



Government Relations
1828 L Street NW, Suite 810
Washington, DC
20036-5104 U.S.A.

tel 1.202.785.3756
fax 1.202.429.9417
www.asme.org

Position Statement on the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science and Technology (S&T) Programs

Submitted by the ASME EPA Task Force of the ASME Environmental Engineering Division to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

June 30, 2014

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee:

The ASME Environmental Protection Agency Task Force is pleased to provide this testimony on the Fiscal Year 2015 (FY 2015) budget request for research and development programs in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Introduction

ASME is a nonprofit, worldwide educational and technical Society with more than 130,000 members. It conducts one of the world's largest technical publishing operations, holds more than 30 technical conferences and 200 professional development courses each year, and has authored over 600 industrial and manufacturing standards.

Background

Scientists and engineers have a long-standing professional interest in applying Science & Technology (S&T) to improve the environment and human health in the U.S. Mechanical engineers increasingly collaborate with other professionals to develop innovative and cost-effective environmental technologies and systems.

The EPA plays an essential role in the nation's efforts to protect human health and safeguard the environment, and EPA's S&T research and development (R&D) activities are instrumental in improving environmental protection in a sound, sustainable, and cost-effective manner. R&D efforts are needed to improve environmental health, the ecology, environmental monitoring, environmental technology development and implementation. Pollution reduction is needed to address the emerging concerns of climate change, as well as homeland security and infrastructure protection.

Overview of the ASME EPA Task Force Review

The FY 2015 budget request for EPA is \$7.9 billion, a \$310 million or 3.8 percent decrease from the FY 2014 enacted amount of \$8.2 billion. The EPA's Science and Technology account would increase by 0.6 percent or \$4.6 million in FY 2015 to \$763.7 million.

EPA has seen declining budget figures for the last four budget cycles. The EPA Task Force feels that a higher appropriation is warranted for the agency in FY 2015. Additional R&D funds are needed in order to enhance study responses to hydraulic fracturing and oil shale waste issues,

climate change, terrestrial carbon sequestration and management, biofuels, and nanotechnology development.

The Task Force’s comments on the FY 2015 budget focus on the mechanical engineering-intensive R&D activities of the S&T portfolio within the EPA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD). The change in funding levels supporting these core objectives between FY 2013 and FY 2015 is as follows:

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
Indoor Air and Radiation	\$ 6.39M	\$ 6.45M	\$6.09M
Homeland Security	\$ 38.88M	\$ 38.36M	\$39.44M
Clean Air and Climate	\$114.9M	\$120.4M	\$118.5M
Safe and Sustainable			
Water Resources	\$ 106.2M	\$ 111.0M	\$ 114.1M
Human Health Protection	\$ 3.6M	\$ 3.6M	\$ 3.6M
Air, Climate, and Energy Research	\$ 87.1M	\$ 94.9M	\$ 101.9M

EPA Office of Research and Development

Through research and technical assistance, ORD provides the scientific foundation for EPA by performing research and development to identify and solve present and future environmental issues and providing responsive technical support to its scientific partners. The ORD administers programs addressing both foundational research, to improve the scientific tools used to understand and evaluate environmental health, as well as problem-driven research designed to provide scientific solutions to high-priority environmental problems. It is an invaluable national resource.

We note that the ORD workforce has declined by over 10 percent in the past several years and is currently not sufficient to permit action on a number of topics of national importance, particularly hydraulic fracturing, climate change, and safe and clean water issues. Effort should be made to bring ORD staff to approximately pre-sequestration levels so that EPA can continue to support R&D on current and future environmental problems.

We support the increases requested for the EPA’s S&T directorate, which partially reverses several years of funding decreases. An evaluation of EPA’s resources is needed to ensure that it can balance between existing priorities and new challenges. Program specifics issues are outlined below:

Indoor Air and Radiation

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
Indoor Air: Radon Program	\$0.56M	\$0.19M	\$0.0M
Reduce Risks from Indoor Air	\$0.36M	\$0.31M	\$0.41M
Radiation Protection	\$1.9M	\$2.1M	\$2.0M
Radiation Preparedness Response	\$4.0M	\$3.8M	\$3.6M

The Task Force supports the EPA’s replacement of the Radon Program with the Federal Radon Action Plan, which will leverage industry and nonprofit efforts to amplify existing federal efforts to reduce radon risk.

Homeland Security

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
--	----------------	----------------	----------------

Critical Infrastructure Protection	\$10.3M	\$10.4M	\$12.0M
Preparedness, Response and Recovery	\$27.9M	\$27.3M	\$26.8M
Protection of EPA Personnel and Infrastructure	\$0.54M	\$0.54M	\$0.57M

Homeland security activities are a significant component of the EPA’s S&T activities, focusing on critical infrastructure protection and disaster preparedness and response. The Task Force supports the additional funding allocated to the Critical Infrastructure Protection program.

Clean Air and Climate

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
Climate Protection	\$13.0M	\$8.31M	\$8.0M

The EPA Task Force views Climate Protection Research as a critical issue and is troubled by the funding trajectory for this program given funding in the previous fiscal years. We urge Congress to appropriate additional funds for Climate Protection to bring this program back up the at least the FY 2013 enacted level.

Research: Air, Climate and Energy

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
S&T Activities	\$87.1M	\$94.9M	\$101.9M

The EPA Task Force supports the full FY 2015 increased request for Air, Climate and Energy Research, particularly the \$3.79 million in additional funding for support for hydraulic fracturing research activities within the ACE research program.

Safe and Sustainable Water Resources

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
Research	\$106.2M	111.0M	\$114.1M

Safe and Sustainable Water Resources funding supports a variety of activities related to the challenges facing U.S. water resources, including drinking water and waste water from industrial activities like hydraulic fracturing. Funding for Sustainability research is slated for an increase of just over \$3.1 million for this fiscal year. The Task Force is pleased that funding has been increased and supports the FY 2015 request.

Human Health Protection

	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>
Drinking Water Programs	\$3.61M	\$3.63M	\$3.68M

Overall, the FY 2015 budget request calls for a slight increase from the FY 2014 appropriated amount. The Task Force considers the long term development of infrastructure related to water quality issues as a high priority of the EPA and supports this request given the constrained budget environment.

Water Quality Research and Support Grants

The EPA Task Force urges Congress to again support funding for the Water Quality Research and

Support Grant program. Last year, Congress provided \$4.23 million for this nationally competitive grant program to fund water quality and availability research. Given the severe droughts and water resource challenges facing many parts of the country, the Task Force supports funding at the FY 2014 appropriated level for this grant program.

Environmental Education

The FY 2015 EPA budget does not request any funding to support Environmental Education, which was funded at \$8.7 million in FY 2014. It is essential to encourage students to pursue careers in environmental science and engineering. Such investments are critical to addressing environmental concerns, bolstering our nation's workforce, and maintaining its competitiveness. If Congress and the Administration proceed with the transfer of EPA environmental education activities to the National Science Foundation (NSF), close coordination and consultation with EPA should be conducted to ensure that the goals of EPA's programs are continued under NSF administration.

Conclusion

The Administration's FY 2015 request is, in part, reflective of a difficult fiscal environment where tough choices have to be made to support priorities within the EPA. As this Task Force has previously stated, however, difficult budget choices should not preclude certain national priorities from receiving funding. This is particularly true in the case of long-term basic scientific research. As noted above, the Task Force requests that additional funding be allocated for the Climate Protection Program and the Critical Infrastructure Protection program to insure that we continue to develop our understanding of environmental and health impacts of climate change and that security enhancements to our water supply and other critical infrastructure are not delayed nor disrupted. Further, the Task Force proposes the continued funding of EPA's Water Quality Research Support Grant program and urges the Committee to ensure continuity of funding for EPA's Environmental Education efforts.

This statement represents the views of the EPA Task Force of the Environmental Engineering Division (EED) of ASME's Technical Communities and is not necessarily a position of ASME as a whole.