Both chambers of Congress continued moving forward with crucial pieces of legislation ahead of the two-week July 4th recess period that starts next week. The House and Senate Armed Services Committees continued marking up their versions of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and the full text of each piece of legislation is expected to be released after the July 4th recess. House Appropriations Subcommittees also continued marking up their bills, which included funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) and would significantly cut basic research funding in favor of later-stage research and technology transfer. Additionally, the Senate Appropriations Committee held a hearing Thursday to vote on 302(b) allocations, which are the allocated funding amounts for each of the twelve Appropriations Subcommittees. As expected, the allocations aligned with the funding levels set in the budget agreement that was a part of the recently passed legislation raising the federal debt ceiling and consist of relatively flat funding for all agencies except DOD and Veterans Affairs (VA), which saw slight increases. Appropriations Committees will continue their work on federal funding legislation after the recess as they look to pass a final spending package before the end of the calendar year.

The University of Minnesota Washington Update provides intelligence and analysis on recent federal activities. Contact Jackson Clark, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC, at jackson@lewis-burke.com with any questions or comments related to the Update’s content.

Congressional, Agency Updates and Funding Opportunities

Congressional Update: House and Senate Introduce Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Bills

Congress recently made significant progress on must-pass legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) beyond its current authorization which is set to expire on September 30, 2023. The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee unveiled and approved the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, while the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CST) Committee released the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 2023. Both reauthorizations garnered bipartisan support and would extend the current FAA authorization through fiscal year (FY) 2028, although most FAA programs would still be contingent to annual appropriations.

The House and Senate proposals extend existing and establish new programs across FAA’s R&D and workforce development portfolios. Moreso than prior authorizations, both also include policies and programs designed to promote and safeguard the growing use of unmanned aerial/aircraft systems (UAS) and other advanced air mobility (AAM) technologies. Both bills prioritize modernizing FAA to improve efficiency and operations,
increase aviation safety, as well as support for the domestic aviation industry. Below are some of the major provisions of interest in the R&D, workforce development, and UAS technology realms:

**Research and Development**
- Both the House and Senate bills would create a new Office of Innovation at the FAA to support the development of advanced aviation technologies.
- The House bill would create a National Aerospace Safety and Security Campus, and within it a Technical Center for Advanced Aerospace that would develop and stimulate “technology partnerships with and between industry, academia, and other government agencies,” through the management of grants and overseeing the use of facilities by academia and industry at the campus.
- The Senate bill includes language that would continue support for Centers of Excellence (COE) on UAS, sustainable aviation fuels, as well as advanced materials. These COEs would promote collaboration between academia, FAA, and relevant industry stakeholders to advance research and technology in the respective fields.
- The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, which has jurisdiction over FAA’s R&D activities, introduced legislation designed to enable new research on aviation fuels, improved operational safety, increased cybersecurity, and studies on the benefits of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, space-based assets, and additive manufacturing.

**Workforce Development**
- Both bills would increase funding levels and broaden the uses and eligibility criteria for aviation workforce development grants. This includes expanded opportunities for universities to support education and training-focused activities related to pilot training, aircraft maintenance, UAS operations curriculum, and manufacturing apprenticeships and internships.
- The Senate bill would instruct the FAA to publish a National Strategic Plan for Aviation Workforce Development, which would develop recommendations to address potential gaps and future workforce development programs required to meet aviation industry needs.
- The House bill would create a National Center for the Advancement of Aerospace, a federally chartered and independent entity to “serve as a repository for research conducted by institutions of higher education, research institutions, or other stakeholders regarding the aerospace workforce and related technical and skill development.” The National Center would support the COEs and Technical Center previously mentioned.
- The House bill also would instruct the FAA and the proposed National Center to create the “Cooperative Aviation Recruitment, Enrichment, and Employment Readiness” (CAREER) Program by FY 2026, which would fund projects that address aviation-related workforce challenges.

**Unmanned Aircraft Systems**
- Both bills continue congressional support for FAA’s UAS Test Sites by reauthorizing the seven current sites for an additional five years. The Senate bill would also direct the FAA to establish two additional sites.
- Both the House and Senate bills would further provide additional authorizations, rules, and certifications for different UAS use cases, including for Beyond Visual Line of Sight operations.
- The House would also include a drone education and workforce training program to fund drone training programs at education institutions.
The Senate bill would establish a new office for Advanced Aviation Technology and Innovation to coordinate development of advanced aviation technologies and assist their integrating them into the national airspace.

Both bills would extend and expand FAA’s BEYOND program. The BEYOND program is a partnership between state and local governmental authorities, universities, and FAA for the testing of concepts and technologies related to UAS. Consortia led by public entities, through an application process, would be approved to conduct UAS flights and related projects based on the needs of their respective communities. The goal of the program is to streamline the process for potential integration of UAS technology into areas such as wildfire management, public safety, and transport of goods, among others.

These provisions are in addition to the House Science Committee’s National Drone and Advanced Air Mobility Research & Development Act, which would provide UAS research opportunities at a range of Federal agencies.

The House bill was marked up by the committees on June 13; however, the Senate mark-up is currently delayed as the members work through multiple outstanding issues, including pilot training requirements and flight restrictions from the Washington Reagan National Airport. Once these issues are resolved, it is likely that the bills will come together in a conference committee after passage to sort out contrasting language, especially to rectify the respective committee’s competing priorities for the next five years. If both chambers cannot develop compromise language before the FAA’s authorization expires on September 30, Congress will need to pass a short-term extension of the current authorization while negotiations continue. Lewis-Burke will continue to monitor the reauthorization’s progression through both chambers of Congress in the coming months.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The full text of the House bill, the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act of 2023, can be found here.
- The full text of the House Science Committee’s bill, which has jurisdiction over FAA’s R&D activities, is available here.
- The full text of the Senate bill, the FAA Authorization Act of 2023, can be found here.
- Lewis-Burke’s full analysis of the House Science Committee’s National Drone and Advanced Air Mobility Research & Development Act, which would increase the number of UAS research opportunities at a multitude of agencies, is available here.

Agency Update: NIH Holds June Advisory Committee to the Director Meeting

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) met on June 8-9 to discuss ongoing programs and initiatives across the agency. The meeting began with a Director’s Report from Acting NIH Director Dr. Larry Tabak. Dr. Tabak highlighted the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) that was released in March. The plan emphasizes three objectives—operations, workforce, and research—to ensure that the NIH workforce will reflect the diversity of the nation and advance the mission of the agency. Dr. Tabak lauded the plan and noted that the NIH will strive to implement it across all Institutes and Centers (ICs), with many opportunities for trans-agency initiatives. He also highlighted the proposed simplified review framework for research project grants. The new framework reorganized the
review criteria into three factors: “importance of the research,” “rigor and feasibility,” and “expertise and resources.” A majority of the respondents to a request for information (RFI) on the framework in March provided positive feedback, a trans-NIH implementation committee will now develop a roll-out strategy based on the feedback.

The meeting also included individual sessions on key agency efforts, including the Public Access Plan; Cancer Moonshot Initiative; RECOVER Initiative on Long COVID; Clinical Trial Stewardship; Climate Change and Health Initiative; and the ACD Working Group on Postdoctoral Training. Recordings of the ACD meeting and all associated materials can be found here, and a full summary and analysis of the meeting can be found here.

Agency Update: CHIPs Update
Below is an update on recent activities related to implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 along with a refreshed timeline on planned CHIPs activities. This includes updates from the Department of Commerce’s CHIPs Program Office, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) Industrial Advisory Committee (IAC) and Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology (VCAT).

- **CHIPs Timeline:** In summer 2023, the NSTC Selection Committee will identify the NSTC Board of Trustees who will establish the NSTC in the fall of 2023 with funding opportunities potentially released late 2023. In the fall, the vision and strategy paper for NAPMP will be released, the CHIPs office will also select topics for the 1-3 new Manufacturing USA Institutes and begin the proposal process. The mainly NIST-intramural Metrology program will begin in the fall. Regarding the Incentives Program, the NOFO for commercial R&D facilities is expected in the fall of 2023. More information on the Incentives Program and mandatory statements of interest can be found here.

- **Summary of Manufacturing USA Institutes RFI responses:** NIST released a summary of the responses to a request for information (RFI) regarding the design, requirements, and potential work of up to three new Manufacturing USA Institutes. The report summarizes over 90 responses from stakeholders, made up of 61% from industry and 7% for academia. Responses included input on the scope, structure and governance of the institutes, strategies to advance co-investment and engagement in the semiconductor sector, education and workforce development plans, and methods for tracking the metrics and success of the institutes. Suggested themes in the RFI responses included smart manufacturing and packaging, advanced packaging substrate technology, substrate manufacturing, design for manufacturing, and infrastructure to support technology transfer. The full report can be found here, and more on the Manufacturing USA Institutes can be found here.

- **New Leadership for Manufacturing USA Institutes:** NIST announced five new leaders for the CHIPs R&D Office:
  - Director Lora Weiss,
  - Deputy Director Eric Lin,
  - Executive Officer Neil Alderoty,
  - Associate Director for Integration and Policy Richard-Duane Chambers, and
  - Director of the Metrology Program Marla Dowell.
The CHIPS R&D office oversees CHIPS for America’s four integrated programs: NSTC, National Advanced Packaging and Manufacturing Program (NAPMP), up to three new Manufacturing USA Institutes, and the Metrology program. The full press release can be found [here](#).

- **Report on Metrology:** The CHIPS R&D Office released a report overviewing the grand challenges in metrology for the semiconductor sector. The report will serve as a resource for researchers within the CHIPS R&D metrology program and guide them on project development as well as research activities and outcomes to reach the overall goals for microelectronics research outlined in the *CHIPS and Science Act of 2022*. The report, *Metrology Gaps in the Semiconductor Ecosystem*, can be found [here](#).

- **NSF DCL on Educating the Semiconductor Workforce:** NSF released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) for *Equitable and Transformative Approaches to Educating the Semiconductor Workforce (ETA-ESW)*. This DCL announced new opportunities through NSF’s *Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE)* and *Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT) program* that seek to “support the development of a skilled STEM workforce in advanced memory manufacturing and/or semiconductor manufacturing and design.” With the overall goal of strengthening the manufacturing workforce through public-private partnerships, this DCL will support submissions to either the ExLENT or IUSE program that focus on broadening access to and creating new experiential learning opportunities; bettering implementation and adaptation of evidence-based practices from the semiconductor industry in curricula; integrating industry standards and career training into learning opportunities to develop workforce pathways; advancing inclusive STEM education; building the capacity of an institution to adapt to changes in the STEM workforce; and consider what contributes to student success in the semiconductor workforce and related fields.

- **Additional Workforce Development Updates:** NSF is developing a comprehensive long-term workforce and education strategy that will govern expenditures for the next four years of their CHIPS funding. A CHIPS R&D workforce development strategy is still forthcoming though some efforts could begin before the launch of the NSTC.

- **Additional Information and Resources:**
  - The VCAT presentation on CHIPS for America Research and Development Updates is available [here](#).
  - Presentations from the June 6 IAC meeting is available [here](#).

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**Funding Opportunity: NOAA Releases Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Solicitation**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management has released a solicitation for the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge, the first of the agency’s programs that is funded by the *Inflation Reduction Act*. This program will be a one-time opportunity, providing $575 million to support large-scale, regional, collaborative projects that seek to improve coastal resilience against weather and climate events, particularly for underserved communities. NOAA named four program priorities that should be incorporated in proposals: (1) **Risk Reduction**, including design and implementation of future adaptation plans that bring co-benefits to local and regional public health outcomes and other issues; (2) **Regional Coordination and Collaboration**, by meaningfully engaging all relevant stakeholders to identify shared priorities and inform implementation and evaluation strategies; (3) **Equity and Inclusion**, which strongly encourages co-development of adaptation plans with underserved communities and/or the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in such plans; and (4) **Enduring Capacity**, to ensure sustainable and long-lasting community
adaptation strategies, including by information sharing with other regions and targeted workforce development efforts.

NOAA will issue awards through two tracks:

- **Track One: Regional Collaborative Building and Strategy Development**
  - Track One will provide awards from $500,000 to $2 million to support “regional scale collaborative efforts focused on building resilience for coastal areas and communities.” Projects will support the development and strengthening of new or existing collaboratives to better promote regional climate resilience and can be used to advance the creation of a joint adaptation strategy. Proposals should describe plans to begin implementation of the strategy within two years of the start of the award.

- **Track Two: Implementation of Resilience and Adaptation Actions**
  - Track Two will provide awards from $15 million to $75 million to support the implementation of regional adaptation strategies, including capacity building activities to ensure long-term success of these adaptation efforts. Proposals should consider necessary workforce development and training efforts to promote the sustainability of the adaptation plan.

Proposals must describe ongoing collaboration efforts between the relevant entities, as well as plans to expand existing resilience efforts. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize scientific information, indigenous knowledge, and local knowledge to support the development and implementation of adaptation activities. The solicitation indicates that this program will support the Justice40 Initiative, which requires that 40 percent of the benefits of federal investments in climate or clean energy programs support disadvantaged communities and encourages applicants to use a variety of federal measurements to identify the communities that are relevant to the adaptation activities as well as the impacts of the adaptation strategies on marginalized communities. For this reason, community partners will be especially important to a competitive application.

**Eligibility Information:** Institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations supporting projects in coastal states are eligible to apply for this program. Coastal states are defined in the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1453(4), and states bordering the Great Lakes are included in this definition. A group of entities may apply together, comprising a “regional collaborative.” Regional collaboratives must represent a defined coastal area, but not all partners in these collaboratives are required to be located in coastal states. Applicants are encouraged to closely read for eligibility and reach out to the agency with concerns.

**Deadline and Key Dates:** Letters of intent are required and must be submitted by **August 21, 2023**. Full applications are by invitation only and must be submitted by **February 13, 2024**. NOAA will host virtual information sessions on this opportunity on June 27 from 1 – 2pm EST, July 11 from 3 – 4pm EST, and July 12 from 7 – 8pm EST.

**Award Information:** NOAA will issue a total of $25 million through Track One, with approximately 20-25 individual awards of $500,000 to $2 million for up to five years, and a total of $550 million through Track Two, with up to 15 individual awards between $15 million and $75 million for up to five years. There is no match requirement, however, applicants are encouraged to include any efforts or commitments to leverage NOAA funds for additional funds from other non-federal sources.
Sources and Additional Information:

- The program page, including additional detail about the virtual information sessions and other resources for submitting applications, is available at [https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge/](https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge/).
- More information on upcoming NOAA programs funded through the *Inflation Reduction Act* is available at [https://www.noaa.gov/inflation-reduction-act](https://www.noaa.gov/inflation-reduction-act).

[back to the top]