

ECA Update: October 27, 2015



In this update:

Two-Year Budget Agreement Reached

ECA Staff

Two-Year Budget Agreement Reached

On Monday evening, congressional leaders announced that they reached an agreement with the White House to suspend the debt limit and raise spending caps for the next two years. The agreement, unveiled in the [*Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015*](#), could be voted on as soon as Wednesday. It was negotiated between outgoing Speaker John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid.

The deal, which applies to fiscal years (FY) 2016 and 2017, raises discretionary spending levels by \$80 billion - \$50 billion in the first year and \$30 billion in the second – above sequestration caps. The increased spending authority will be split evenly between defense and non-defense programs. An additional \$32 billion for the Defense Department's Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account, evenly split between both years, is also part of the agreement. Overall, this funds the government at \$66 billion above FY16 caps and \$46 billion above FY17 caps. Leaders also agreed to suspend the debt ceiling until March 15, 2017.

Once passed, the agreement would effectively eliminate the possibility of a government shutdown or political brinkmanship over the debt limit during a presidential election year. Other provisions of the agreement include offsets for the additional spending, some policy changes to entitlement programs like Medicare, and the authorization for the sale of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Impact on Energy and Water Appropriations

Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson, the chairman of the House energy and water appropriations subcommittee, predicted that Congress could

More Information

[About ECA](#)

[Membership](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Helpful Links](#)

To help ensure that you receive all emails with images correctly displayed, please add ecabulletin@aweber.com to your address book or contact list

[Subscribe](#) to the ECA Email Server

[Online Version](#)

If you have trouble viewing this email, view the online version

Events of Interest

[Manhattan Project Park MOA Signing Ceremony](#)

November 10
Washington, DC

[2015 Intergovernmental Meeting](#)

November 18-20
New Orleans, LA
Email: ivana@energyca.org
for more information

Calendar

[Update on Low-Level](#)

quickly resolve their energy spending differences. According to *Politico*, Simpson said that he and his Senate counterpart, Sen. Lamar Alexander, "are very close in our bills" and that the differences could be resolved "in a pretty short time."

The energy and water bill could become part of an omnibus appropriations package to fund the government beyond December 11. Simpson also expressed hope that his appropriations bill would include funding for Yucca Mountain waste. Either way, a final spending bill would include funding to pursue a "consent-based" siting process for other nuclear waste sites in line with the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations.

Defense Spending

The agreement also negates the main point of contention between the Administration and Congress over the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The President vetoed the bill last week because it increased defense spending by providing additional funds through the OCO account without any similar increase for domestic programs.

Earlier this year, the Defense Department requested a budget that was \$38 billion above the caps; the agreement provides an extra \$33 billion. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain said earlier today that the agreement means that an attempt to override the President's veto is no longer necessary. Sen. McCain and his House counterpart, Rep. Mac Thornberry both said they are ready to trim the NDAA to bring it in line with the budget deal but weren't sure where those cuts would come from. The NDAA authorizes the Energy Department's national security and nuclear programs, including NNSA and environmental cleanup.

Congressional Passage

While a number of conservatives have thus far criticized the process that led to the deal and some have announced their opposition, the deal is expected to pass Congress easily. The tweaks to entitlement programs and oil sales from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve have attracted some concerned statements from lawmakers but are not likely to sink the bill. As a point of comparison, the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013* (also known as the Ryan-Murray Agreement) passed the House by a vote of 332-94 and the Senate by 64-36. The continuing resolution that funds the government through December passed 277-151 in the house and 77-19 in the Senate.

[Radioactive Waste Disposal Issues](#)

House Energy and Commerce Environment and Economy Subcommittee
October 28

[National Energy Laboratories Hearing](#)

Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee
October 28

[National Day of Remembrance for Nuclear Weapons Program Workers](#)

October 30

[EMSSAB Oak Ridge Reservation Meeting](#)

November 10

[EMSSAB Nevada Meeting](#)

November 10

[EMSSAB Savannah River Site Meeting](#)

November 16-17

[NNMCAB Meeting](#)

November 18

[EMSSAB Paducah Meeting](#)

November 19

ECA will continue to bring you news on the passage of the agreement, NDAA, and other spending bills.

