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APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

FY 2006 Outlook (President's Budget)

The President will submit his FY 2006 budget on February 7, 2005. President Bush remarked during his State of the Union speech that he will submit to Congress a budget that holds the growth of discretionary spending below the rate of inflation. The President also said that he intends to cut the deficit in half by 2009.

Outlook for NIH & NSF Funding

We continue to expect that the President will propose an increase of between one and two percent for NIH and to virtually freeze funding at NSF.

Budget Committees' Position

The Chairmen of the Senate (Judd Gregg R-NH) and House (Jim Nussle R-IA) Budget Committees continue to indicate that they strongly support the President's effort to reign in domestic discretionary spending and plan to put forward a budget resolution that will not exceed the total amount of funding the President is providing for discretionary spending.

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REORGANIZATION OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

The plan by leaders of the House of Representatives to reorganize the Appropriations Subcommittees has been met by strong resistance among Senate subcommittee Chairs.

House Proposal

The House proposal introduced by House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) would result in the most radical restructuring of the Appropriations Committee in decades. His proposal would eliminate three subcommittees (Veterans Administration/Housing and Urban Development (VA/HUD), Legislative Branch and the District of Columbia). Under Lewis' plan, NSF and NASA would be funded as part of the Energy and Water spending bill (currently, the agencies are part of the VA/HUD subcommittee).

Senate's Reaction

While Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-MS) initially voiced apprehension to the idea to reorganize, he recently began to show some support for the House proposal. However, after meeting with the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs, Senator Cochran has asked the House leaders to revisit and more fully negotiate the House-proposed reorganization. Senator Specter (R-PA) has said the House plan poses a quite number of problems. The current Chairman of the VA/HUD subcommittee, Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), responded that he is very concerned with the plan and is not clear why it is necessary to make such radical changes.

Outlook

It appears that final decisions on restructuring the Appropriations panel will not be made until next week at the earliest. Therefore, until the restructuring proposal is adopted by the House and Senate, we will not know who will chair the committees that have jurisdiction over the agencies that FASEB tracks.

If this plan, or anything resembling it, is agreed to, a power struggle for control of the remaining ten or so subcommittees could ensue. We expect that House L/HHS Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH) will continue to have responsibility for the NIH. We hope that Senator Arlen Specter remains as Chairman of the Senate L/HHS Committee. However, if the restructuring plan is adopted, Senator Specter could use his seniority to move to another committee, such as the Foreign Operations committee (Senator Specter previously has expressed some interest in this committee). The good news is that we no longer have to worry about Senator Specter leaving for the Intelligence Subcommittee because both Senate and House leaders remain opposed to creating it. Unfortunately, we now may have to be concerned with Senator Specter leaving for another, already established subcommittee.

If the House plan is adopted it could be positive for NSF because it would provide the agency (and us) with an opportunity to educate and cultivate new champions among the Members of the Energy and Water Subcommittee. The fact that NSF's budget was cut by two percent in FY 2005 raises strong concerns about how committed VA/HUD subcommittee members are to NSF.

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INSIDE (the Beltway) SCOOP – Jon Retzlaff, Legislative Director

The Message to Capitol Hill:

A common theme that the biomedical research community is hearing (over and over again) on Capitol Hill is that NIH's budget has been doubled and therefore it does not need to receive additional increases for some time. In addition, the conflict of interest situation at the NIH is being cited as an example of what can happen to an agency when it grows too fast. The conflict of interest issue is likely to be used as ammunition by "deficit hawks" to justify providing NIH with a below inflationary increase for FY 2006.

In order to counteract this environment, we will stress to Members of Congress and their staff that the work of the NIH has never been more promising or more important. As the President himself said in this week's State of the Union "Medical research can help us...by developing treatments and cures that save lives and help people overcome disabilities." FASEB's FY 2006 Federal Funding Report provides excellent information and the necessary justification for increasing NIH funding as well as for increasing funding at the NSF, USDA, DOE, VA, and NASA. We will provide this document to Congressional Members and staff during our visits. It is also available on our website at: <http://www.faseb.org/opa/fund2006/fedfund2006.pdf>

Involving FASEB Member Societies:

We are also asking for help from the FASEB Member Societies to identify researchers in key Congressional Members' States and districts for possible visits to Capitol Hill. For example, Paul Kincade, FASEB's President, and two FASEB Board Members, Drs. James Rose (SGI) and Mark Lively (ABRF), who also are distinguished researchers at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, are scheduled to visit with Senator Richard Burr's (R-NC) staff and Senator Elizabeth Dole's (R-NC) staff on February 16th. The responsiveness of Members and their staff greatly increase when a constituent is involved in a conversation or meeting.

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ADDITIONAL FASEB ACTIVITIES

FASEB Meeting With Office of Congressman Charlie Bass (R-NH)

On January 28th, Gary Kline, FASEB Legislative Analyst; Dr. Carrie Wolinetz, FASEB Associate Director for Communications; Chris Rorick, Government Relations Manager of The Endocrine Society; and Ellen Weiss, Public Affairs Coordinator for the Biophysical Society met with Alissa Southworth, Senior Legislative Assistant for Congressman Charlie Bass (R-NH). Congressman Bass is the Co-Chair of the Tuesday Group, a

collection of moderate House Republicans who meet once a month to discuss various issues. Press releases on Congressman Bass's election to the Tuesday Group indicated that they are interested in pro-science legislation and stem cell research.

According to Ms. Southworth, expanding the number of stem cell lines available for federal research is a primary agenda item for the Tuesday Group. In addition to Representative Michael Castle (R-DE), a member of the Tuesday Group, sponsoring a bill, they may also try to attach a pro-stem cell amendment to the upcoming NIH reauthorization bill. Ms. Southworth indicated that she would like to gain a better understanding of the science on this issue and asked for our help in keeping her updated on any issues regarding stem cell research that may arise.

The FASEB group provided Ms. Southworth with a copy of the FY 2006 FASEB funding report and presented science funding as an issue that the Tuesday Group should consider focusing on. Although the Tuesday Group is committed to cutting the deficit, and it is unlikely that they will focus on increasing science spending, she did offer FASEB the opportunity to present a memo on the topics we feel the group should consider.

FASEB Meeting with Congressman Charlie Dent's Office (R-PA)

On February 2, Gary Kline, FASEB Legislative Analyst; Dr. Andrea Stith, FASEB Science Policy Analyst; Pete Farnham, ASBMB Public Affairs Director and Dr. Rebecca Osthus, APS Science Policy Analyst, met with Ms. Laura Stevens, Senior Legislative Assistant to Congressman Charlie Dent (R-PA). This meeting was set up as part of the FASEB "New Members Initiative," which is designed to introduce freshman legislators to FASEB member societies and issues that are important to their constituents.

Ms. Stevens, who was a former staff member for science supporter and former Member of Congress James Greenwood (R-PA), indicated that Congressman Dent would appreciate any information we could provide him on the issue of stem cell research. Stevens, was also interested to learn our position on the proposed changes to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee and its effects on NIH. The group told Ms. Stevens that the proposed changes would not affect NIH, however they discussed the possible effects on NSF. FASEB presented Ms. Stevens with a copy of the FY 2006 funding report and indicated how important science funding was to Mr. Dent's district and the country. Ms. Stevens said she appreciated our visit and would like to have FASEB as a science resource.

FASEB Meeting With Congressman Bobby Jindal's Office (R-LA)

On February 2, Gary Kline, FASEB Legislative Analyst; Dr. Andrea Stith, FASEB Science Policy Analyst; Peter Farnham, ASBMB Public Affairs Director and Dr. Rebecca Osthus, APS Science Policy Analyst, met with Mr. Zachary Rimmele, Legislative Correspondent for Congressman Bobby Jindal (R-LA).

Mr. Rimmele indicated that Congressman Jindal was interested in ways to reduce cost of health care and find preventative solutions to long term health needs. Pete Farnham indicated that this is also a priority for the scientific community that we represent. Mr. Rimmele thanked us for this information and our visit and indicated that he would share information with the Congressman as health care is of significant interest to him. We presented the staffer with a copy of the FY 2006 FASEB funding report and other FASEB publications.

Future FASEB Activities: Paul Kincade will be back in town the week of February 14th. Numerous meetings with Congressional budget staff will be scheduled to discuss the President's proposals and to convey the message that science funding should be a priority.

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FLOOR ACTION

HHS Secretary Leavitt Confirmed: On January 26, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Michael Leavitt to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services by voice vote.

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BILLS, BILLS, BILLS

S. 3 – On January 24, Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), introduced S. 3, the Protecting America in the War on Terror Act of 2005. NIH-related provisions in Title 1, the Biopreparedness Act of 2005, would require the Secretary of HHS, in coordination with the Directors of NIAID and CDC, to establish and award grants for the study of physiological responses of certain animal species to bioterrorism agents and other infectious agents. Other provisions would expand the definition of countermeasures covered by the Project BioShield Act of 2004; enhance the availability of private and international sector financing for procurement or development of qualified countermeasures; provide patent incentives and protections for countermeasures and vaccine research; provide liability protections; and require the Secretary to establish a Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program. S. 3 was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance. We will be monitoring the legislation to see whether it moves through committee. We will keep you updated on any developments.

S. 37 – On January 24, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced S. 37 to extend the breast cancer stamp program for two years. Seventy percent of the funds generated by the sale of the stamps are directed to NIH; the remaining amounts go to the Department of Defense. The program was extended to December 31, 2005 under Sec. 541 of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of FY 2004 (P.L. 108-199). The bill was referred to the

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs. We will be monitoring the legislation to see whether it moves through committee and keep you updated on any developments.

S. 174 – On January 26, Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) introduced S. 174, the Children’s Compassionate Care Act of 2005, to improve the palliative and end-of-life care provided to children with life-threatening illnesses. The bill would require the Director of NIH to provide translational research grants to fund research in pediatric pain and symptom management. These grants would be made using existing networks, including the pediatric pharmacological research units and the general clinical research centers (GCRC’s). The bill also specifies the types of entities that would be eligible for such grants, including children’s hospitals, hospices serving children, and pediatric departments of medical schools. S. 174 was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). We will be monitoring the legislation to see whether it moves through committee. We will keep you updated on any developments.

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE & UPCOMING EVENTS

Both the House and Senate reconvened on January 25.

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FASEB’s Washington Update is brought to you bi-monthly by the FASEB Office of Public Affairs. We welcome your questions and comments – please contact Gary Kline, Legislative Analyst at gkline@faseb.org or (202) 543-1155. It also available online at: <http://www.faseb.org/opa/washington/> For more information about how to get involved in research advocacy, visit: <http://capwiz.com/faseb/home/>