



# Science Policy News

Entomological Society of America Science Policy News

January 2018

## IN THIS ISSUE

### ESA IN DC

- *ESA Supports Nominations for Federal Tick-Borne Disease Working Group Subcommittees*
- *ESA Signs Coalition Letter Requesting Increase in Agricultural Appropriations for FY 2018*
- *ESA Signs Multiple Community Letters Expressing Concern for CDC "Banned" Words*
- *ESA Launches Call for Volunteers, Comments for New Position Statement on Science Communication*

### CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES AND NEWS

- *Congress Passes Third Continuing Resolution to Fund the Government Through January 19*
- *President Signs Tax Bill Into Law*

### FEDERAL AGENCY AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATES AND NEWS

- *DOI Requests Nominations for the Invasive Species Advisory Committee*
- *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Seeks Applications for Conservation Innovation Grant*
- *EPA Moves to Replace Obama-era Climate Rule*
- *NSF Releases Dear Colleague Letter for Rules of Life Forecasting and Emergence in Living Systems Program*

---

### ESA IN DC

#### ***ESA Supports Nominations for Federal Tick-Borne Disease Working Group Subcommittees***

The Tick-Borne Disease Working Group held its inaugural meeting on December 11. The group, authorized by the *21st Century Cures Act* signed into law in December 2016, was established to help inform the federal government on issues pertaining to tick-borne diseases and coordinate interagency efforts to address these infections through treatment, prevention, and research. While the core membership of the committee was established last fall, the working group released a request for nominations to serve on relevant subcommittees on December 21 with self-nominations due shortly after the first of the year. ESA, in conjunction with society

leadership, identified and submitted a supporting letter on behalf of half a dozen individual nominations related to the following subcommittees: Disease Vectors, Surveillance, and Prevention; Vaccine and Therapeutics; and Other Tick-Borne Diseases and Co-infections.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- More information on the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/advisory-committees/tickbornedisease/about/index.html>.
- The solicitation for subcommittee nominees is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/advisory-committees/tickbornedisease/notices/index.html>.
- A copy of the ESA letter of support may be found on the ESA Science Policy Updates page at <http://www.entSOC.org/esa-science-policy-documents>.

---

***ESA Signs Coalition Letter Requesting Increase in Agricultural Appropriations for FY 2018***

On December 14, ESA and several dozen other scientific, agricultural, academic, and consumer-based organizations sent letters to Congressional leadership requesting that, as members of Congress seek a final resolution to the fiscal year 2018 appropriations, they include growth for agricultural funding if other discretionary programs are getting a boost. Other discretionary programs have seen growth despite budget constraints. The organizations note, however, that it is important that Congress doesn't overlook the important role research and technology play in the continued growth of the agricultural sector, which supports more than 22 million jobs, contributes \$1 trillion to the national economy, and plays a critical role in advancing food security and national security priorities.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The coalition letter requesting support for FY 2018 agricultural appropriations is available at [http://supportagresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FY\\_2018\\_Ag\\_Appropriations\\_Allocation\\_Letter\\_to\\_House\\_Speaker\\_and\\_Minority\\_Leader.pdf](http://supportagresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FY_2018_Ag_Appropriations_Allocation_Letter_to_House_Speaker_and_Minority_Leader.pdf).

---

***ESA Signs Multiple Community Letters Expressing Concern for CDC "Banned" Words***

On December 15, *The Washington Post* reported that policy analysts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were told that a specific set of words, including "vulnerable," "entitlement," "diversity," "transgender," "fetus," "evidence-based," and "science-based," should not be used in the FY 2019 budget justification. The budget justification is a document created by the agency in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget and which is shared with Congress to advance both the objectives of the agency as well as the Administration.

Considering previous efforts to suppress research and data at other agencies since the Administration took office in January 2017, many scientific and professional organizations were alarmed by the news that the CDC, a critical agency for public health, would avoid words that

emphasize the importance of science and evidence in its policymaking. Adding to this concern was a series of tweets by CDC Director Brenda Fitzgerald, which said that calling the words "banned" was a mischaracterization but failed to shed light on the real situation that prompted this report. Consequently, coalitions rapidly mobilized their membership to express reservations about such censorship by sending letters to Eric Hargan, acting secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), of which CDC is a part, as well as addressing members of Congress and creating open letters to the community. ESA signed on to several of these letters.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The letter to Acting Secretary Hargan on behalf of public health societies is available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b7eXYMxgVGPRYR6-b4mLOJ8fZC80kx2/view>.
- The open letter opposing censorship organized by the March for Science is available at <https://www.marchforscience.com/censorship>.
- Copies of the letters on which ESA was a signatory may be found on the ESA Science Policy Updates page at <http://www.entsoc.org/esa-science-policy-documents>.

---

***ESA Launches Call for Volunteers, Comments for New Position Statement on Science Communication***

The importance of effective scientific communication has been widely discussed in the past year, with many organizations seeking to improve their ability to communicate the importance of research to interested third parties, such as lawmakers. A December 2016 report from the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) calls for the development of a scientific research agenda. To address the need for improved scientific communication in entomology, the ESA Governing Board and Science Policy Committee have agreed to develop an official position statement of the Society on the importance of science communication. Member input is sought to shape the content of the position statement and members are sought to serve on the writing committee.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- To volunteer to serve on the writing committee for the Science Communication position statement, visit <https://entsoc.wufoo.com/forms/q1m1y7qf0f87jni/>. (The deadline to apply is February 9.)
- To provide member input on the content for the Science Communication position statement, visit <https://entsoc.wufoo.com/forms/qtkmwmt1fcix0z/>.
- To review the NAS report on Science Communication, visit <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23674/communicating-science-effectively-a-research-agenda>.

---

**CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES AND NEWS**

***Congress Passes Third Continuing Resolution to Fund the Government Through January 19***

On December 21, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to avoid a government shutdown and extend funding for government programs at fiscal year (FY) 2017 levels through January 19. The extension is designed to give Congressional leaders additional time to negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement with the White House to lift funding caps on defense and non-defense discretionary spending and complete a final FY 2018 omnibus bill to fund government agencies for the remaining eight months of the fiscal year. The House passed the bill on a mostly party-line vote of 231-188 and the Senate followed suit with a vote of 66-32. In addition to funding government programs, the bill also provides additional defense spending, temporarily extends funding for several health care programs and government surveillance powers, and waives automatic cuts to entitlement programs triggered by the tax bill. The bill also delays automatic sequestration cuts in both defense and non-defense funding for the duration of the CR.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The text of the CR is available at <http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20171218/BILLS-115HR1370-RCP115-52.pdf>.
- 

### ***President Signs Tax Bill Into Law***

On December 22, President Trump signed into law a significant overhaul of the U.S. tax code recently passed by Congress, with lower tax rates for corporations and individuals. Changes impacting institutions of higher education include a tax on the investment income of the endowments of certain private colleges and universities and an impact on charitable giving. Prior to the bill's passage, ESA issued an Action Alert encouraging its members to contact their legislators to oppose a proposed tax on tuition waivers for employees, their dependents, and graduate students; that tax was not included in the final bill.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The text of the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* is available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1/text>.
  - The ESA Action Alert regarding the tuition waivers may be found at <http://www.entsoc.org/science-policy/ActionAlerts>.
- 

## **FEDERAL AGENCY AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATES AND NEWS**

### ***DOI Requests Nominations for the Invasive Species Advisory Committee***

On December 27, the Department of the Interior released a request for nominations for new members of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee. ISAC provides advice to the National Invasive Species Council, the advisory body responsible for coordinating interagency invasive species initiatives, on a variety of issues pertaining to the mitigation and control of invasive species as well as emerging priority areas for the Administration. Nominees should have extensive background in the prevention, control, and eradication of invasive species. Additional

information regarding the required application materials are included in the full Federal Register notice. The deadline for submissions is February 26.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The full Federal Register notice requesting nominations for new members of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/12/27/2017-27829/invasive-species-advisory-committee-request-for-nominations>.
- More information about the Invasive Species Advisory Committee is available at <https://www.doi.gov/invasivespecies/about-isac>.

---

***USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Seeks Applications for Conservation Innovation Grant***

On December 18, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a request for applications (RFA) for the Conservation Innovation Grants program, seeking proposals for innovative conservation technologies in three focus areas: grazing lands, organic systems, and soil health.

The long-term objective of the program, which is managed by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is to improve the productivity and resilience of farms and ranches while conserving natural resources. NRCS anticipates distributing \$10 million for approximately five to seven awards. Individual award amounts may be for up to \$2 million with a program period of one to three years. The submission deadline for full proposals is February 26.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- A press release announcing the RFA is available at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1370829>.
- Additional details about the solicitation are available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=299499>.

---

***EPA Moves to Replace Obama-era Climate Rule***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) soliciting public comment on the repeal of the Obama-era Clean Power Plan and input on what a replacement rule should look like. The notice follows an October announcement by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt about the Agency's plans to rescind the Clean Power Plan, which was a key Obama Administration initiative that was never fully implemented due to litigation.

EPA has already signaled that any replacement rules would only require existing coal and natural gas plants to improve efficiency. This is contrary to the Clean Power Plan, which was predicated on the ability of plant operators to switch entirely from coal to cleaner energy sources. Attorneys generals from Democratic-controlled states and environmental groups are expected to challenge these changes through legal action.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The full ANPRM is available at [https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/12/18/document\\_cw\\_01.pdf](https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/12/18/document_cw_01.pdf).

---

***NSF Releases Dear Colleague Letter for Rules of Life Forecasting and Emergence in Living Systems Program***

On December 11, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released a Dear Colleague Letter for the Rules of Life Forecasting and Emergence in Living Systems (FELS) program. The letter is the most recent attempt to refine one of NSF's Big Ideas for Future Investments: "Understanding the Rules of Life: Predicting Phenotype." Led by the Biological Sciences Directorate, FELS will focus on novel, interdisciplinary approaches to identify "general principles or theoretical constructs that explain and predict the characteristics of living systems." The broad objective of this program is to deepen understanding of the interactions between organisms at all levels. Depending on the funding mechanism, proposal deadlines range from February to June.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The full Dear Colleague Letter is available at <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18031/nsf18031.jsp>.



###

Click [here](#) to unsubscribe

Entomological Society of America (ESA), 3 Park Place, Suite 307, Annapolis, MD 21401-3722 USA  
(1)-301-731-4535 [www.entsoc.org](http://www.entsoc.org)