

ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>
July 2024 Agenda - **Members and Liaisons**
Tuesday, July 23, 2024 3pm (CT)/4pm (ET)

Attendees: Scott Senseman, Steve Lommel, Anton Bekkerman, Sreekala Bajwa, Elizabeth Stulberg, Glenda Humiston, Wendie Cohick, Chris Hamilton, Doug Steele, Derek McLean, Gary Thompson, Cindy Morley

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Anton Bekkerman (NERA) Past Chair: Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) Incoming Chair: Steve Lommel (SAAESD)</p> <p>Members: Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Derek McLean (NCRA) Wendie Cohick (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Scott Senseman (SAAESD) Sreekala Bajwa (WAAESD) Shawn Donkin (WAAESD)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Jason Henderson (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHHS)</p> <p>Executive Vice-Chair Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) Cindy Morley (SAAESD)</p>
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Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome – Anton
- Approval of the May 28 meeting notes – Anton
 - **Approved by acclamation**
- Approval of today’s agenda – Anton
 - **Approved by acclamation**
- DC and Farm Bill update – Elizabeth
 - Both the House and Senate passed appropriations bills out of committee but haven’t come to the floor for a vote and likely won’t pass before the election. Unlikely that anything will happen before the August recess.
 - What is in these bills? A lot of the same. Senate version has \$1M for RFA but the House version does not have RFA funding allocated (mandatory money in the farm bill drafts).
 - Farm Bill - everyone is waiting for the election. House Republicans have their full text out. Senator Stabenow has not released the full text of her bill. Questions about which provisions will make it into the final version. Had expected to see text by the end of the summer, but it is unlikely to pass before the election.

- A potential continuing resolution should not involve the 1% cut in appropriated non-defense programs that was discussed for FY24, but unsure if this is still in effect this fiscal year. FY25, administrations may have changed, and the issue may be moot.
- Talks about cuts to capacity funding for FY24 are less of an issue for FY25. FY24 there was a large gap that was filled from FY25 (borrowed \$30B). The Senate found emergency funding to replace that money. Still a shortfall in the House, but they did not touch Ag programs.
- agInnovation Roadmap: BLC participation – Anton
 - agInnovation Roadmap will set a medium to long-term vision and goals for our section that will be primarily oriented toward advocacy and messaging the value of our research. Development of the 10-year roadmap is in progress. One-pagers have been created and will be updated as input is received. Goal is to have the roadmap finalized by the first of the year.
 - Can the BLC provide input and direction for implementation strategies to support significantly increased funding from appropriations and through other legislation? We will be discussing this further in future meetings.
 - Federal investment strategy
 - Initial discussion was doubling NIFA budget (FY23 \$1.7B) which is roughly equal to increasing the federal investment in ag R&D by 1% of the total Federal Research and Development budget, resulting in \$1.9B annual increase (\$19B increase over 10 years).
 - BLC can contribute in the following ways:
 - Develop funding strategies (\$ needed to achieve goals).
 - Identify research funding priorities and opportunities.
 - Justify how higher funding can achieve those priorities.
 - Identify lines that could be strategically targeted to get to these goals?
 - Other issues include match requirements, identifying agencies other than NIFA, aligning with the USDA Science and Research Strategy priorities, expanding beyond food to include energy (biofuels, bio feedstocks, etc.).
 - Anton proposes that in future meetings, to take one bullet in each meeting and brainstorm.
 - Spend some serious time on messaging to individual constituency groups, including commodity groups, professional societies, NGOs, Farm Bureau etc. to individualize the message?
- RFA Implementation – Anton
 - Staffers are interested in putting report language in the Farm Bill, with regards to how to expand the Farm Bill and direct USDA on how to implement RFA funding.
 - There will be a match requirement. There is some ability to influence what that looks like. Are “soft” match options?
 - Take away is that the door is open for us to help create language and offer suggestions for the Farm Bill right now.

- Proposed forming a subcommittee of the BLC with every other week meetings for the next few months. **Action:** Email Anton and Gary if you want to be on this subcommittee. Looking for BLC members, ED, and LBA representative.
- Liaison updates
 - FANR – BAA Summer Leadership meeting in Providence last week updates
 - BAC Decadal Vision, agInnovation Roadmap, Capacity Funding Initiative
 - ECOP stayed an extra day to start the process of strategic planning in relationship to the decadal vision, roadmap, and Capacity building.
 - RFA Implementation - What are the questions we have? NIFA doesn't know how this will play out yet. Do they have the capacity? Can they mobilize and push it out the door?
 - It is up to us to craft and carry the message to others. We are entering a quiet period with congressional recess but that is the perfect time to craft those messages.
- Adjourn