

**House Report 109-118 - SCIENCE, STATE, JUSTICE,
COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
BILL, FISCAL YEAR 2006**

Language is included that provides up to \$425,000,000 for Polar research and operations support, as requested. The recommended funding level in this account acknowledges the decision of the Administration to shift funding for polar icebreaking from the budget of the Coast Guard to that of the NSF. Language is included allowing the NSF Director to use funds under this account to reimburse the Coast Guard for services provided in support of the NSF's mission. Additional language is included requiring that any such reimbursement be treated as a reprogramming of funds under section 605. The Committee believes that burdening the NSF with the responsibility for maintenance and long-term modernization costs of the Coast Guard icebreaking fleet would irresponsibly jeopardize the nation's primary source of funding for critical basic scientific research. While using Coast Guard capabilities may be necessary to meet fiscal year 2006 requirements, the Committee expects NSF to immediately begin a concurrent pursuit of alternative, more economical, icebreaking solutions for 2006 and beyond. The Committee directs NSF to pursue the most cost-effective means of obtaining icebreaking services in the Antarctic for the 2005-2006 season, including, but not limited to, reimbursing the Coast Guard on a mutually agreed upon basis for the operations and maintenance of the U.S. polar icebreaking fleet. NSF is specifically given the flexibility to pursue alternatives to current operations. Should NSF continue to utilize the Coast Guard for icebreaking capabilities in fiscal year 2006, the Committee would expect NSF to model a reimbursement agreement with the Coast Guard on their successful Memorandum of Understanding with the Defense Department.

The Committee is aware of studies currently underway to review the Nation's icebreaking needs and to examine options for supporting the presence the United States has maintained in the Antarctic for the past four decades. The Committee directs NSF to immediately inform the Committee when the results and recommendations from these studies become available. The Committee anticipates a preliminary report on options for meeting long-term icebreaking needs from the National Academies in September. No later than December 31, 2005, the Committee expects a report from the Office of Polar Programs advisory committee outlining options and potential costs for alternative means of providing logistical support to the McMurdo and South Pole stations in the event that icebreaking capabilities are not available.

**Senate Report 109-088 - DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE AND
JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2006**

The Committee has provided the budget request of \$386,930,000 for polar research activities. Within this amount, no more than the base funding in the budget submission, as well as an additional \$48,000,000 for ice breaking, as requested by the administration, is provided for icebreaking activities. The Committee has included bill language clarifying that the Director of NSF shall procure polar ice breaking services from the Coast Guard. However, if the Coast Guard is unable to provide ice breaking services, NSF shall procure such services from alternative sources. The Committee expects the Director of NSF, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to work jointly to ensure that the Coast Guard ice breaking fleet is capable of meeting NSF's future polar ice breaking needs.

#6-H.R.2862-EAS

Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Engrossed Amendment as Agreed to by Senate)

RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

For necessary expenses in carrying out the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1861-1875), and the Act to establish a National Medal of Science (42 U.S.C. 1880-1881); services as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109; maintenance and operation of aircraft and purchase of flight services for research support; acquisition of aircraft; and authorized travel; \$4,345,213,000, of which at least \$386,930,000 shall remain available until expended for Polar research and operations support, of which up to \$58,000,000 shall be used for the procurement of polar ice breaking services from the U.S. Coast Guard, and that in the event that the U.S. Coast Guard is unable to provide said ice breaking services, then the National Science Foundation shall procure such services from alternative sources, and for reimbursement to other Federal agencies for operational and science support and logistical and other related activities for the United States Antarctic program; the balance to remain available until September 30, 2006: Provided, That receipts for scientific support services and materials furnished by the National Research Centers and other National Science Foundation supported research facilities may be credited to this appropriation: Provided further, That to the extent that the amount appropriated is less than the total amount authorized to be appropriated for included program activities, all amounts, including floors and ceilings, specified in the authorizing Act for those program activities or their subactivities shall be reduced proportionally.

**CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2360, DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006 -- (House
of Representatives - September 29, 2005)**

POLAR ICEBREAKING

Both the House and Senate approved the transfer of \$47,500,000 in polar icebreaking funding from the Coast Guard to the National Science Foundation (NSF) as requested in the budget. The conferees encourage the Coast Guard, NSF, and the Executive Office of the President to finalize a long-term strategy for polar icebreaking. The conferees direct the Coast Guard to pursue a sustainable cost sharing agreement with the NSF for unanticipated and extraordinary maintenance of the polar icebreakers.