

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION****Federal Legislative Update**

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*City Manager's Office*

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL****INFORMATION  
ONLY**

No formal action is required; this is an informational briefing. Congress, the Administration, and Federal agencies each year approve actions that impact the City in a broad range of areas. Staff may recommend, and/or Council may wish to direct, communication to the City's congressional delegation on a range of issues throughout the year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

NA

**BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS****D.C. Big Picture**

The FY 2020 budget season is officially underway with the release of President Trump's budget proposal. While Congress may choose to ignore parts or all of the President's budget proposal, it will have to confront the need to get a budget agreement to avoid the deep spending cuts that will be required in FY 2020 under the Budget Control Act. Technically, Congress needs to pass a budget agreement to set top-line appropriations numbers. The federal debt limit also looms on the horizon, but the Treasury Department estimates that Congress does not need to address it until this fall. Congress will likely wait as long as possible before taking any action. Any debate related to increasing the debt limit will be complicated and extremely political.

In addition to budget and appropriations matters, a great deal of legislative discussion, debate and activity occurred during the last few weeks while Congress was in session. Key highlights are summarized below.

**Budget and Appropriations**

As indicated above, Congress and the President have turned their focus to FY 2020 funding. The President kicked off the budget season with the release of a budget proposal on March 11. Congress is now tasked with developing its budget proposal to set topline appropriation numbers, and hearings are being held on the appropriations process. Early indications are that the road to FY 2020 funding will be bumpy.

The President's budget proposal serves primarily as the President's opening bid in spending negotiations with Congress. The level of domestic spending cuts in this year's Presidential Budget

Proposals have already set the stage for what will likely be difficult negotiations between the White House and Congress.

There is no agreement yet on what a congressional budget will look like, although there seems to be agreement from both the House and Senate that the budget caps set by the Budget Control Act should be increased and that the non-defense discretionary cuts proposed by the President are too steep. The top priority for House Democrats will be to push for significant increases in funding for the Health and Human Services, Labor and Education departments in FY 2020. In the Senate, appropriators may stake out a middle ground between the White House's suggested cuts and House Democrats' increases.

### **President's Budget**

The President's budget proposes a 9% reduction in non-defense discretionary funding, an increase in defense spending and includes \$8.6 billion for building a border wall. A few highlights:

#### **Transportation**

The Transportation Department received one of the steepest cuts under the President's budget proposal, 22 percent less than estimated 2019 spending, but more than the Administration proposed for FY 2019. The proposal reflects the Administration's desire to see reforms for Amtrak, subsidized airline services for rural airports, Washington's Metrorail system, and Capital Investment Grants. The budget would shift transit funds away from grants for new projects and toward grants to keep systems in a "state of good repair," Transportation Deputy Secretary Jeffrey Rosen said. There's also money for competitive bus grants, a transit mode preferred by the Administration because of its lower capital costs.

#### **Proposed Eliminations**

The President's budget request calls for the elimination of the following agencies or programs:

- Economic Development Administration
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership program
- Community Development Block Grant program
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- Community Development Financial Institutions Fund grant and loan programs
- Abandoned Mine Land economic development grants
- Interior Department Indian Guaranteed Loan Program
- National Wildlife Refuge Fund payments to local governments
- National Heritage Areas
- Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy
- Title XVII Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program

- Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing Loan Program
- Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program

### **Immigration and Border Spending**

The President's immigration and border proposals include:

- \$8.6 billion for a border wall, including \$5 billion for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and \$3.6 billion for the Department of Defense;
- \$506 million to hire an additional 2,800 officers and staff at U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and 128 immigration court prosecuting attorneys;
- \$2.7 billion for 54,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention beds; and
- Funds to hire an additional 100 immigration judge teams.

### **Other Highlights from the President's Proposed Budget:**

- The creation of the Space Force as the sixth branch of the armed forces.
- A 3.1 percent pay increase for military service members.
- The creation of an Unaccompanied Alien Children Contingency Fund, with \$480 million in funding in fiscal 2020 and \$738 million over the decade.
- A Labor Department paid parental leave program that would cost \$750 million in fiscal 2020 and \$20.5 billion over the next decade.
- \$291 million for Health and Human Services HIV programs.
- \$7.2 billion for the Census Bureau as it prepares for its 2020 survey.
- \$500 million in assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia to transition away from Russian military equipment and address macroeconomic dependence on Russia.

## **POLICY UPDATES**

### **Public Lands Package**

On March 12, the President, in a private ceremony, signed the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act into law. The bill was a massive public lands package that permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which expired in September. It also contains over 100 different public lands bills, including legislation to designate the Mountains to Sound Greenway as a National Heritage Area. Senator Cantwell and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) jointly championed and steered the legislation through Congress even though it had originally faced opposition in the Senate.

A summary by the bill's sponsors of the other key WA state provisions are as follows:

- The ***Methow Headwaters Protection Act*** permanently protects the headwaters of the Methow River by removing 340,000 acres of Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest from potential mining development.
- The ***Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act*** authorizes an integrated and collaborative approach to addressing water challenges in the Yakima Valley to restore ecosystems and fisheries, ensure communities have access to water, help rehabilitate and repair the Wapato Irrigation Project, and extend water supplies for farmers in times of drought.
- The ***Wildfire Management Technology Advancement Act*** increases safety for firefighters and helps modernize firefighting agencies across the country by acquiring and using newer technologies such as GPS and unmanned aircraft systems.
- The ***National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act*** improves the nation's volcano monitoring and early warning capabilities and strengthens existing monitoring systems, including the Cascades Volcano Observatory in Washington and Oregon, to help keep communities and travelers safe.
- The ***Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Act*** designates 1.5 million acres of land stretching along the Interstate 90 corridor from Ellensburg to Seattle as the Pacific Northwest's first National Heritage Area.
- The ***National Nordic Museum Designation*** designates the Nordic Museum in Seattle as the National Nordic Museum, recognizing the museum's unique work to preserve, celebrate, and educate the American public about Nordic history, culture, and art.

## **National Flood Insurance Program**

Several proposals have been introduced to reauthorize and reform the National Flood Insurance Program. Lawmakers must act by May 31 to avoid a lapse in the program's key authorities ahead of the 2019 hurricane season. There have been 10 short-term extensions of the program since the last major reauthorization which expired at the end of fiscal 2017.

One proposal offered by House Democrats would cancel the program's current \$20.5 billion debt and extend the program through fiscal 2024. The proposal would also authorize any necessary funding through fiscal 2028 for Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) grants to help states launch revolving loan funds to reduce flood risks and damages. This proposal, which was offered by House Financial Services Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), represents the Democrats' opening proposal to address the future of the program.

## **Disaster Supplemental Funding Package**

The Senate may take up a disaster aid package soon. Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) is said to be working on a disaster aid package. House Democrats passed a \$14.2 billion disaster aid measure (H.R. 268) in January during the partial government shutdown. The Senate never took up the legislation due to disagreements over relief for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories.

The Administration issued about 60 major disaster declarations in 2018, including for wildfires in California — the most destructive in the state's history — as well as hurricanes Florence and Michael, Typhoon Yutu and Hawaii's Kilauea volcano eruption.

## **Telecommunications**

HR 530, the Accelerating Wireless Broadband Development by Empowering Local Communities Act of 2019, would repeal a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule approved last September that sets limits on the fees and process required by local governments for the placement of small cell sites necessary for the deployment of 5G. Introduced by Representative Anna Eshoo (D-CA), the bill has 22 Democratic co-sponsors and was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. It has been endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, and the National Association of Counties, American Public Power Association and many local governments.

## **BELLEVUE COUNCILMEMBERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Bellevue City Councilmembers Conrad Lee and Janice Zahn participated in the National League of Cities annual Washington, D.C., conference March 10-13. In addition to participating in the conference, they made calls on congressional offices on behalf of the City of Bellevue. Meetings were held with the offices of Representatives Adam Smith (D-WA), Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Kim Schrier (D-WA) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). The focus and purpose of the meetings were to discuss the following:

- ***USDOT Grant Application for the Autonomous Shuttle Program*** – Councilmembers Lee and Zahn provided an update about Bellevue's grant application, providing new information about the increased urgency to get the program on line with upcoming construction on I-405 and additional economic growth and expansion in Bellevue. They asked for assistance in getting information from the USDOT on the status of this round of grants. All offices were very supportive of Bellevue's grant request and offered to help with outreach to the USDOT. Representative Smith's office will coordinate a delegation letter to the USDOT outlining the increased urgency of the program and to formally request information on the grant status.

- ***Smart Cities/Transportation Technology*** – Councilmembers discussed Bellevue's mission to lead on smart transportation technology and programs and be an incubator for innovative and technology-driven programs to improve the efficiency, safety and environmental impact of mobility in the region. Councilmembers encouraged the delegation to partner with Bellevue in these efforts. As a follow-up to this discussion, Representative DelBene's transportation, technology and telecom Senior Legislative Assistant will be coming to Bellevue in April for a more in-depth conversation about these matters.
- ***Grand Connection and Meydenbauer Bay Park*** – Updates were provided on the status of the projects and significance of the projects to help Bellevue to provide multi-modal options and connections between the Lake Washington waterfront and across I-405 to the Wilburton Opportunity District. Invitations to the Meydenbauer Bay Park opening were given to each office. These conversations helped to lay the foundation that Bellevue is interested in possible ways to partner with the federal government on the Grand Connection project.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

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## **OPTIONS**

N/A

## **ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

N/A

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A