



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Analysis of the House and Senate FY 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills | May 29, 2018

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have approved their fiscal year (FY) 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills. This bill contains funding for the two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) statistical agencies, the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), as well as the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which funds competitive research projects. The House bill (H.R. 5961) was approved by the subcommittee on May 9 and by the full committee on May 16. The Senate version of the bill, which does not yet have a bill number, was passed by the subcommittee on May 22 and by the full committee on May 24.

At a Glance...

- **Both the House and Senate bills would maintain flat funding for ERS at \$86.8 million**, rejecting the nearly 50 percent cut proposed in the President's request.
- **Both the House and Senate propose decreases for the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** as it ramps down from the 2017 Census of Agriculture; the House proposal of \$173.7 million is \$1.1 million below the Senate's proposed \$174.8 million. However, both levels are higher than the amount proposed in the President's request.
- **The House bill would provide \$1.45 billion for NIFA, which is 2.8 percent above FY 2018. The Senate bill includes \$1.42 billion, an increase of 1.1 percent.** Both chambers propose increases for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, with the House proposing a larger increase than the Senate.

The next step for both bills is consideration by their respective chambers. Both the House and Senate leadership have expressed a commitment to trying to pass at least some of the FY 2019 appropriations bills before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1. However, with August recess and the peak of campaign season quickly approaching, it remains to be seen which bills will be passed and when.

Summarized below are the House and Senate Appropriations Committees' proposals for the Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Text of the bills, Committees' full reports, and webcasts of the markups can be found on the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Committees' websites.

Check COSSA's [funding updates](#) page for COSSA's analysis of the President's FY 2019 budget and the latest on FY 2019 funding for agencies important to social and behavioral science.

Economic Research Service & National Agricultural Statistics Service

Both chambers propose relatively stable funding for USDA’s two statistical agencies. **The House and Senate bills would both maintain flat funding for Economic Research Service (ERS) at \$86.8 million**, a welcome show of support for the agency in light of the President’s proposed cut of nearly 50 percent. In addition, the House Committee report specifically notes that the “Committee does not concur with the request to significantly eliminate ERS’ research activities.” **Both the House and Senate propose decreases for the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** as it ramps down from the 2017 Census of Agriculture; the House proposal of \$173.7 million is \$1.1 million below the Senate’s proposed \$174.8 million. However, both levels are higher than the amount proposed by the President. The amounts proposed for the Census of Agriculture are about the same among the House, Senate, and Administration’s request, so the difference in funding would come from NASS’ Agricultural Estimates.

The accompanying reports from both Committees include several provisions repeating requests from previous years, including requesting that ERS study the economic benefits of breastfeeding (in both reports). The House report also carries forward language from its FY 2018 report that encourages ERS to support evidence-based policymaking:

“Evidence-Based Policymaking.—As part of the bipartisan effort to improve government capacity for evidence-based policymaking, the Committee encourages ERS to explore ways to assist rural communities in using data and evidence to address local challenges. In particular, ERS should examine ways in which local governments in rural communities could access the research and data expertise of public land-grant universities to help communities address local needs and priorities.”

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Of the two chambers, the House proposes the higher allocation for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at \$1.45 billion, an increase of \$38.8 million above FY 2019 and \$188.9 million (15 percent) above the Administration’s request. The Senate’s proposal of \$1.42 billion is \$23.4 million below the House’s, though still \$165.5 million more than the amount in the Administration’s budget. Both chambers propose increases for the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), with the House proposing a \$15 million increase compared to the Senate’s \$5 million.

	Enacted FY 2018	Request FY 2019	House FY 2019	House vs. FY 2018	Senate FY 2019	Senate vs. FY 2018	House vs. Senate
Economic Research Service	86.8	45.0	86.8	0.0%	86.8	0.0%	0.0%
National Agricultural Statistics Service	191.7	165.0	173.7	-9.4%	174.8	-8.8%	-0.6%
Census of Agriculture	63.4	45.3	45.4	-28.4%	45.3	-28.5%	0.1%
National Institute of Food and Agriculture	1407.8	1257.7	1446.6	2.8%	1423.2	1.1%	1.6%
Hatch Act	243.7	243.2	259.0	6.3%	243.7	0.0%	6.3%
Agricultural and Food Research Initiative	400.0	375.0	415.0	3.8%	405.0	1.3%	2.5%

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