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# Conferees Reach Final Agreement, First Appropriations Minibus Filed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Committee today announced that a final conference agreement has been reached on the first of three Fiscal Year 2019 minibus appropriations packages. The first package, H.R. 5895, includes appropriations bills for Energy and Water Development, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Legislative Branch. The conference report to accompany H.R. 5895 is available online. Senate and House votes on the conference report are expected this week. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) released the following statement on the agreement:

“Striking a balance between both chambers and parties is never easy, but I am pleased to say we have accomplished that in this conference report. I strongly urge my colleagues in the Senate to

support final passage this week so we can get this bill to the President's desk and move to the next minibuses in the queue. The American people expect us to get our work done. If we continue to work together in a bipartisan manner we can successfully fund nearly 90 percent of the federal government on time through regular order – something Congress has not been able to do in many years. I want to thank Senator Alexander, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey for their hard work in bringing this conference committee to a successful close, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to accomplish the considerable work that lies ahead."

The final conference report provides \$97.1 billion to take care of our nation's veterans and fund military construction, \$44.6 billion to support U.S. Department of Energy programs and critical infrastructure projects administered by the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation, and \$4.8 billion to maintain essential operations and security of the U.S. Capitol, Congress and support agencies.

## **Energy and Water Development**

## The **Energy and Water Development**

division of the bill provides \$44.6 billion to support U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) programs and critical infrastructure projects administered by the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. The measure provides resources to strengthen the U.S. nuclear deterrence posture, ensure nuclear stockpile readiness and safety, and prepare for existing and future nuclear threats. The measure also provides record level funding for the DOE Office of Science and programs that spur greater innovation in energy research, high-performance computing, and next-generation technologies. In addition, the bill includes the funding necessary to improve and maintain flood control projects and ensure the viability of national and regional ports and waterways.

“Boy Scouts shouldn’t get a merit badge for telling the truth, and senators shouldn’t get an award for passing an appropriations bill: that’s what we are supposed to do. But, it is worth noting that for the first time in nearly 10 years these appropriations bills are on time, and they are also within the budget. They will help to keep our country first in science, technology, supercomputing, and will build the ports and waterways that create jobs,” said **Senator Lamar Alexander**

(R-Tenn.), Chairman of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee.

## Bill Highlights:

- **Nuclear Weapons:** Provides \$11.1 billion, an increase of \$458 million above FY 2018, for Weapons Activities within the National Nuclear Security Administration, including full funding of life extension programs for nuclear weapons at \$1.92 billion.
- **Navy Nuclear Propulsion:** Provides \$1.79 billion to fund the Navy's nuclear propulsion program, an increase of \$169 million above FY 2018.
- **Office of Nuclear Energy:** Includes \$1.3 billion for the Office of Nuclear Energy, including \$100 million for next generation reactors and \$112 million for Advanced Reactor work.
- **Science:** Provides \$6.58 billion for the Department of Energy, which is the largest single provider of funding for basic research of the physical sciences in the country. A significant portion of the new funding goes toward new or

upgraded infrastructure at the national laboratories and associated facilities.

- **Energy Research & Development:**

Provides \$740 million for Fossil Energy Research and Development, including \$25 million to continue the solicitation for transformational coal technologies.

- **Army Corps of Engineers:** Provides \$6.84 billion to fund the Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works program. These funds support \$1.54 billion from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, exceeding targets from the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 for the fifth year. The bill also continues the prohibition on the Corps of Engineers from requiring Clean Water Act permits for exempt agriculture activities.

## **Military Construction and Veterans Affairs**

The **Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (VA)** division of the bill provides \$97.1 billion to support veterans' health care and benefits, medical and prosthetic research, the National Cemetery Administration, information technology, and the VA Inspector General. Congress is committed

to ensuring that veterans receive the health care they have earned and deserve under the VA MISSION Act. To that end, the bill provides \$1.25 billion more than requested for the VA Medical Services and Medical Community Care accounts. These funds will support the VA's traditional community care programs as well as the transition to the new and improved program. The bill also funds construction of national defense facilities, family housing, and military hospitals and schools.

"This bill is the result of a bipartisan commitment to return to regular order," **said Senator John Boozman (R-Ark.)**, chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee. "The critical investments included in this package fund construction of national defense facilities and family housing for our Armed Forces in addition to upholding our promises to our veterans by supporting their health care and benefits. I appreciate Chairman Shelby's leadership which has provided all members a voice in determining how taxpayer dollars are spent."

## Bill Highlights:

- **VA MISSION Act:** Congress is committed to ensuring that veterans receive the health care they have earned and deserve under the VA MISSION Act. To that end, the bill provides \$1.25 billion more than requested for the VA Medical Services and Medical Community Care accounts. These funds will support the VA's traditional community care programs as well as the transition to the new and improved program.
- **Military Construction:** The bill provides \$10.3 billion – \$241 million above the FY 2018 level – to facilitate maximum readiness and warfighting capability by funding 167 construction projects on military bases within the United States and around the globe.
- **Electronic Health Records:** The bill provides \$1.1 billion for the Veterans Electronic Health Record system and management to improve the efficiency and quality of veterans' health care.

## Legislative Branch

The **Legislative Branch** division of the bill continues the pay freeze for members of Congress, and provides \$4.8 billion to

maintain essential operations and security of the U.S. Capitol, Congress and support agencies. The bill also includes directives for the U.S. Capitol Police to address security issues for Members at events off of the Capitol complex.

"This is great news. As Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, I fought to include language to increase transparency and access for U.S. Senate campaign finances, and after today's announcement, we're one step closer. This bill also makes an important investment in the Capitol complex and in the agencies that support our branch of government. I look forward to getting this through the House, the Senate, and on to the president's desk for signature," said **Senator Steve Daines (R-Mont.)**, chairman of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

### Bill Highlights:

- **Member Pay Freeze:** The bill continues the prohibition on a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) for Members of Congress, which has been in place since 2009.



- **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)**  
**Transparency:** Specific funding is included for increased transparency at CBO, as well as report language asking for increased transparency and responsiveness from the agency.
- **Member Security:** \$1 million is included for the Capitol Police specifically to expand protections of Members at off-campus events. More than one year after Members of Congress were targeted during a baseball practice, it is imperative we are ensuring the safety of members and continuity of government.

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## Related Files

Conference Report to accompany H.R. 5895.pdf

Joint Explanatory Statement H.R. 5895.pdf