Communicating Science in a Changing Political Climate

Presentation to UCAR Member Representatives
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State of Play

- Update on FY 2011 Appropriations and UCAR’s Legislative Priorities
- The Mid-Term Election and Its Impact on UCAR’s Advocacy Agenda
- Communicating with Policymakers in a Shifting Political Landscape
Status of FY 2011 Appropriations

- Drawn out process persists despite Presidential and Congressional support for science.
- House and Senate discretionary spending caps well below President’s request – stage set for tough conference negotiations.
- No floor action yet on any FY 2011 bills (not even Defense or Homeland Security).
- CR through December 3, perhaps longer – stay vigilant as 112th Congress is seated.
- Potential omnibus to complete bills; fate of appropriations in the hands of the election.
FY 2011 Science Funding

- **NSF** would receive President’s request in House bill (7.2% over FY10) which is consistent with 10 year doubling path, nearly that in Senate bill (6.2%).

- Unexpected cuts to **DOE** – Office of Science flat in House bill and 2.2% increase in Senate bill. Both below President’s request.

- **NASA** science programs do well in House and Senate bills receiving the request.

- **NOAA** would receive the request in House and Senate – 17% increase slated for satellite programs.

- But are cuts looming?
Other UCAR Legislative Priorities

- Senate fails to generate consensus on climate and energy bill.
- NOAA Organic Act sees no action and champion is retiring.
- America COMPETES Act reauthorization stalled.
- No appetite for hurricane research or other weather research related legislation.
- Oil spill/RES bill could see floor time in lame duck.
- Cap and trade may be dead (for now), but adaptation still has legs at the agencies.
# Federal Agency Adaptation Initiatives

| **NOAA** | • NAPA report released  
| • Comments solicited on Vision & Strategic Framework  
| • National Climate Adaptation Summit Report released  
| • NOAA/DOI MOU; seeking ways to engage DOT and USDA  
| • NOAA hires 6 regional climate service directors  
| • Developing new vision for OAR |
| **DOI** | • Secretarial order  
| • NOAA/DOI MOU  
| • Awarded 2 Climate Science Centers |
| **NSF** | • SEES/Climate Research Investment /Climate change education |
| **HHS** | • NOAA/CDC workshop on climate and public health  
| • NIH exploring human health impacts of climate change |
| **OSTP** | • Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force report pending  
| • USGCRP Strategic Planning – focus on adaptation |
Impacts of the Midterm Elections

- Very different 112th Congress, regardless of who is in power - almost guaranteed political gridlock.

- Key retirements, Committee leadership changes - education will be critical.

- Competing lame duck priorities – FY 2011 omnibus approps, tax cut extenders, Defense authorization, food safety measures, Fiscal Commission, 112th Congress committee assignments...

- Likely turnover in the Obama Administration – focus shift to reelection.

- What is the role of the UCAR community?
Communicating Science to Policymakers

- Election will force introduction of UCAR priorities to new Congress and Administration officials.
  - Congress may be less focused on climate/weather/science issues.
  - Develop new champions – e.g. House S&T Committee will be brand new; UCAR community can play a major role in educating new members and influencing committee agenda.
Communicating Science to Policymakers (continued)

- Critical to communicate importance of issue to a Member’s individual state or district
  - Expanded focus on local and regional impacts.

- Emphasize how science can contribute to the national good.
  - Importance of science to informing sound policy decisions.
  - Economy and long term investments/payoffs

- Science central to future U.S. global competitiveness.
Congratulations UCAR and NCAR!
Discussion
And... Agencies Continue to Make Progress on Obama Priorities

| **NASA** | Earth Science investments  
|          | Transition away from human space flight  
|          | Earth systems observations  
|          | Accelerating decadal |
| **DOE**  | Funding for clean energy technologies  
|          | Emphasis on scaling-up new technologies  
|          | Promotion of clean energy economy  
|          | Modeling and simulation (CCS; engine technologies; nuclear reactors; climate change.) |
| **USDA** | Increase in competitive research  
|          | Focus on food security  
|          | Across the board elevation as science agency  
|          | Applications of agricultural science (bioenergy, climate change, nutrition) |
Difficult Budgetary Environment – But Science Remains a Priority

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Amounts in billions

* Does not include ARRA investments
STEM Education

- STEM Education is a priority of Congress and the Administration
  - Congress – COMPETES Reauthorization
  - President Obama – Educate to Innovate and Change the Equation
    - Leverage funding and efforts of outside groups
- New PCAST report Calls for Large Investment in K-12 STEM Education
  - Support for state-led common science standards; teacher preparation programs that emphasize STEM content knowledge (ex UTeach); informal science education; and 1,000 new STEM-focused schools
  - Create an advanced research projects agency for education to develop innovative technologies for teaching and assessment
  - Low likelihood of implementation
America COMPETES Act
Reauthorization

- 5 year reauthorizations (House) versus 3 year reauthorizations (Senate) for NSF, DOE Office of Science, and NIST; continue budget doubling

- Themes: innovation and entrepreneurship; development of the STEM workforce; interdisciplinary research and education; and research in support of tackling national needs
  - Similar themes, but Senate bill much less expansive than House bill

- Timing:
  - House – Passed in May
  - Senate – NSF language passed committee in July; DOE text being drafted; possible vote during lame duck session