released a statement promising to veto any measure that would not devote adequate funding to stop the spread of Zika or would do so for the sake of continued Ebola recovery efforts.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The Senate version of the funding package can be found at: <https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr2577/BILLS-114hr2577pp.pdf>.
- The House version of the package can be found at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5243?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Zika%22%5D%7D&resultIndex=3>.
- The Obama Administration's response can be found at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/legislative/sap/114/saphr5243r_20160517.pdf

House Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science Spending Bill

On May 24, the House Appropriations Committee unanimously approved the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill that funds the National Science Foundation (NSF), among other agencies.

The House CJS bill would provide NSF with \$7.406 billion, which is \$57.4 million or 0.8 percent below the FY 2016 level, \$157.9 million below the President's FY 2017 request, and \$103.6 million below the Senate's proposal.

The Committee markup dealt primarily with unrelated amendments regarding trade with Cuba, programs administered by the Department of Justice, immigration, gun control, and others. Near the end of the markup, CJS Subcommittee Ranking Member Mike Honda (D-CA) offered and withdrew an amendment related to funding for NSF research in the bill. The amendment would have increased NSF's Research and Related Activities (R&RA) account by \$593 million, bringing NSF's total funding to \$8 billion.

House Republicans have stated their desire for regular order regarding consideration of appropriations bills. However, it is unclear how Speaker Ryan's promise to hold an open

amendment process will impact the legislation's ultimate passage once it reaches the floor for consideration by the whole House.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The full House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Bill can be found at <http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/bills-114hr-sc-ap-fy2017-cjs-subcommitteedraft.pdf>.
 - The corresponding report for the House CJS bill can be found at <http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hrpt-114-hr-fy2017-cjs.pdf>.
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Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2017 Agriculture Spending Bill

On May 19, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill by unanimous vote.

In the bill, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) would receive \$1.36 billion, an increase of approximately three percent over the FY 2016 level. Within NIFA, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) would receive \$375 million, an increase of \$25 million above the currently enacted level. Similar to the House measure, the President's request for \$325 million in new mandatory spending was not entertained in Subcommittee or full Committee. Also in line with the House measure, the Senate did not accept the President's request to direct the seven percent increase in AFRI funds to research in sustainable bioenergy.

Markup on the Senate side was significantly less contentious than in the House Committee. Only four amendments were offered, and three were accepted by voice vote, including a labeling for genetically engineered salmon. None of the amendments related to research or education programs within USDA.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The full text of the bill is available at <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY2017%20Agriculture%20Appropriations%20Bill%20-%20S2956.pdf>.
 - Accompanying report language is available at <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY2017%20Agriculture%20Appropriations%20Bill%20-%20Report%20114-259.pdf>.
 - The press release announcing the Committee's approval of the bill is available at <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/senate-appropriations-committee-approves-fy2017-agriculture-rural-development-bill->.
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FEDERAL AGENCY AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATES AND NEWS

USDA Releases Survey on Honey Bee Colony Health

On May 12, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) published the results of the Honey Bee Colony Loss survey, the first ever comprehensive analysis of its kind. As part of the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators, a strategic plan to reduce the effects of stressors on pollinator health, this report surveyed over 20,000 beekeepers about colony losses and additions, frequent stressors and indicators of illness, interstate colony movement, and general issues pertaining to honey bee health. The collected data indicates that in the past calendar year beekeepers with five or more colonies saw an eight percent population decline and an increase in colonies displaying symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder in the first quarter of 2016. Varroa mites were also identified as the primary stressor on honey bee health and population. Responsible for pollinating an estimated \$15 billion in crops each year, this survey is intended to provide valuable data to policymakers and inform decisions on honey bee health moving forward.

Sources and Additional Information

- The USDA press release, including a link to the survey, is available at <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2016/05/0114.xml>.

National Academies Releases Genetically Modified Crops Report

On May 17, the National Academies of Sciences Committee on Genetically Engineered Crops published a comprehensive report assessing the positive and negative economic, environmental, social, and health related impacts of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), crops engineered to be resistant to herbicides and insecticides, viruses, and insects. GMOs including soybeans, cotton, maize, and canola have been commercially produced in the United States since the mid-1990's, but there has been much public debate over whether or not they produce significant crop yield increases and potential adverse effects on human health compared to traditional breeding techniques. This report, in addition to addressing these issues, notes regulatory changes that should be made to maximize the benefits of these technologies as well as emerging and future technologies that could lead to significant advances in the field. The study found that gene editing techniques have lessened the gap between potential and actual yield for certain crops by mitigating losses from pests and disease, but there was no evidence of consistent, significant yield increases.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The full National Academies report is available at <http://www.nap.edu/read/23395/chapter/1>.