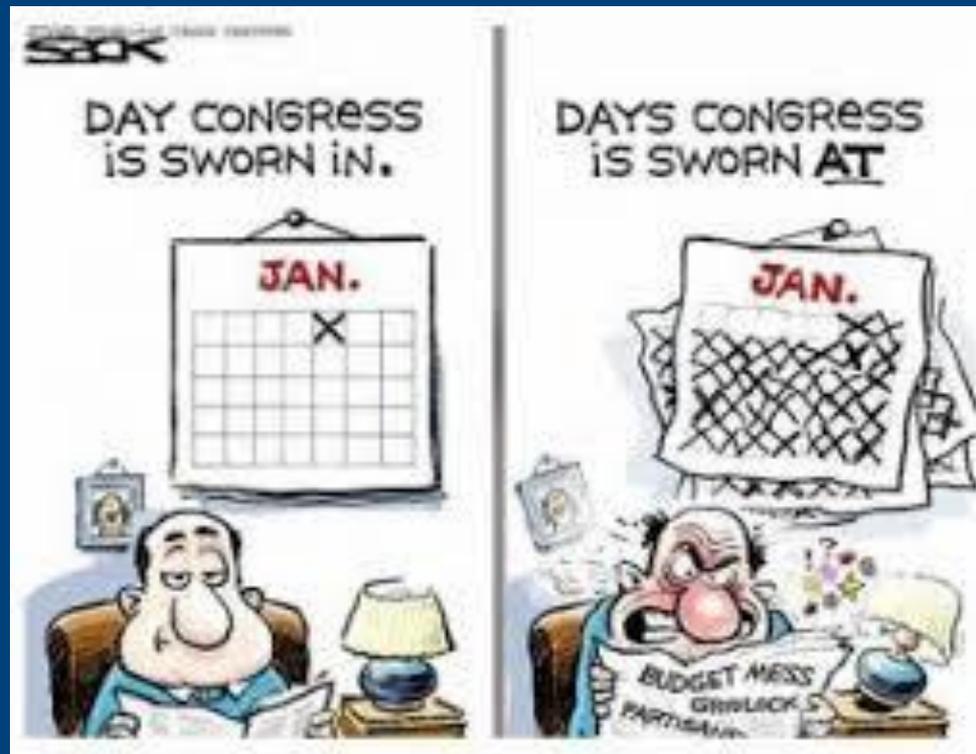


Making Conservation Happen:

THE 116TH CONGRESS APPROACHES HALFTIME



Today's Agenda

The 116th Congress Approaches its “Half Time”

- *Appropriations Update*

House Natural Resources Begins Moving Agenda

- *House and Senate Side-by-Side*
- *Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling*
- *Nationwide Fisheries Policy Listening Sessions*

Legislation of Interest to Zoos and Aquariums – Colin Sheldon, WCS

- *Wild Bird Conservation Reauthorization Act*
- *SALAMANDER Act*
- *Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Act*

The Bigger Picture

- *Interior Department has its Own Inspector General Issues*
- *Law & Order – Snapshot of Legal Challenges to Environmental Rollbacks*
- *Year End Engagement Tips*

Congressional Update



Tom Adams

Policy Advisor
The Ocean Project



Congressional Update



- Impeachment will consume more and more oxygen
- Immigration & infrastructure not moving
- Appropriations bills unfinished...stop-gap continuing resolution expires November 21
- House Natural Resources Committee acting on agenda – climate change a focal point
- House & Senate Committees moving more narrow bills
- Senate Floor is a graveyard

Interior & Environment FY 2020 Appropriations

As of 10/3/19

■ Multinational Species Conservation Fund

- House: \$15 million
- Senate: \$12.8 million

■ ESA Recover Challenge Grants

- House: \$8 million
- Senate: \$6 million

■ State and Tribal Wildlife Grants:

- House: \$70.6 million
- Senate: \$65.1 million

House rejected Administration proposal to have competitive wildlife grants directed solely to big game species in 11 western states



Commerce (NOAA) FY 2020 Appropriations

As of 10/3/19

NOAA

■ Environmental Literacy Grants Program

- House: \$5.5 million
- Senate: \$5 million

■ Bay, Watershed, Education and Training (BWET) Program

- House: \$9 million
- Senate: \$7.5 million

House and Senate Appropriations bill rejected Administration proposal to reduce or eliminate informal science education programs

■ Marine Debris Program:

- House: \$9.5 million
- Senate: “not less than \$7.5 million”



Labor, Health and Education FY 2020 Appropriations

As of 10/3/19

- **Institute of Museum and Library Services**
 - House: \$267 million
 - Senate: \$244 million

- **Office of Museum Services**
 - House: \$42.7 million
 - Senate: \$35.7 million

House and Senate Appropriations bill rejected Administration proposal to eliminate IMLS and its programs



House and Senate Lands, Water and Oceans Split Screen

House is Active

- Committee bills incorporating climate change into everything
- Approves bipartisan bills banning offshore oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic, Pacific, Florida Gulf coast, and Alaska coastal plain
- Using oversight to make Administration officials accountable for decisions
- House leadership wants to show they can “walk and chew gum”

Senate is Less Ambitious

- Talk but very little action on climate change
- No Senate action expected on House oil and gas drilling bills
- Focusing on smaller bills within their jurisdiction that could be part of larger package in 2020
- Floor schedule is being tightly controlled by Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell (R-KY)



September 12: House Passes Bills Banning Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling

- Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act (H.R. 1146)
- Coastal and Marine Economies Protection Act (H.R. 1941)
- Securing and Protecting Florida's Coastline Act (H.R. 205)
- *The Senate is not expected to act on any of these bills*



Fisheries Policy Listening Sessions

- House Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee begins series of listening sessions to gather views of stakeholders
- Purpose is to gather views of stakeholders before drafting revisions to Magnuson - Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Impact of climate change expected to be included in the House bill.
- Sessions begin tomorrow:
 - *At Arcata (CA) Community Center; 2:30 - 4:30 pm*
 - *October 7th in San Francisco at Aquarium by the Bay; 1:00 - 3:00 pm*
- Additional sessions contemplated later this year for Seattle and early next year in Alaska, New England, Mid-Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico



How Zoos and Aquariums Can Participate in Fisheries Listening Sessions?



- Host a listening session:
 - *You are trusted and your facilities are viewed as a neutral venue*
 - *The hook as been baited...Aquarium by the Bay hosting session*
 - *Seattle Aquarium has offered to host Seattle session*
- If appropriate, have your scientist or other leader be a panelist
- Attend sessions and make public comments
- Use lessons from The Ocean Project's Fisheries Policy Visitor Engagement Projects – *your guests want to learn about issues and how they can help*
- Want more information – tadams@theoceanproject.org

Legislation to Know About:

Saving Critically Endangered Animals & Amphibians



Colin Sheldon
Assistant Director of
Federal Affairs

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H.R. 2685, the Wild Bird Conservation Reauthorization Act



- *Introduced by Rep. Jeff Van Drew (D-NJ)*
- Renews a program created by Congress in 1992 to conserve wild birds affected by the illegal pet trade.
- The bill would provide grants to conserve species like scarlet macaws, African grey parrots, Asian songbirds, and many of other wild bird species that are now threatened or endangered because of the illegal trade.

H.R. 4340, the SALAMANDER Act

- *Introduced by Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and Rep. Peter King (R-NY)*
- Reestablishes the Amphibians in Decline program that was also discontinued due to budget cuts
- Prior to suspension, the program funded more than 40 projects
- As with CEACA, the SALAMANDER Act also uses MSCF approach to help stop the decline of amphibians around the world.



H.R. 4341, the Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Act (CEACA)

- *Introduced by Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) and Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL)*
- Reestablishes Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Fund that was discontinued due to budget cuts
- Prior to suspension, the program funded more than 100 projects
- Uses Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) approach for imperiled species like snow leopards, Andean cats, African penguins, white-backed vulture and countless others in need of help.



The Bigger Picture

- ✓ Oversight Fights Heat Up
- ✓ Importance of Litigation
- ✓ Engagement tips



It's Getting Testy: *House Oversight of Federal Agencies*

- House Natural Resources Committee conducting aggressive oversight of Interior Department
- This is one of the most partisan committees in Congress – ripple effect will likely impact cooperation legislative process
- Suppression of climate change report
- Interior political appointees making multiple decision favoring former clients/employers
- Similar issues at Commerce Department (NOAA)
- Other Committees doing similar oversight which adds to the drip, drip, drip of impeachment



Law and Order:

Lawsuits Against Trump Administration Environmental Rollbacks

- Implementation of Trump Agenda is mostly being attempted by Executive Orders and “cutting regulations”
- No landmark conservation law is immune
- Litigation blocking and/or delaying much of these actions
- **Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)** has filed 90 lawsuits. Prevailing in 49 of 53 decided cases – **92% win rate**
- **EarthJustice** has filed 120 lawsuits. Prevailing in 16 of 17 decided cases – **94% win rate**



Tips for Engaging Members of Congress



- ✓ Use May 20, 2020 AZA Advocacy Day as a target that you build to with a DC meeting
- ✓ Invite Members of Congress, staff & their families for VIP tours – including/especially state and district staff
- ✓ Use holiday events strategically & invite officials for formal role in opening night events
- ✓ Offer facilities for meetings, staff retreats, etc..
- ✓ Emphasize your role as educators
- ✓ Use internet for basic research:
 - *Do a media event when having a shared position on an important issue*
 - *Give them an award – even if you must invent it!*
 - *Find a reason to thank them for positive actions*

Thank you!

This Webinar is funded by the *Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*

This webinar has been recorded. To rewatch it or share it with a friend or colleague, it is posted at www.theoceanproject.org.

A PDF version of the slides also will be available on our website.

If you have any follow up questions, need information or advice on possible engagement activities, please contact Tom Adams at tadams@theoceanproject.org

