

Federal Update September 15, 2006

Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Status

The U. S. Congress returned from its annual monthlong summer recess last week. Below is an update of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities active appropriations projects. Congress is required to complete the 12 annual appropriations (spending) bills by Sept. 30 and unfortunately often misses this deadline – as likely will be the case this year. House Majority Leader **John Boehner**, R – Ohio, has instructed members that they should expect to return to Washington following the November elections for a *lame duck* session, which easily could last until the end of December.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities FY2007 Appropriations Summary

| <u>Project</u> | FY 2007 House Committee | FY 2007 Senate Committee |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Baccalaureate Nursing | \$350,000 | |
| Biomedical Device Manufacturing | \$100,000 | |
| Engineering Technology, Bemidji State University | \$350,000 | |
| Minnesota Center for Renewable Energy | | \$2,000,000 |
| Center for Applied Biofuel Research | | \$2,500,000 |
| National Child Protection Training Center | | \$3,000,000 |
| Science Initiative St. Cloud | \$400,000 | |
| Veterans Re-Entry | | \$150,000 |
| Totals | \$1,200,000 | \$7,650,000 |

Earmarked Funding Continues to be Scrutinized

Scrutiny on lawmakers' home state projects has led to a reduced number of earmarked spending for local projects in the FY2007 spending bills. For example, the fiscal year 2007 Transportation-Treasury-HUD bill (H.R. 5576) includes nearly two-thirds fewer earmarks than fiscal year 2006, and the Defense bill (H.R. 56531) has a 50 percent reduction in the amount of earmarks compared with last year. The FY2007 Energy and Water spending bill (H.R. 5427) reduces by 16 percent the total amount of earmarks, almost \$200 million less than last year. Even the Labor-Health and Human Services bill (H.R. 5647), except last year when it was stripped of all projects, is down from previous years with earmarks comprising less than 1 percent of total discretionary spending for fiscal year 2007.

Labor-HHS-Education (H.R. 5647 / S. 3708)

The Labor-HHS- Education bill is the only bill yet to pass the House floor. The committee draft was approved June 13 and is awaiting a floor vote sometime in the next few weeks. The bill has become deadlocked in the House over several concerns, including language to raise the federal minimum wage and disagreements between moderates and conservatives. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its draft (S. 3708) of the largest of the fiscal 2007 spending bills on July 20. The Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill is often the toughest of the annual spending measures to clear. The non-profit Committee for Education Funding has compiled a comparison chart of FY2006 and FY2007 House and Senate funding bills, which can be viewed at http://www.aascu.org/policy/07_cefbudget.pdf .

Homeland Security Appropriation Bill Focuses on Preparedness, Recovery and Borders

Major amendments to the House bill include increasing fire grants by \$111 million, increasing rail and transit security grants by \$50 million, and increasing Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding by \$20 million. The bill also provides \$4.185 billion for enhancing port, container and cargo security against terrorists and criminals. Two major amendments to the Senate bill include a \$350 million amendment for border infrastructure and program integrity, and a \$648 million amendment for port security assessments, inspectors, equipment, aircraft, ships and grants. Funding for the Preparedness and Recovery is primarily for first responder grants and assistance including state and local assistance grants, law enforcement terrorism and prevention grants.

Minnesota State Fair Survey Results

During the Minnesota State Fair, fairgoers took part in a poll conducted by the House and Senate Public Information offices. The poll is an informal survey on a number of issues that have been discussed in prior legislative sessions that may possibly be legislative topics again in the future. You may view the results of the House poll at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/Fair/2006Results.pdf>. Senate results may be viewed at http://www.senate.mn/departments/secretary/info/statefair/2006/fair_survey.pdf