

**ESCOP B&L Monthly Conference Call**  
**October 24, 2017**  
**MINUTES**

**Participants:**

Ernie Minton  
David Benfield  
Jim Moyer  
George Hopper  
Jeff Jacobsen  
Hunt Shipman  
Josh Stull

Mike Harrington  
Rick Rhodes  
Saied Mostaghimi  
Alton Thompson  
Paula Geiger  
Cheryl Achterberg  
Sarah Lupis (recording secretary)

- The minutes and today's agenda were unanimously approved.
- Cornerstone Report – Hunt Shipman  
A continuing resolution has passed that extends until December 8<sup>th</sup>. A disaster supplemental bill is being voted on today to provide relief to TX, VI, PR, CA and FL. Another supplemental bill is being compiled and sent to OMB today. Congress is also working on a budget resolution which is very late in the funding cycle (typically the first thing that happens in a calendar year to kick off the appropriations process). This year, bills have been written to a current services amount or less (in the case of the agriculture bill) and the budget bill currently underway will provide a procedural way to address tax reform. This will provide a roadmap forward for funding to pass an omnibus appropriations bill in late November/early December—could even spill over into January—this will carry the remaining FY18 bills, disaster relief, and any other items that have not yet moved this year.  
Farm Bill committees are compiling proposals and obtaining CBO scores on those. There may or may not be an opportunity for the House Ag Appropriations committee to move anything forward before the end of the year.
- SoAR Farm Bill letter/BAA Farm Bill Letter – Hunt, Mike  
The BAA did not sign onto the SoAR letter (<http://supportagresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Farm-Bill-Research-Policy-Letter-and-Attachment-with-Signing-Organizations-10-20-2017.pdf>). Instead the BAA crafted and sent a separate letter (<http://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/index.html>). A copy will be distributed to the BAA listserv and is included with these minutes. The BAA letter lacks some of the details that the SoAR letter contains, but the details were where the BAA had concerns.
- NIFA Update – Josh Stull  
Listening sessions have begun. Comments will also be accepted online: <https://nifa.usda.gov/nifalistsens>  
Sam Clovis' nomination Senate hearing may be held next week.  
Jason Hitchcock is the new director of Information and Technology.
- Status of Time and Effort Reporting  
A factsheet on T&E reporting was distributed with today's agenda, at the ESS Annual Meeting, on the NIFA website. Discussions are on-going with regional business officers the respective fall meetings. NIFA is still accepting comments on this document.  
<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Time%20and%20Effort%20Reporting%20Fact%20Sheet%20Final%20508.pdf>