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ESA IN DC

Thank You for Attending the Science Policy Session at ESA Annual Meeting;
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Representatives from ESA’s Washington, DC- based government relations firm, Lewis-Burke Associates, greatly enjoyed attending and participating in the Society’s 63rd Annual Meeting on November 15-18 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Lewis-Burke representatives presented a Lunch-and-Learn session entitled “Science Policy: Fellows, Funding, and the Federal Future of Entomology,” and conducted a training session with the new class of ESA Science Policy Fellows. Lewis-Burke representatives were pleased to meet an array of ESA members and are grateful to those who attended and participated in these sessions.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the Society’s policy efforts, be sure to check out the suite of advocacy tools Lewis-Burke has put together for ESA members to use. These documents, which include Frequently Asked Questions about science policy advocacy, talking
points and communication tips, a guide to congressional meetings, and a template for scheduling a congressional meeting, are all available online at http://entsoc.org/sci-pol/science-policy-communications-documents.

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**ESA Endorses New AIPM Legislation**

This month, ESA formally endorsed new federal legislation for Areawide Integrated Pest Management introduced by Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI). The *Areawide Integrated Pest Management (AIPM) Act of 2015* would prioritize and elevate critical AIPM efforts and projects within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The legislation would establish a new areawide IPM Committee to oversee program priorities, which would include nine voting members from stakeholder groups, plus three ex-officio members: the National Program Leader for the Invasive Pests of Crops of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS); the National Program Leader for Bio-based Pest Management at NIFA; and the USDA Senior Invasive Species Coordinator.

AIPM projects address large-scale pest control efforts to prevent the spread of pests and invasive species in a variety of ways including prevention, monitoring, suppression, and educational management efforts. The legislation would complement existing federal pest management programs in collaboration with ARS. ESA worked with Rep. Gabbard’s staff, providing feedback and comments on the draft legislation.

**Sources and Additional Information:**

- The full text of the *AIPM Act* is available at https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr3893/text.

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**CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES AND NEWS**

**Congress Nears Funding Deadline**

On December 11, the federal government once again faces the threat of a government shutdown unless Congress passes (and the president signs) new spending bills or another continuing resolution (CR) for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2016. Current appropriations, an extension of FY 2015 funding levels, passed on September 30.

In a surprise move at the end of October, the House and Senate announced a compromise agreement that alleviates sequestration for FYs 2016 and 2017. The deal provides increased discretionary spending of $80 billion over two years, split evenly between defense and non-defense spending. Since the accord was signed into law on October 30, appropriators in both
chambers have worked to allocate the increased available funding to different areas of the federal government, including research agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

While many were hopeful that the compromise agreement would pave the way for increased appropriations and avert the possibility of a government shutdown, extraneous political issues have come into play. The attacks in Paris coupled with the Syrian refugee crises, Planned Parenthood controversy, and Congressional efforts to block the Obama Administration’s climate agenda all pose serious threats in derailing a new spending bill.

Sources and Additional Information:


FEDERAL AGENCY AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATES AND NEWS

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Announces $4 Million to Protect Monarch Butterflies

On November 12, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a $4 million investment to span ten Midwestern states to improve survival rates of monarch butterflies. Funding for the program will come from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a U.S. Department of Agriculture financial assistance program that helps farmers engage in resource conservation. The goal of the investment is to keep monarch butterflies off the endangered species list.

The $4 million will be focused on planting milkweed and other nectar-rich plants along waterways, in wetlands, and around farms and pastures. NRCS will work to provide technical assistance and training to farmers and ranchers in the region in order to improve rangeland and farm field health.

Sources and Additional Information:

**EPA Cancels Registration of Sulfoxaflor**

In a major reversal, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a cancellation on the registration and use of pesticide products containing sulfoxaflor, a chemical suspected of contributing to the decline in bee populations. Following a successful lawsuit brought by the Pollinator Stewardship Council against the EPA, the agency was required to cancel future use of the pesticide. The ruling by the court was based on the grounds that initial approval did not take into account scientific data on sulfoxaflor’s impact to bees.

**Sources and Additional Information:**


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**Opportunity for Public Comment: White House Solicits Sources of Agricultural Innovation**

On November 5, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released a Request for Information (RFI) about sources of agricultural innovation with the goal of discovering new ideas to spur innovation, elevate the profile of agricultural research, and address the needs of the growing global population.

OSTP seeks information about existing programs of innovative agricultural science, as well as feedback on areas of need in research, education, or training. The request calls for input from “biological and agricultural stakeholders” -- researchers in academia, professional and scientific societies, industry, and non-governmental organizations are all invited to submit their comments.

The RFI includes seven questions regarding the “future of agriculture and food systems:

- Over the next ten years, what are the most important research gaps that must be addressed to advance agricultural innovation?
- What interdisciplinary agriculture and food programs successfully impact agricultural innovation?
- What elementary, middle, and high school outreach programs are successful examples of introducing students to agricultural careers, and what are examples of effective ways to introduce agriculture to suburban and urban students interested in careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)?
- How can colleges and universities recruit STEM undergraduates into agricultural disciplines? What effect, if any, do introductory courses that engage students in discovery-based research have for this purpose?
- What resources are fundamental to addressing agricultural research needs?
- What further training is needed among agricultural professionals to take advantage of advances in agriculture research?
- Is there any additional information, not requested above, that you believe OSTP should consider in identifying crucial areas of agricultural research?”
Respondents need not answer all questions, but should indicate which questions they are responding to in their submission. To submit responses, visit https://www.whitehouse.gov/webform/request-information-agricultural-innovation. The deadline is December 4, 2015. Contact Elizabeth Stulberg, OSTP Science Division, at estulberg@eop.ostp.gov with any questions.

Sources and Additional Information: