

White House Budget Proposal Supports Science Agencies and Programs

The proposed federal budget for fiscal year (FY) 2014, which the Obama administration sent to Congress on 10 April, would provide overall strong support for federal science agencies in a tight budget environment. The proposal calls for \$142.8 billion for federal research and development (R&D), an increase of almost \$1.9 billion, or 1.3%, above the 2012 enacted level in current dollars. However, the proposed budget is a slight decrease when factoring in an expected 4% inflation between 2012 and 2014.

The budget “is a small decline, and it represents a continuing strong commitment from the president, from this administration, to avoid eating seed corn by protecting as much as we can of our research and development and STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] education investment,” said John Holdren, assistant to the president for science and technology. At a 10 April budget briefing, Holdren explained that all comparisons are relative to FY 2012 because the 2013 appropriations were enacted only at the end of March and that specific comparisons do not account for inflation. Holdren added, though, that if the 2013 budget continuing resolution were annualized, it would total \$142.9 billion. “The president’s 2014 proposal is almost identical to that: \$142.8 billion. Of course, there are many differences in detail,” he said.

The proposed FY 2014 budget would provide \$68.1 billion for federal basic and applied research investment, up 7.5% from \$63.4 billion. Nondefense R&D funding

would be \$69.6 billion, up 9.2% from \$63.8 billion. Defense R&D would be cut to \$73.2 billion, down 5.2% from \$77.2 billion, due to reductions in development activities as programs mature and transition to production.

The FY 2014 budget would provide increased funding for several science and technology agencies. The Department of Energy (DOE) would receive \$28.4 billion (up 8%), with \$5.2 billion (up 5.7%) for the agency’s Office of Science. The proposed DOE budget also would provide continued support for renewable energy while cutting \$4 billion in subsidies to the oil, gas, and coal industries.

NASA’s proposed budget of \$17.7 billion (down 0.3%) includes \$1.8 billion for Earth Science to revamp the Landsat program, to develop climate sensors for the Joint Polar Satellite System, and for other satellite and research efforts. The budget would also provide funding for, among other programs, the Space Launch System heavy-lift rocket and the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, development of a commercial crew capability, the James Webb Space Telescope, and the launch of another rover to Mars. NASA also would receive \$78 million for a mission to identify, capture, and relocate a small asteroid, which could prove useful if there were a need to move a hazardous asteroid in the future.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) would receive \$7.6 billion (up 8.4%), including \$6.2 billion (up 9.2%) for its research and related activities account, \$880 million (up 6.2%) for education and human

resources, and \$210 million (up 6.6%) for major research equipment and facilities construction.

The budget request for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is \$5.4 billion (up from \$4.9 billion); it includes \$733 million for the agency’s R&D budget, an increase of \$160 million. In addition, the total proposed investment in satellite acquisition for FY 2014 is about \$2 billion, according to NOAA acting administrator Kathryn Sullivan. She said the agency had worked hard to maintain a balance between NOAA’s research and operations and between oceanic and atmospheric programs.

The proposed federal budget would provide the Department of the Interior (DOI) with \$11.7 billion (up 4%), including funding to support responsible development of oil and gas resources. Within DOI, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) would receive \$1.2 billion, a \$98.8 million increase, including \$18.6 million to help minimize potential adverse impacts from shale gas development through hydraulic fracturing.

For cross-cutting programs, the FY 2014 proposal includes \$2.7 billion (up 6%) for the multi-agency U.S. Global Change Research Program. In addition, the budget would place the Department of Education at the center of a cross-agency reorganization of federal STEM programs to increase the impact of those education efforts.

The administration’s proposed FY 2014 budget is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Overview>. Look for additional detailed analysis of the proposed budget in future issues of *Eos*.

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