

Committee **Full Government Affairs Committee (GAC)**

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Date/Time **Tuesday, 27 April 2021 / 3:00 pm eastern**

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Loucas Tsakalacos, Damon Dozier, Jeff Aguiar, Josh Caldwell, Alex Chortos, Sean Hearne, Jen Nekuda Malik, Justus Ndukaife, Linda Olafsen, Dio Placencia, Chris Schuck, Cathy Tway, Ashley White, Kris Uher (recording secretary)

<b>Participants</b>		
<b>Next call</b>	May 25, 2021 @ 3 pm ET	
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Due</b>

**Washington DC Update**

While the ‘skinny budget’ is a good marker of Democrat’s priorities, it is not likely to pass as is. Here’s a snapshot of the ‘skinny budget’ proposal:

- NASA – \$2.7B which is an increase. Includes support to build climate and clean energy research programs and sustainability (a theme throughout all budget proposals)
- National Science Foundation (NSF) – \$10.2B. There are a couple things included which haven’t been included before. There is money added for research facilities, and observatories infrastructure.
- Department of Commerce – includes a historic investment in US technological and scientific competitiveness. It provides \$916M, an increase of \$128M over 2021, to expand scientific and technological research at NIST to advance research in climate-resilient building codes, computing, cybersecurity, AI, quantum information science, etc.
- Department of Defense (DOD) – \$715B which is a smaller increase in the 2.2% range. It is believed that the increase is reflected in applied science.
- Department of Energy (DOE) – \$46.1B which is a 10.2% increase. Interesting to note that it includes creation of a new project Advanced Research Projects Agency for Climate, as well as the exiting Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy. These initiatives would support solutions for carbon-pollution free energy, adaptation, and resilience against the climate crisis.

**Endless Frontiers Act** – this bill proposes strengthening of major science agencies such as NSF, NIST and DOE. It will also create a new Technology and Innovation Directorate at NSF that will receive \$100B over five years to invest in basic and advanced research, commercialization, cybersecurity, quantum computing, and education and training programs. The issue of geographic diversity in the distribution of grants has been discussed as a criticism. The Democrats have a strategy to address some of these issues and more we be known on this soon. There is some thought that GAC should have a mini CVD on this to communicate how important this is to MRS.

There may a re-installation of earmarks. An earmark is a provision inserted into spending appropriations bills that direct funds to a specific ‘pet project’ while going around the merit-based funds allocation process. Earmarks are narrowly focused for one year and not funded on an annual basis. MRS does not have a position on earmarks or support one particular earmark.

There is nothing new to report on the CHIPS Act.

### **GAC Activities Post S21 Meeting - Overview**

A Department of Energy Basic Energy Science Advisory Committee (BESAC) Town Hall, led by Eric Stach and Matt Tirrell was held on April 26, 2021. Eric and Matt answered a wide range of questions on scope, methodology and topics. There were 233 participants with 60 questions.

A Government Funding Agency Session on Research Funding Opportunities, led by Vanessa Chan, will be held on April 28, 2021.

Three other webinars will be held next week:

May 3, 2021 – Research Funding Opportunities – NSF Division of Materials Research, led by Dr. Linda Sapochak

May 3, 2021 – Research Funding Opportunities – Department of Energy – Basic Energy Sciences, led by Dr. Andrew Schwartz

May 5, 2021 – Research Funding Opportunities – National Institutes of Health, led by Dr. Luisa Russell

### **Working Group Reports**

Josh Caldwell reported on the upcoming webinars (see above). He also noted that they have discussed and are in favor of reaching out to government agencies to do a virtual summit focused on the EFA (Endless Frontiers Act).

Damon reported that they are researching how informatics can be used to enhance research and manufacturing of semiconductors. Dan Becerra and Elias Garratt are working on a Public Affairs Alert focused on the Endless Frontiers Act.

### **Adjournment**

The Zoom Meeting ended at 3:33 pm ET.