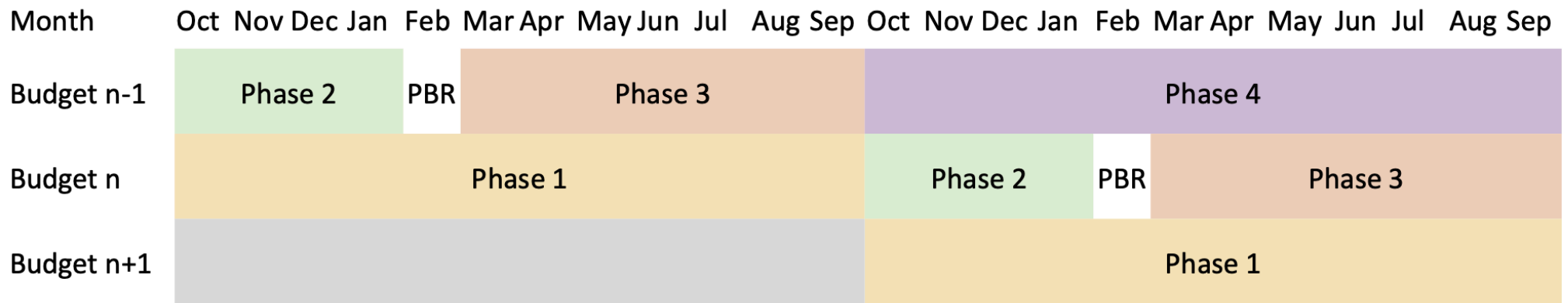


NASEM CAA

2026 CJS SUMMARY AND HIDDEN GEMS

BUDGET CYCLE

Figure 1: A standard budget timeline



COURTESY ALESSANDRA ZIMMERMANN, AAAS

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

- The minibus bill (signed into law January 23, 2026)
- The Joint Explanatory Language (portions have force of law)
- The Senate CJS language (many aspects defaulted to this language)
- The House CJS language

THE NASA APD SUMMARY

<i>FY 2026 Budget Comparisons (Baseline, Minibus, SAC, HAC)</i>						
Account	Canceled in PBR	FY24/25 Baseline	FY26 Senate Report	FY26 House Report	FY26 Minibus JES	Combined FY26 Budget
Science Mission Directorate		\$7,334.2	\$7,300.0	\$6,000.0	\$7,250.0	\$7,250.0
Astrophysics Division		\$1,530.0	\$1,604.9	\$1,485.0	\$1,595.0	\$1,595.0
Astrophysics Research		\$297.9	\$300.4			\$300.4
Balloon Project	x	\$49.3		\$49.3	\$49.3	\$49.3
Cosmic Origins		\$339.0				
Hubble Space Telescope		\$93.3	\$98.3	\$88.9	\$98.3	\$98.3
James Webb Space Telescope		\$187.0	\$208.0		\$208.0	\$208.0
Physics of the Cosmos		\$196.4				
Chandra X-Ray Observatory	x	\$69.6	\$63.0			\$63.0
Laser Interferometer Space Antenna	x	--	\$80.5		\$80.5	\$80.5
Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite	x	\$1.3		\$1.3		\$1.3
Exoplanet Exploration		\$461.6				
Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope		\$407.3	\$300.0	\$376.5	\$300.0	\$300.0
Habitable Worlds Observatory		\$17.5	\$150.0		\$150.0	\$150.0
Astrophysics Explorer		\$234.8	\$230.7			\$230.7

COURTESY THE PLANETARY SOCIETY

THE NSF TOP LINES

National Science Foundation

The bill provides **\$8.75 billion for the National Science Foundation**, which is a 3.4% cut from Fiscal Year 2024, but far less than the 57% cut proposed in the President's Budget Request.

Research and Related Activities

The bills funds the Research and Related Activities (R&RA) account at the level of **\$7.2 billion** and directs NSF to "*equitably distribute funding to support all basic research directorates within R&RA, as well as the Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships Directorate.*" It further states that "*no directorate shall receive more than a 5 percent reduction relative to the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.*"

COURTESY THE AAS POLICY TEAM

THE DOE TOP LINES (ENERGY & WATER)

Budget Details

Selected programs (\$, millions)
% change over prior year enacted

- Show summary view
 Show all subprograms

click rows for subprogram details

PROGRAM	ENACTED	REQUEST	HOUSE	SENATE	FINAL
Office of Science	\$8,240	\$7,092	\$8,400	\$8,250	\$8,400
Basic Energy Sciences	\$2,588	\$2,241	\$2,728	\$2,578	\$2,678
High Energy Physics	\$1,252	\$1,113	\$1,230	\$1,253	\$1,235
Advanced Scientific Computing Research	\$1,036	\$1,016	\$1,105	\$1,090	\$1,116
Nuclear Physics	\$826	\$768	\$845	\$871	\$866
Biological & Environmental Research	\$870	\$395	\$800	\$830	\$854
Fusion Energy Sciences	\$790	\$745	\$830	\$800	\$806
Science Laboratories Infrastructure	\$261	\$210	\$243	\$210	\$225
Science Program Direction	\$227	\$227	\$227	\$227	\$227
Isotope R&D and Production	\$170	\$162	\$170	\$174	\$170
Safeguards and Security	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190
Workforce Dev. for Teachers & Scientists	\$31	\$25	\$32	\$28	\$32



TELL ME AGAIN

**WHY YOU ONLY READ
THE MINIBUS LANGUAGE**

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JOINT LANGUAGE: GSFC

Goddard Space Flight Center Consolidation.—The Committees have reviewed reports regarding facility and building closures at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center’s Greenbelt campus and are concerned about potential negative impacts to operations and capabilities at the Center. The agreement directs NASA to preserve all the technical and scientific world-class capabilities at Goddard, including those that will be used to complete any mission funded in fiscal year 2026 by Congress during any campus consolidation. In addition, the agreement directs NASA to, no later than 30 days after the enactment of this act, contract a study with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine regarding the current technical and scientific capabilities housed at Goddard, what capabilities are positioned to ensure long-term success of the NASA mission, including for future cutting-edge scientific discovery and crewed space exploration, and what facilities are needed to house and operate those capabilities.

JOINT LANGUAGE: NSF FACILITIES

Research and Development Centers and Scientific Facilities.—The agreement supports the world-class research performed at the National Science Foundation–funded research and development centers and major scientific facilities. The agreement directs NSF to provide a briefing, not later than 30 days after enactment of this act, on its facilities management and oversight plan for NSF-supported research and development centers and major scientific facilities across all disciplines. The agreement further directs NSF to submit a report, not later than 180 days after enactment of this act, on this plan.

JOINT LANGUAGE: NSF NEXT GEN FACILITIES

Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey Priority Facilities.—The agreement provides not less than \$30,000,000 for NSF to support the development of next generation astronomy facilities recommended in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics 2020 (Astro2020) and adopts House and Senate direction. The agreement also reiterates Senate direction that NSF shall immediately advance both U.S. Extremely Large Telescopes into final design review, at no cost to the Federal Government. Not later than 45 days after enactment of this act, NSF shall brief the Committees about how the Foundation intends to implement this congressional direction and adopts House direction requesting regular program updates thereafter.

ization of the NAAIM, and budget expectations for out years.

Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey Priority Facilities.—The Committee understands that the Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics 2020 (Astro2020) has developed a comprehensive research strategy and vision for the future of astronomy and astrophysics, particularly as it relates to ground-based instruments and observatories, including the U.S. Extremely Large Telescope Program (USELT) and the Next Generation Very Large Array. The Committee is encouraged to see NSF taking proactive steps towards advancement to the next phase of the process and notes that this has the potential to unlock additional non-Federal investments. The recommendation provides up to \$30,000,000 for continued design efforts. The Committee notes the importance of the USELT program, a critical science program that is undertaken by the Federal Government with a 50 percent cost share by non-federal partners, including major U.S. allies, in ensuring continued U.S. leadership in astronomy and safeguarding national security. The Committee directs NSF to continue to provide regular briefings on the status of the USELT program.

JOINT LANGUAGE: NSN & DSN

Space Communications.—The agreement includes not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level for the Near Space Network and Deep Space Network and includes the House direction and funding level under the heading “NASA Near Space Network (NSN) and Deep Space Network (DSN) Services”.

and land crew on a runway within the continental U.S.

NASA Near Space Network (NSN) and Deep Space Network (DSN) Services.—The Committee supports NASA’s NSN and DSN services which provide space communications and tracking services to missions. The Committee notes that NSN and DSN services enable crewed, robotic, and launch vehicle missions with NASA-owned stations and through cooperative agreements with inter-agency, international, and commercial service providers. The Committee provides \$3,500,000 for NASA’s continued work with university partners on NSN and DSN lunar tracking services.

SENATE LANGUAGE: TOP LEVEL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Committee provides \$7,300,000,000 for Science, which is \$34,200,000 below the fiscal year 2025 enacted level. The Science account encompasses: Earth Science, Planetary Science, Astrophysics, Heliophysics, and Biological and Physical Science. This funding supports NASA programs that seek to answer fundamental questions concerning the ways in which Earth is changing; the comparison of Earth with other planets in the solar system and around other stars; the connections between the Sun and Earth; and the origin and evolution of planetary systems, the galaxy, and the universe, including the origin and distribution of life in the universe. These objectives are assisted by input from the scientific community through decadal surveys and are achieved through orbital and suborbital experiments, robotic flight missions, ground-based scientific research and data analysis, and the development of new technologies for future missions. NASA shall continue its progress toward implementing the recommendations of decadal surveys in Earth Science, Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics, and Biological and Physical Sciences.

The Committee rejects the mission terminations proposed in the fiscal year 2026 budget request for Earth Science, Planetary Science, Astrophysics, and Heliophysics. The Committee is concerned by the plan to end 55 missions across Science, which was driven by budget pressure rather than scientific value. The operating missions that are providing valuable scientific data should undergo the Senior Review process. Meanwhile, missions that are at the end of development and have been confirmed should proceed to launch at the earliest possible date. The Committee is open to collaborating with NASA to implement Senior Review findings. However, mission cancellations without clear justifications may hinder scientific progress and U.S. leadership in space.

Further, the Committee affirms the importance of NASA upholding its commitments to our international partners and expects future budget requests to sustain funding to fulfill these commitments, including for missions such as Laser Interferometer Space Antenna and Rosalind Franklin ExoMars Rover.

SENATE LANGUAGE: OPERATING FLAGSHIPS AND RESEARCH

Astrophysics.—The Committee recommendation for Astrophysics includes not less than \$98,300,000 for the Hubble Space Telescope, restoring grant funding for investigators and maintaining current public outreach activities; not less than \$63,000,000 for the Chandra X-ray Observatory; and \$80,500,000 for NASA's contribution to the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna [LISA].

The Committee recognizes that both Hubble and Chandra continue to make transformative discoveries and provide key capabilities that augment and complement the James Webb Space Telescope [JWST] and help secure U.S. leadership in space and science but will eventually need to be decommissioned as their capabilities degrade and resources are prioritized to other observatories.

Astrophysics Research.—The Committee recognizes the role of the Astrophysics Research program in supporting the development of novel astrophysics observation technologies that lay the foundation for future mission architectures. Additionally, a strong research program maximizes the scientific value of space-based missions by ensuring that the data collected through such observations can continue to provide new insights into the mechanisms behind cosmological phenomena. The Committee also understands that supporting these activities through extramural grant funding contributes to the long-term viability of the U.S. astrophysics community. As such, the Committee recommends \$300,400,000 for Astrophysics Research.

SENATE LANGUAGE: ROMAN, HWO EXPLORERS

linked directly to its science missions.

James Webb Space Telescope.—The Committee provides \$208,000,000 for JWST, including \$4,000,000 for a one-time cost to refresh the technology for the JWST Mission Operations Center. The Committee directs that no cuts will be made to flight operations, observatory operations, observing modes, or current public outreach activities.

Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope.—The Committee strongly supports the timely development and launch of the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope and provides \$300,000,000 for the mission. Recognizing the telescope's transformative potential to survey billions of galaxies, detect thousands of exoplanets, and probe the universe's large-scale structure with a field of view 100-times larger than the Hubble Space Telescope, the Committee encourages NASA to prioritize the completion of all necessary integration, testing, and assembly processes to enable a launch at the earliest feasible date.

Habitable Worlds Observatory.—The Committee supports the Habitable Worlds Observatory as recommended by the Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics, "Pathways to Discovery in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the 2020s" [Astro2020]. In order to cement continued American leadership in astronomy, the Committee provides \$150,000,000 for the Habitable Worlds Observatory. The funding should be used to increase the technical readiness level of the coronagraph, ultra-stable segmented telescope, and astrophysics instrument subsystems; finalize architectures; construct hardware testbeds; and begin development of the observatory with a target launch date in the mid to late 2030s. In addition, the Committee directs NASA to establish the Habitable Worlds Observatory Project Office at Goddard Space Flight Center to leverage existing expertise in astrophysics and segmented mirror technology.

Astrophysics Explorer.—The Committee is encouraged by NASA's commitment to accelerate the cadence of Astrophysics Explorer missions and to continue a new line of small Pioneer-class missions that leverage advancements in low-cost platforms such as CubeSats and balloons to support groundbreaking science. Such activities can improve scientific understanding while simultaneously developing the scientific workforce through increased research opportunities for students and faculty. Therefore, the Committee provides \$230,700,000 for the Astrophysics Explorer program to meet these needs.

SENATE LANGUAGE: NSF TOP LINE

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The Committee's recommendation provides \$9,000,000,000 for the National Science Foundation [NSF]. The recommendation is \$60,000,000 below the fiscal year 2025 enacted level.

NSF was established as an independent agency by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 (Public Law 81-507) and is authorized to support research and education programs that promote the

RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Appropriations, 2025	\$7,176,500,000
Committee recommendation	7,176,500,000

The Committee's recommendation provides \$7,176,500,000 for Research and Related Activities [R&RA]. The recommendation is equal to the fiscal year 2025 enacted level.

Scientific Facilities and Instrumentation.—A critical component of the Nation's scientific enterprise is the infrastructure that supports researchers in discovery science. The Committee strongly supports NSF's role in building and operating groundbreaking research facilities, especially in areas that maintain or enhance U.S. leadership in key disciplines. Investments to advance the frontiers of research and education in science and engineering are critical to the Nation's innovation enterprise. The Committee expects NSF to fully fund its U.S. scientific research facilities and instruments to adequately support scientists and students engaged in sustained, cutting-edge research.

As major research facilities transition from construction, funded in the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account, to science operations and maintenance, funded in R&RA, it is necessary for NSF to accommodate this shift without impacting the existing scientific activities. The Committee notes that as a result of the National Science Board's "Study of Operations and Maintenance Costs for NSF Facilities" the agency created the Facility Operation Transition pilot to enable this shift. The Committee expects that as major research facilities, such as the Vera C. Rubin Observatory, move from construction into science operations NSF will continue to use the Facility Operation Transition to allow the ongoing operations and maintenance costs to gradually be absorbed into the managing division or directorate. Further, as part of the fiscal year 2027 budget request, NSF shall provide a 5-year operations and maintenance budget outlook for facilities that have recently graduated from the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account.

The recommendation includes full operational funding for the National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory, the National Radio Astronomy Observatories, the National Solar Observatory [NSO], and the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System.

SENATE LANGUAGE: DKIST, FACILITIES, USELT

Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope [DKIST].—The Committee provides not less than the fiscal year 2024 funding level for DKIST operations. DKIST is the largest and most advanced solar telescope on the planet and is a valuable resource for research and educational programs in solar physics. The Committee recognizes the value of DKIST's operations and does not support a reduction in its observing time. As such, the Committee expects NSF to respect the conclusion of the bottom-up operations and maintenance cost analysis and include the recommended amount in the fiscal year 2027 budget request to enable DKIST to operate seven days a week.

Astronomy.—The Committee expects NSF to provide appropriate levels of support for operating its current facilities, developing instrumentation, and preparing for investments in future world-class scientific research facilities. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NAS] Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics 2020 [Astro2020] outlines a comprehensive research strategy and vision to maintain U.S. science and technology leadership at the frontiers of astronomy and astrophysics for ground-based instruments and observatories. The Committee therefore provides \$50,000,000 for NSF to support the development of next generation astronomy facilities recommended in Astro2020.

The Committee remains strongly supportive of a two-hemisphere, U.S. Extremely Large Telescope [USELT] program with a robust user support system and data archive to ensure broad U.S. community access. This is consistent with the direction in division C of the joint explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 118–42 and Astro2020. NSF shall immediately advance both USELTs into final design review, at no cost to the Federal Government. Further, NSF, within the construct of the National Science Board approval process, is encouraged to advance the design of these Astro2020 priority projects during fiscal year 2026 so that appropriate Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction funds can be included in the fiscal year 2027 budget request. The U.S. ground-based astronomy program has been the leader in this critical basic science for more than a century, and the NSF has helped ensure open access to scientists regardless of their academic institution affiliation. The USELT program will provide unprecedented opportunities for scientific discovery and represents the only major science program undertaken by the Federal Government with a 50 percent cost share by non-Federal partners, including major U.S. allies. Not later than 90 days after enactment of this act, NSF shall brief the Committee about how the Foundation intends to implement this congressional direction.

SENATE LANGUAGE: GBO, LIGO, ICECUBE

available for continued research and educational programs.

Green Bank Observatory [GBO].—The Committee continues to support NSF's effort to develop multi-agency plans at GBO and provides not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level to support operations and maintenance at GBO through multi-agency plans, or directly through the Foundation. The Committee also supports efforts to develop new radar capabilities at GBO in partnership with other agencies such as NASA, the Department of Defense, and industry.

Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory [LIGO].—The Committee rejects the proposal to close one LIGO detector, which would completely undermine Nobel Prize-winning observations into gravitational waves. The Committee directs NSF to continue operating both LIGO facilities and provides not less than \$49,000,000. Further, the Committee supports the Foundation's efforts to invest in infrastructure and improve observational capabilities at both LIGO facilities, including technology development for the next generation gravitational wave detection network, as recommended in Astro2020 and in the recent report of the Advisory Committee for the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate. Not later than 90 days after enactment of this act, NSF is directed to brief the Committee regarding the plan to develop next generation gravitational wave detection network.

Neutrino Research.—The Committee is aware of the many important scientific contributions being made by the South Pole neutrino observatory IceCube, the current upgrade underway, and the initial planning for the next generation facility IceCube-Gen2 as recommended in Astro2020 and the Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel. NSF should consider development activities for IceCube-Gen2 and ensure an appropriate transition between the IceCube upgrade and IceCube-Gen2 projects to leverage lessons learned and knowledge transfer from one project to another to protect the specialized Antarctic workforce needed for both the upgrade and construction projects. The Committee provides not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level for IceCube operations and maintenance.

SENATE LANGUAGE: MSRI, REU, CAREER, GRFP

Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure.—The recommendation provides \$50,000,000 for the Mid-scale Research Infrastructure program and encourages the Foundation to make no fewer than two mid-scale awards to EPSCoR States.

Research Experiences for Undergraduates [REU].—The Committee was dismayed to hear about the cancellation of numerous REU programs during 2025. The Committee is strongly supportive of the REU Sties and Supplements program, as authorized by section 514 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science [COMPETES] Reauthorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-358), and provides not less fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

NSF Faculty Early Career Development [CAREER] Program.—The Committee expects NSF to continue to fund the CAREER Program, which provides financial support to early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization.

NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program.—The Committee supports the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, which provides a stipend and cost-of-living allowance to graduate students who are pursuing full-time, research-based masters and doctoral degrees in STEM education. The Committee provides sufficient funding to support 2,000 new fellowships in fiscal year 2026.

SENATE LANGUAGE: MREFC

MAJOR RESEARCH EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

Appropriations, 2025	\$234,000,000
Committee recommendation	350,000,000

The Committee's recommendation provides \$350,000,000 for Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction [MREFC].

The recommendation is \$116,000,000 above the fiscal year 2025 enacted level.

The MREFC appropriation supports the acquisition, procurement, construction, and commissioning of unique national research platforms and facilities as well as major research equipment. Projects supported by this appropriation push the boundaries of technology and offer expanded opportunities for the science and engineering community. Preliminary design and development activities, ongoing operations, and maintenance costs of the facilities are provided through the R&RA appropriation account.

The Committee's recommendation supports the continued construction of the Antarctic Infrastructure Recapitalization and the Leadership-Class Computing Facility. The Committee encourages NSF and the National Science Board to continue planning and budgeting for the next generation of major facilities needed to ensure the United States maintains its scientific leadership.

The recommendation provides \$90,000,000 for Mid-scale Research Infrastructure. The Committee continues to support investments in Mid-scale Research Infrastructure, including the procurement of larger mid-scale instrumentation under the MREFC account. Using MREFC for larger mid-scale projects will allow these projects to benefit from the oversight that all MREFC projects undergo. NSF is encouraged to award at least one mid-scale project led by an institution in an EPSCoR State.

The Committee encourages GAO to continue its annual review of programs funded within MREFC so that GAO can report to Congress shortly after each annual budget submission of the President and semiannually thereafter on the status of large-scale NSF projects and activities based on its review of this information.

SENATE LANGUAGE: ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Antarctic Research Infrastructure.—The Committee is concerned about pausing Antarctic field research and delaying the Fourth Generation Ground Cosmic Microwave Background [CMB-S4] and IceCube-Gen2 due to infrastructure challenges. Despite significant support for Antarctic infrastructure upgrades at McMurdo, Amundsen-Scott, and Palmer Stations, the modernization effort is years behind schedule, potentially extending another decade. These delays risk U.S. leadership in Antarctic research, partner support for new facilities, and progress in understanding critical Antarctic changes. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of community and stakeholder consultation in these decisions. NSF is directed to request sufficient resources to support concurrent infrastructure upgrades, ongoing research, and major facility planning, and to submit a comprehensive plan within 180 days, detailing timelines, milestones, and funding needs for Antarctic upgrades, research vessel deployment, and South Pole physics experiments.

Study on NSF Research Infrastructure.—The National Science Board's Vision 2030 States that research infrastructure “symbolizes a nation's commitment to S[cience] & E[ngineering], since it represents a significant long-term undertaking.” Within 30 days of enactment of this act, NSF shall update and make public the plan required under 42 U.S.C. 1862n-4 and shall contract with the National Academies to report on NSF's plans to strengthen research infrastructure. The report shall analyze whether NSF is providing the major research facilities to ensure the United States can conduct world-leading scientific research, how the NSF responds to international partner interest in major facility construction partnerships, the adequacy of NSF's capability to join existing partnerships, and recommendations for the current NSF process for investing in design and operation of billion-dollar class major facilities could be improved, including new funding mechanisms. The report shall be released not later than 270 days after the enactment of this act.