

# Update on America COMPETES Act Reauthorization

## Congressional Visits Day; April 28-29, 2010

(last updated on April 23, 2010)

### Overview

- Both the House and Senate are actively engaging in reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. In the Senate, House Science Committee Chairman Gordon is retiring and reauthorization of COMPETES is his top priority. In the Senate, a bipartisan group led by Senators Bingaman (D-NM) and Alexander (R-TN) is leading the charge.
- Both the House and Senate hope to have legislation passed in their respective chambers by Memorial Day, with a conference agreement completed by the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess. Both sides feel that COMPETES could be a bipartisan "good news story" in a deeply divided Congress, however fiscal concerns could impact this bipartisanship.

### In the House

- On Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Chairman Gordon introduced HR 5116, The America COMPETES Act.
- HR 5116 is comprised of three separate bills addressing each of the three core science agencies (NSF, NIST, and DOE Office of Science - which included ARPA-E and Energy Innovation Hubs) that were marked up in subcommittee, plus newly added titles on OSTP, STEM Education, and Innovation.
- The bill, as introduced, is a five year authorization that continues the three core agencies on the 10-year doubling path outlined in COMPETES I. It is very likely, however, that these authorization levels will be reduced before the bill goes to the floor as the majority recognizes fiscal concerns and may make concessions to keep the bill bipartisan. One likely outcome will be that the numbers reflect an 11-year doubling path, similar to (but higher than) the President's Budget Request.
- Full committee markup of the bill is scheduled for Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup>, and the bill will most likely go to the floor on or around May 12<sup>th</sup>. House Science is seeking endorsements from any and all institutions before the bill goes to the floor to help secure bipartisan support. They also are encouraging advocates to meet with their members, and seek op-eds and meetings with editorial boards of their local papers. The Committee POC is Lori Pepper: [lori.pepper@mail.house.gov](mailto:lori.pepper@mail.house.gov).

### In the Senate

- A multi-committee (Energy and Natural Resources; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Commerce, Science, Transportation; and Appropriation committees) working group has been meeting bi-weekly since December to discuss reauthorization of COMPETES.
- While Senators Bingaman and Alexander are jointly leading this effort, there is some concern regarding additional minority support.
- The Senate expects to put forth a narrow bill that does not include any programs from COMPETES I that were authorized but not appropriated. Although there will be limited new programs, the bill will likely keep the three core agencies on the 10-

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year doubling path.

- On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Commerce held the one and only hearing expected on the COMPETES. They will likely be the only committee to markup the legislation (schedule: TBD).

**Key points**

- The America COMPETES Act of 2007 was a historic piece of legislation that helped to solidify support for scientific research and development and improve science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM) capacity at all levels in the U.S.
- This legislation called for an unprecedented doubling of science funding for three critical agencies - the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Department of Energy Office of Science.
- The increases in R&D funding for these agencies received through the FY09 and FY10 annual appropriations process and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) would not have been possible without the vision provided in the America COMPETES Act.
- The reauthorizing of COMPETES will underscore the country's commitment to policies that strengthen America's talent pool and ensure that American innovators will continue to produce the discoveries that create new technologies, new industries, and high value jobs for Americans.
- **As Congress considers reauthorization of this important legislation, we hope that it will:**
  - **Continue in the bipartisan tradition of COMPETES I;**
  - **Maintain funding increases for the three core science agencies by keeping them on the doubling path outlined in COMPETES I;**
  - **Consider a five-year authorization, which will provide a clear signal of Congress' intent to provide a sustained, long-term growth path for U.S. R&D agencies; and**
  - **Include strong support for STEM education, which will play an integral role in this country's long-term competitiveness.**