

Research



Senate Passes First Appropriations Bill of the Year: The Energy and Water Infrastructure Act

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Last week, the Senate passed a [\\$37.5 billion energy and water spending](#) bill that funds the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Army Corp of Engineers for fiscal year 2017. The bill, entitled “The Energy Security and Water Infrastructure Act” passed 90 to 8. The bill is \$259 million above the FY16 enacted level, and \$168 million over the president’s budget request.[\[i\]](#)

The bill also includes:

- A \$355 million increase over 2016 levels for the DOE defense related programs;
- An \$808 million decrease for nondefense issues including DOE programs;[\[ii\]](#)
- \$9.3 billion for a nuclear weapons program that would be financed through DOE;[\[iii\]](#)
- \$102 million to clean up contamination from the early atomic energy program; and
- \$983 million for management, development and restoration of water and related natural resources for federally recognized Indian tribes

Hot Water

One measure that had stalled the bill for the last month deals directly with the Iran nuclear deal. According to [the Hill](#), under the terms of the nuclear deal, Iran is required to reduce its stock of fuel. Last month, the U.S. said it would spend \$8 million to purchase heavy water from Tehran. This led to opposition from some Republicans over the fact that the U.S. would be subsidizing the nuclear deal, and an amendment was introduced to prevent similar purchases. A majority of Democrats voted against the measure, stating that if the U.S. did not purchase the heavy water, countries like North Korea could buy it instead. The measure failed 57-42 allowing for the passage of the spending bill.

Obstacles

Although the bill had overwhelming support in the Senate, and passed unanimously through the [Appropriations Committee](#), the White House is threatening to veto it as the administration does not think the bill designates enough to renewable energy sources or funding of advanced energy projects.

One Down, Eleven to Go

The bill is the first appropriations bill to pass the Senate this year. This is a step in the right direction by the Republican majority who is trying to complete 12 appropriations bills before the end of the year. Time is not on

their side, but if compromise and collaboration are a factor, it could become a reality.

[i] <http://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=394509>

[ii][ii] <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/279723-senate-approves-375-billion-energy-and-water-bill>

[iii] http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/05/12/senate-is-set-to-pass-a-37-5-billion-energy-appropriations-bill/?WT.mc_id=SmartBriefs-Newsletter&WT.mc_ev=click&ad-keywords=smartbriefsnl&_r=0