

**ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee
Monthly Conference Call Notes
May 22, 2018**

Participants:

Ernie Minton Mike Harrington Shawn Donkin Dave Benfield Alton Thompson George Hopper Jon Wraith Chris Pritsos	Cheryl Achterberg Paula Geiger John Stull Becky Walth Jim Richards Vernie Hubert Rick Rhodes
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Agenda and notes from April call were approved

DC Update – Cornerstone

- 2019 Budget:
 - Senate markup today, committee report of Thursday
 - Small increases only in AFRI dues to lower allocation

 - House Committee report increased 5 of our 6 priority areas indicating that system advocacy efforts were successful
 - Increases to Hatch, Evans Allen, MC-Stennis, Smith-Lever, AFRI (+\$15 M), but 1890 extension was flat, SARE was down \$5M
 - Included a request to NIFA to develop a report on ways combine the various lines to simplify the budget. Senate would have to undo this with specifics. (Unlikely)

- **Farm Bill**
 - House version was defeated concerns about having an immigration bill first as well as SNAP program. Expect to be taken up again 3rd week of June after immigration reform

NIFA Update – John Stull

Tom Shanower was introduced as the acting Director for NIFA beginning May 6. Chavonda Jacobs-Young dispelled any rumors about a possible ARS takeover of NIFA. Numerous vacancies need the Secretary's approval. Denise Elbin has resigned as the Deputy Director of Food Safety and Nutrition. Ray Starling (from the White House) is the new USDA Chief of Staff.

Further thoughts on Strategic realignment in light of House Committee report

The B&L Committee is solidly behind efforts to strategically consolidate the small lines in the NIFA budget. Small lines have advocates and apparently there are Deans who contact Cornerstone asking for help with reinstatement of funding. The practice is outside the BAA process.

Next call – June 26