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OFFICE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY (OSTP)

On February 7th, President Bush's Science Advisor Dr. John Marburger held a briefing to speak about President Bush's FY 2006 budget as it relates to science and technology.

Dr. Marburger indicated that this year's budget reflected the priorities of the Bush Administration: war on terror, homeland defense and growing the economy while adhering to fiscal restraint in the growing deficit. Marburger stated that while this budget was tough, it did show that the President respects science. In the President's 2006 budget, total federal R&D investment is \$132.3 billion, an increase of \$733 million of FY 2005's record R&D budget and a 45% increase compared to 2001's \$91.3 billion. He said that Bush's 2006 budget commits 13.6 percent of total discretionary outlays to R&D—the highest level in 37 years. Marburger suggested that not since 1968 and the Apollo program have we seen an investment in science of this magnitude. The full report from today's briefing can be found here: <http://www.ostp.gov/html/budget.html>

Below, please find a detailed analysis of FY 2006 budgets for agencies and programs of interest to FASEB society members.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

Summary of the NIH FY 2006 Budget:

President Bush is proposing to increase NIH's budget by 0.7 percent over the FY 2005 Appropriation. However, \$97.1 million of the NIH budget in FY 2006 is set aside for research in radiological/nuclear/chemical countermeasures (note that this money will be transferred to the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund). Therefore, the

“real” increase is closer to 0.5 percent. NIH is forecasting an increase in the number of *competing* RPGs (Research Project Grants) by 247 over FY 2005, although the total number of RPGs will decline by 402 in FY 2006. For more information:

<http://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/ui/2006Budget.htm>

Highlights from NIH Budget Briefing:

Yesterday afternoon, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, NIH Director, held a briefing to discuss the FY 2006 NIH budget. Dr. Zerhouni said that the small increase for NIH reflects the reality of competing national priorities, including the war in Iraq and growing deficits. He stated that the President’s request for NIH is actually an improvement over the initial proposal from the Office of Management and Budget.

RPG’s: No inflationary increases will be provided for non-competing Research Project Grants (RPG’s). However, where NIH has committed to a programmatic increase in an award, such increases will be provided.

Research Training: Stipends will increase by four percent for post-docs with 1-2 years of experience. Individual post-doctoral fellows will receive an increase of \$500 in their institutional allowance for rising health benefit costs. The increases in stipends and health benefits are financed within the FY 2006 request by reducing the number of Full-Time Training Positions.

Success Rates: NIH is projecting its success rate to be 22 percent in 2005 and 21 percent in 2006. In 2003, the success rate was 30 percent and in 2004, it was 25 percent.

Finally, in response to a question regarding what concerns him most about the proposed budget, Dr. Zerhouni responded that he is especially worried about the young and new investigators and specifically, the possibility that NIH will lose them forever.

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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF)

The President requested a \$132 million (2.4%) increase for the National Science Foundation with a proposed budget of \$5.602 billion in FY 2006. If Congress appropriates at the President’s requested level, the FY 2006 budget will still be less than the \$5.652 billion that Congress appropriated in FY 2004. A portion of this increase will be absorbed by NSF taking over the funding of ice breaking activities from the U.S. Coast Guard in polar regions. The budget request for the Directorate for Biological Sciences was a 0.9% increase over the FY 2005 appropriation. More details on the NSF budget can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/about/budget/fy2006/>.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

In FY2006, \$393 million is requested for indirect costs of the VA Research and Development Program, \$9 million less than the \$402 appropriated for FY2005. This comes out of the total Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation request of \$786 million for FY2006.

See the VA FY 2006 Budget Submission at <http://www.va.gov/budget/summary/index.htm>

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

The National Research Initiative (NRI) competitive grants program fared quite well in the President's budget, with a proposed funding level of \$250 million, a \$70 million increase over FY 2005. In addition, the budget calls for an elimination of the indirect cost caps on USDA research, in order to make it competitive with other federal research agencies. This is a change FASEB has advocated in its funding report for some time. Higher education programs also received a slight boost, up \$6 million from FY05 to \$35 million, plus a new higher education program targeted towards agrosecurity, with an initial budgetary allocation of \$5 million.

Finally, the FY06 budget proposes moving \$75 million from formula funds, which are granted on a non-competing basis, to a new competitive, peer-reviewed local, state and regional granting program. Justifying this change, the budget states, "It is important that these funds be used as effectively as possible. For that reason, the Administration supports research funding that is provided on a competitive, peer-reviewed basis, to ensure that the Government funds only the highest quality research targeted primarily toward national concerns." (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/agriculture.html>) It seems that these grants will go to land grant universities, rather than individual investigators, based on remarks made at the Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP) briefing, but the budget itself is short on details. It is not unusual for the President's budget to be more supportive of the USDA's competitive research programs than the final Congressional appropriation – it remains to be seen whether the higher levels will be granted by Congress. For more detailed information: <http://www.usda.gov/agency/obpa/Budget-Summary/2006/12.REE.htm>

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE)

The President requested a budget of \$3.46 billion for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science in FY 2006. This is a decrease of nearly \$137 million (3.8%) from the FY 2005 appropriation. When the FY 2005 funding for one time projects is excluded, the decrease in DOE funding is 1.6%. The FY 2006 budget for the division of Biological and Environmental Research (BER) is \$456 million. The decrease in this division's budget is entirely due to the funding of one-time projects in FY 2005. The proposed funding level of \$1.15 billion for Basic Energy Sciences (BES) is an increase of \$41 million over last year. Details of the DOE's Office of Science can be found at:

<http://www.mbe.doe.gov/budget/06budget/Start.pdf>. A presentation by Dr. Raymond Orbach, Director of the Office of Science on the FY 2006 budget is available at http://www.er.doe.gov/Sub/speeches/Presentations/Press_and_Stakeholder_FY%2006.pdf.

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NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

Under the FY 2006 budget proposed by President Bush, NASA would get \$16.456 billion, an increase of 2.4% over FY 2005 levels.

As part of the reorganization of NASA, the former Office of Biological and Physical Research (OBPR) has been moved into a new directorate named the Exploration Systems

Directorate (ESMD) and renamed under a new theme: Human Systems Research and Technology. According to the agency, The Human Systems Research and Technology (HSR&T) theme is new to ESMD and is comprised of several of the efforts of the former Biological and Physical Research Enterprise (BPRES). The programs of BPRES have been transformed from a discipline focus on biological and physical research, to a requirements-driven product-delivery focus. The Theme now focuses on ensuring the health, safety, and security of humans through the course of solar system exploration. For FY 2006, the President's budget recommends \$806.4 million for HSR&T; a \$197.5 million (or 20 percent) decrease from the FY 2005 budget.

Detailed information on the NASA budget can be found online here:

<http://www.nasa.gov/about/budget/index.html>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [FASEB Statement on NIH & NSF FY 06 Budget](#)
- [House Science Committee Democrats on FY06 Budget](#)
- [House Science Committee Chair Boehlert \(R-NY\) on FY06 Budget](#)
- [Senator Arlen Specter \(R-PA\) Op-Ed](#) Senator Specter has decided to remain as Chair of the L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee. Senator Specter wrote, "The President's budget puts at risk critical funding for the National Institutes of Health and other important priorities of the subcommittee. Fiscal year 2006 looks like an especially tough year, so I've decided to stay and fight rather than switch." (Washington Post, free registration)

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