

**ESCOP B&L**  
**Monthly Conference Call**  
**June 27, 2017**  
**NOTES**

**Participants:**

Bill Brown	Maggie Ewell
Ernie Minton	Rebecca Walth
Shaun Donkin	Cheryl Achterberg
Jeff Jacobsen	Hunt Shipman
Rick Rhodes	Jeremy Whitte
Tim Phipps	Alton Thompson
John Wraith	Sarah Lupis (recording secretary)

(Committee membership: <http://www.escop.info/ViewCommittees.cfm?comid=2>)

- **Cornerstone update – Hunt Shipman**

The House Ag Approps Subcommittee markup will be 6/28/2017. NIFA top line is significantly reduced. The subcommittee's allocation is off by approximately \$9M, the difference between the 2017 and 2018 numbers for NIFA, they are off by \$21M. Cornerstone believes that our priorities are level-funded for FY18. There are a couple trims in there (e.g., rural development centers are back to FY16 funding levels). This holds true for research, extension, and integrated activities. There is no date scheduled for full committee markups. After *that* the bill and committee reports will become public and Cornerstone will provide an update. Senate markup will take place in mid-July.

Continuing resolution for FY18 remains a possibility, but it is too early to tell. Committees are committed to producing bills at this time.

- **AgIsAmerica "One Ask" Campaign - Hunt Shipman**

Two weeks ago, the CMC/AgIsAmerica/AgAction.org campaign was launched. This campaign urged support of the \$200M "One Ask." This was paired with digital advertising to get the video in front of key people. The results to date are very disappointing. Traffic to the video has been through digital advertising and NOT from universities. There is currently no evidence that any university has promoted the video at all. Voter action statistics indicate that only 51 people have gone all the way through the process and actually written their member of congress. No one from Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Texas, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming, or Idaho has written their member of congress. We cannot see that anyone has passed this on to their State Farm Bureau, given it to CARET members, or broadly promoted it with partner/friend organizations. kglobal sent it to LGI communications folks and others. In that we have been held relatively harmless, it has been a success. The greatest opportunity to influence the process is early and any opportunity to capitalize on the One Ask, at least with the House, seems to have passed.

Ag is American Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahPDX11EEqA>

Support for APLU FY 18 Budget proposal go to: [agaction.org](http://agaction.org)

***The committee recommends that ECOP and ESCOP chairs Fred Schlutt and Bret Hess send strongly worded reminders to members.***

Last week the house held a subcommittee hearing on university ag research. It went fairly well. The only negative take-away....The non-LGU representative was fair and even handed. Glenda Humiston (VP-UCANR) had a great opportunity to speak about the system, writ-large.

- **CLP/Farm Bill Status and Conservation Title**

Robin Shepard and others looked at the Conservation Title. A meeting between NRCS-ECOP-ESCOP is being planned. Jeff Jacobsen and Robin Shepard will lead.

- **NIFA update – Maggie Ewell**

Time and effort reporting has been a hot topic for a couple of years. Maggie and Tim Nesbit presented on this topic at the NERAOC2017 meeting in Texas. It seems that institutions are looking for clearer guidance; however, there is no one right way to do this. There are regulations, but there is no one correct method/process/controls for documenting and tracking time and effort. NIFA is working on putting together Best Practices. NIFA is recommending that you have policy and procedures on actual vs. estimates—it doesn't have to be a report, papers, etc.; it depends on how your institutions works and functions. Most institutions have things in place that are close to satisfactory or do satisfy and it's just a matter of putting it into established policy and procedure and ensuring that faculty are following the guidelines. Another issue is that time and effort reports are not certified by the employee, with a staff person who is responsible for this task. In conducting reviews, NIFA will examine grantee records to ensure that there is a system of internal controls is adequate to:

1. Assess the sufficiency of ensuring payroll costs are properly charged.
2. Determine whether there are records to support the distribution of an employee's salary among different federal awards or other activities
3. Budget estimates are reconciled against actual activity
4. There is a process to review interim charges after the fact and make needed adjustments
5. That matching funds are following the same policies and procedures as federal funds

*See synopsis of Mike's notes, attached to an earlier email.*

- **Infrastructure One-Pager**

Sarah Lupis compiled and designed the final one-pager on infrastructure. This brief went to Jay, the EDs, APLU, etc. Much of what was in the brief ended up in Politico Morning Ag report a couple Fridays ago.

- **Capacity Funds One-Pager**

Links with ECOP. Mike provided a 2-page summary/brief on capacity funds. Rick Klemme and Ron Brown and Alton Thompson commented. Most content is from the Teconomy report. There was some discussion about the key messages the document should deliver. ***Sarah Lupis and Mike Harrington will condense the existing 2-page brief down to a single sided, compelling document.***