



Science Policy Committee (SPC) American Society of Plant Biologists

Committee Meeting, March 26, 2024, 11:00 AM EST

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://lewis-burke.zoom.us/j/82098703458?pwd=azBZUINiNW5UZmtnKzJNQjBxcUZDQT09>

Invited Participants:

SPC Chair: Tessa Burch-Smith

SPC Members in attendance: Simon Gilroy, Pradeep Kachroo, Robert Stanley, Victoria Swiler, Georg Jander, Crispin Taylor

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC: Eve Granatosky, Joanna Ratigan, Dominique Foster

Agenda

1. Welcome from Tessa and Crispin
2. DC update
 - FY 2024 appropriations - Eve
 - FY 2024 appropriations have been finalized with President Biden signing the second “minibus” into law on Saturday afternoon. This year’s budget agreement was split into two separate packages. The first package included funding for USDA, NSF, EPA, and DOE. The second package included funding for the remaining agencies, including NIH and DOD.
 - Most agencies received flat funding or small cuts, except for DOE which received a slight increase for FY 2024. The two spending packages adhere to the funding caps in the *Fiscal Responsibility Act*. This includes \$886 billion for defense spending and \$773 billion for non-defense spending.
 - With budgets being set, we expect to see agencies start to send out solicitations to get the money out the door before the end of the fiscal year.
 - FY 2025 appropriations - Eve
 - On March 11, President Biden released his fourth budget proposal to Congress to fund federal agencies and programs for fiscal year (FY) 2025, which begins on October 1. Compared to prior years, the FY 2025 budget request is more modest and federal agencies would face constrained spending growth since the budget request mostly adheres to statutory spending caps put in place in the 2023 debt-limit law, the *Fiscal Responsibility Act*.
 - The President’s Budget Request highlighted Biden’s administration priorities like maternal and women health, climate change, mental health, and AI.
 - Offices will now change gears and start processing and reviewing FY 2025 requests. This process will start to take place during late spring and summer. However, the odds of Congress passing FY 2025 before the general election are very slim due to officials starting their campaigns and overall political tensions. This will most likely

lead to the passage of a Continuing Resolution that would provide funding until after the election.

- We had hoped to see a draft this month of the Farm Bill, but since Congress has just passed FY 2024 appropriations, we expect to see movement on this during late spring and summer.

3. National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology - Crispin

- Crispin was invited by Anastasia Bodnar to join a listening session hosted by the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) last Friday. The meeting participants discussed biotechnology regulation as a whole and how fundamental change of regulation might be needed to avoid impacts on projects. For more information please visit: [Home - Biotech \(senate.gov\)](#)
- NSCEB is seeking feedback and has proposed these questions:
 1. What are your primary concerns about current oversight for biotechnology products? For example, you might share information about the length or cost of different regulatory processes.
 2. How would you describe an ideal oversight system for biotechnology products? For example, you might share how products could enter the system; how reviews could occur and by whom; or the appropriate role, if any, for outside advisory panels.
 3. What are beneficial aspects of biotechnology oversight? For example, you might share what is successful about current oversight for biotechnology products, in the United States or in other countries.
 4. How can Federal agencies better prepare researchers and new companies to enter the regulatory system? For example, you might share how the Federal government could better connect oversight of biotechnology research (such as the NIH Guidelines for rDNA research) with oversight and regulation of biotechnology products.
 5. What additional infrastructure is needed to support biotechnology oversight? For example, you might share about specific standards, risk assessment research, or resources.
 6. Are there biotechnology products, current or future, which do not currently have a clear regulatory path in the United States? If yes, what are those products? What characteristics, if any, make them unique compared to products that currently do have a regulatory path?
 7. What are opportunities to improve harmonization or alignment between U.S. and other countries' biotechnology oversight? For example, you might describe relevant regional harmonization models or how countries could use international guidelines or standards (such as OECD Consensus Documents) to streamline regulation.
- Crispin is asking SPC members to submit add their comments no later than **April 1st**.
 - Eve has created a google document that members can add their thoughts to here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/16guebEID3HAtiDKyudCwsNclweFEm5BuA_rl99gho5Y/edit?usp=sharing

4. SPC Hill Meetings

- FY 2025 ASPB Priorities One-Pager - Tessa
 - Tessa shared the procedure and background on the purpose of a One-Pager in congressional meetings. ASPB bases its asks on a community consensus through community letters or Dear Colleague letters. Earlier in the week a past One-pager was shared with SPC members so, they have an example on what a One-pager looks

like. An updated One-pager will be sent out to SPC members before hill meetings begin. Typically, during a hill meeting, an LBA team member will send the congressional staffer a copy of the One-Pager and will use the One-Pager to get across major priorities to the congressional offices. Tessa noted that staffers will ask questions during congressional meetings.

- The LBA team will also be tracking outside witness testimony deadlines, but we expect them to be due around early to mid-May.
- SPC members should expect communication from LBA staff by the end of the week – please share availability for virtual Hill meetings when they reach out.

5. Update on agency speakers at future meetings - Eve

- Meeting with NSF: Susan Marqusee - Assistant Director, Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO). She plans to discuss plant science funding within BIO and how NSF BIO interacts with other Directorates on (5/28).
- Meeting with NIH- NIGMS (National Institute of General Medical Sciences): Dorit Zuk- She is the Deputy Director of NIGMS (10/22).
- LBA Team discussed reaching out to these potential agencies
 - EPA Research office
 - DOE, ARPA-E, NASA
 - USDA - Eve suggested reaching out to them later in the year since the NIFA Director (Manjit Misra) spoke to ASPB in the fall.

6. Reminder to register for Plant Bio 2024 - Tessa

- Tessa reminded committee members to register for the event. Registration is free and there are other perks if you use a special code – check with Tessa for details.
- SPC plans to host a workshop with local colleagues to lead a session at Plant Bio 2024. Originally, the plan was to invite a Congressional member to attend, Tessa is still waiting on confirmation if a member and their staff can come to Hawaii and attend the session.

7. Next meeting: April 30 at 11:00 AM

- Eve flagged NCFAR Lunch and Learn and Congressional meetings are scheduled for the same time as the next SPC meeting time. The group decided that we would reschedule the meeting.

8. Adjourn