

## 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 109-88**

### ***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.