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In our last Washington Update of January 31, we included information on the GRANT Act (H.R. 3433), a bill that is pending before the full House of Representatives that has stirred up some concern in the community regarding its intention to provide more transparency in the federal grant-making process by requiring all federal agencies to publicize the selection procedures for each grant program. While transparency is critically important, the bill as currently written has the potential to undermine the peer-review process. Specifically, the provision requiring the posting of funded proposals in their entirety online is especially troublesome as it could have implications for intellectual property.

The attached letter, sponsored by the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) of which UCAR is a member, outlines objections to the bill and will be forwarded to the bill's sponsor, Representative Lankford of Oklahoma. CNSF is asking institutions that want to sign onto the letter to contact Sam Rankin smr@ams.org by Wednesday, February 8. If you would like your institution to sign on, please contact your government affairs staff asap.

UCAR Government Affairs staff is working with Congressional staff to improve the legislation. Specifically, our Washington office, Lewis-Burke Associates, has been working with staff on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to work out the troublesome
provisions. UCAR as an organization has not signed the community letter as discussions with staff on improving the bill are ongoing; however, if your institution is interested in signing on, you are encouraged to contact your university government affairs officials by Wednesday, February 8.

**NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation Initiative Launches Pilot in Louisiana**

In late 2011, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced its new "Weather-Ready Nation" initiative that will not only improve weather forecasts, but also improve the dissemination and communication of those forecasts to ensure people heed necessary warnings. As part of this effort, the National Weather Service's Baton Rouge/New Orleans office has launched a pilot 24/7 emergency response desk that will be staffed by a team of meteorologists and hydrologists. According to a press release, these scientists "will provide forecasts, warnings, and timely decision support services during high-impact weather and other disasters."


**Career Opportunity: Apply for an AMS-UCAR Congressional Science Fellowship - Applications Due March 15, 2012**

Every year, AMS and UCAR send one member of the atmospheric sciences community to Washington, D.C. to work for a member of Congress or a congressional committee. The program involves spending a full year in Congress working on science policy issues. We encourage you to consider applying or forwarding this along to others in your circle who may be interested.

This year the fellowship term runs from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013. As always, each fellow is free to choose from a wide variety of positions within Congress. She or he will spend the year on Capitol Hill with over 30 fellows from other professional societies.

Applicants must have a Ph.D. or equivalent in the atmospheric or related sciences, be a member of AMS (or applying), be a U.S. citizen, and be comfortable working with people from diverse professional backgrounds and under demanding deadlines. Federal employees are not eligible. Past AMS-UCAR fellows include Michael Morgan (currently Director of the AGS Division at NSF), Ana Unruh-Cohen (currently Deputy Chief of Staff of the House Natural Resources Committee), and Kevin Rennert (currently Professional Staff with the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee).

For more details or to apply, click here [http://www.ametsoc.org/atmospolicy/congressionalfellow.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/atmospolicy/congressionalfellow.html)
Funding Opportunity: Decadal and Regional Climate Prediction at NSF - Proposals Due May 11, 2012

The NSF, in conjunction with the DOE and USDA, requests proposals for decadal and regional climate prediction using Earth system models. This is the second solicitation for this program; however, unlike the first solicitation, this one will "not consider proposals for incubator or pilot project initiatives." Instead, proposals should place greater emphasis on "predictability studies, extreme events, prediction and attribution, upscaling/downscaling, interactions between natural and human systems, and research on metrics, methods, and tools for testing, evaluating, and validating climate and climate impact predictions and their uncertainty characterization."

Letters of Intent: Not applicable.

Application Deadline: Full proposals are due May 11, 2012.

Total Funding and Award Size: The agencies hope to make seven to 12 awards, each in the range of $300,000 to $1 million per year. Furthermore, they hope to award a total of $35-$39 million in fiscal year (FY) 2012 and FY 2013.

Eligibility and Limitations: Institutions of higher education, non-profit non-academic organizations, for-profit organizations (such as small businesses), and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) are eligible to apply.


Department of Commerce Report: The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States

On January 6, the Department of Commerce released “The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States,” a report which examines the effectiveness of research and development policy, tax policy, the general business climate in the US, regional issues such as the role of state and local government in higher education, barriers to new business, trade issues, science and technology education, and the state of the manufacturing sector. The report acknowledges a series of alarms on the subject of American competitiveness and calls for the U.S. to increase investment in basic research, education, and infrastructure.

The America COMPETES Act of 2010, which President Obama signed into law at the beginning of last year, requires a regular report from the Commerce Department on U.S. economic competitiveness and innovative capacity.

The full report is available here http://www.commerce.gov/americacompetes
NSF Report: Science and Engineering Indicators 2012

On January 17, the National Science Board (NSB) released Science and Engineering Indicators, a biannual publication on the status of the science, engineering and technology workforce, education efforts and economic activity in the U.S. and abroad. Of note this year, the report highlights that while "the U.S. remains the global leader in supporting science and technology (S&T) research and development, it is only by a slim margin and could soon be overtaken by rapidly increasing Asian investments in knowledge-intensive economies."

According to Science and Engineering Indicators 2012, the largest global S&T gains occurred in the so-called "Asia-10"--China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand--as those countries integrate S&T into economic growth. Between 1999 and 2009, for example, the U.S. share of global research and development (R&D) dropped from 38 percent to 31 percent, whereas it grew from 24 percent to 35 percent in the Asia region during the same time. In China alone, R&D growth increased a stunning 28 percent in a single year (2008-2009), propelling it past Japan and into second place behind the United States.

For a table of contents and the full report, click here

NAS Report: The National Weather Service Modernization and Associated Restructuring: A Retrospective Assessment

On February 6, the National Academies of Sciences released its long awaited report on the Modernization and Associated Restructuring (MAR) of the National Weather Service (NWS), which was a large and complex re-engineering of a federal agency.

The MAR process lasted a decade and cost an estimated $4.5 billion. The result was greater integration of science into weather service activities and improved outreach and coordination with users of weather information. The MAR created a new, modernized NWS, and, significantly, it created a framework that will allow the NWS to keep up with technological changes in a more evolutionary manner.

The National Weather Service Modernization and Associated Restructuring presents the first comprehensive assessment of the execution of the MAR and its impact on the provision of weather services in the U.S. This report provides an assessment that addresses the past modernization as well as lessons learned to support future improvements to NWS capabilities.

To read the report for free online, click here
UCAR Report: A U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Plan

A UCAR Carbon Cycle Science Working Group produced his 2011 report, titled *A U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Plan*, and supported by NASA, DOE, USDA, USGS, NOAA, NSF, and NIST. You can find the full report here