

News!

JUNE 26, 2009

VOL III , No. 24



**FULL HOUSE DEBATES FY10 INTERIOR BILL—
FINAL VOTE ON FRIDAY**

The House began debate yesterday on the \$32.3 billion spending bill to fund the Department of Interior, EPA and various other agencies and is expected to approve the measure sometime on Friday. While debate began Thursday evening, voting on many of the amendments and the final bill was postponed until Friday.

Before taking up the spending bill, the House approved a rule that allowed votes on only 13 of the 105 amendments submitted, angering many Republicans. However, the Democrats countered that Republicans were purposefully stalling recent bills citing the rare eight-hour non-stop voting session they forced last week on a limited number of amendments on the Commerce, Justice, Science spending bill. Several of the 13 Amendments would strip funding for earmarked SAT projects

The House will also vote today on two amendments to slash the bill's spending, which are expected to fail, and a manager's amendment from Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) making adjustments to abandoned mine land funding, increase Save America's Treasures by one million and add ten million more for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside program.

Congressman Ben Chandler (D-KY), a member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and champion of SHPO funding said in his floor statement last night. "This bill also helps preserve our cultural heritage and educates our citizens about our history. State Historic Preservation Offices are funded at \$46.5 million. The projects these organizations undertake in all 50 States not only protect our cultural identity, but they create jobs in so many of our small towns and communities."

Norm Dicks (D-WA), chair of the Interior subcommittee called the bill a "catch-up budget after years of underfunding." Interior Appropriations Subcommittee ranking member Mike Simpson (R-ID) said he objected to the overall spending level as too high but that he had no problem with what the money was spent on. "I think we've come out with a good bill," Simpson said.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PASSES FY10 INTERIOR	2
UPCOMING EVENTS	2

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PASSES FY10 INTERIOR BILL

The full Senate Appropriations Committee yesterday approved their FY2010 spending bill that would provide a total of \$32.1 billion for the Departments of Interior, EPA and related agencies. The bill would provide the President's budget request for all HPF programs (see table below) but moves the Preserve America account from the Historic Preservation Fund to the National Recreation and Preservation account (as done in the three previous fiscal years).

The committee report accompanying the spending bill contains numerous provisions known as "riders" which instruct agencies on a variety of issues. One of these riders addresses concerns raised during a subcommittee hearing earlier this month about whether Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's push for renewable energy development on public lands could cause permanent environmental harm. It directs Interior and the Forest Service within 180 days to submit a report on the criteria for siting renewable energy projects, a detailed strategic plan on how the agencies will coordinate their development, an analysis of the useful life of renewable energy sites and how infrastructure will be removed when no longer functional. "Appropriate siting of these projects and cost-appropriate size limitations are critical to ensuring that the pristine landscapes and magnificent views of the country's public lands and coastlines are protected," the report says.

Overall, the Park Service would receive \$2.71 billion, slightly below the House bill. That includes an increase of \$130 million for basic operations of the Park Service. It does not provide \$25 million for NPS public-private matching grants, which the administration requested and the House included. The Senate bill would also provide \$1.56 billion for the Forest Service operations, roughly on par with the House. The Fish and Wildlife Service would receive roughly \$1.61 billion, \$29 million less than the administration request. That includes \$488.6 million for national wildlife refuges, slightly above the administration proposal but lower than the House's \$503 million. The bill would provide \$419 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, an increase of \$127 million over 2009, according to the committee.

It remains to be seen when the spending bill will come to the Senate floor. Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) indicated Thursday that Democrats would like to proceed with regular order on appropriations but that to save time the leadership may need to roll numerous fiscal 2010 spending bills together into an omnibus package. Durbin noted that the Senate has already spent much of a week negotiating over the Legislative Branch appropriations bill, the smallest and usually easiest of the spending measures, and that numerous other big-ticket items also remain on the agenda. "We don't have enough time if every bill takes a week," Durbin said.

*Funding moved from the HPF to the National Recreation and Preservation Account

** likely to become \$31 million once the House votes on Friday's Interior amendments



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- July 8-11, 2009 – NCSHPO Summer Board Meeting, Big Bend, Texas
- October 13-17, 2009 – National Preservation Conference, Nashville, TN
- October 14-15, 2009 – NCSHPO Winter Board Meeting, Nashville, TN

