

The BUDGET and APPROPRIATIONS

I. The President's Budget Request

The President submitted his budget request for all of the government to Congress on February 1st, 2010. This budget will cover the 2011 Fiscal Year that will begin in October 2010 (The Federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30).

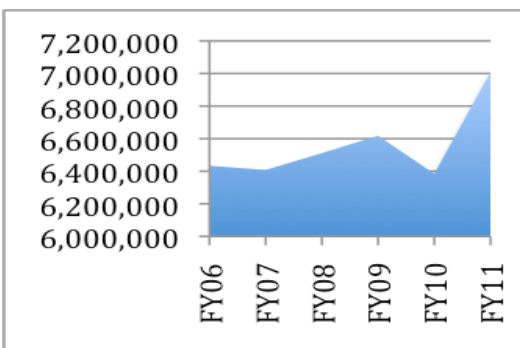
This request is developed at the agency level, and the final package is put together by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Agencies must negotiate with OMB for their budget. Some offices, such as Defense Programs in the Department of Energy (DOE), have a stronger negotiating hand than others, and generally can get whatever they ask for.

II. Congressional Role

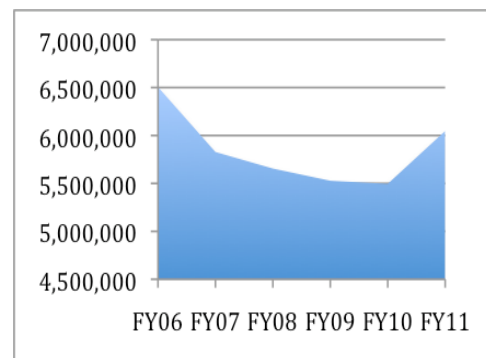
The Budget Resolution

The Budget Resolution is passed each year, and sets spending levels for each category of the budget such as atomic energy defense activities (the 053 account), international, domestic, etc. These levels are not binding law, but subsequent appropriations usually stay under the levels the Resolution sets. The Budget Committees in the House and Senate develop the Budget Resolution. The President's request serves as a marker, but Congress can ignore the President's request if it chooses. However since the President must eventually sign all appropriations into law, the Congress can't stray too far from the President's request or they will risk a veto of their bills.

Total, Weapons Activities Request FY06-FY11



Total, Environmental Management Spending Request FY06-FY11



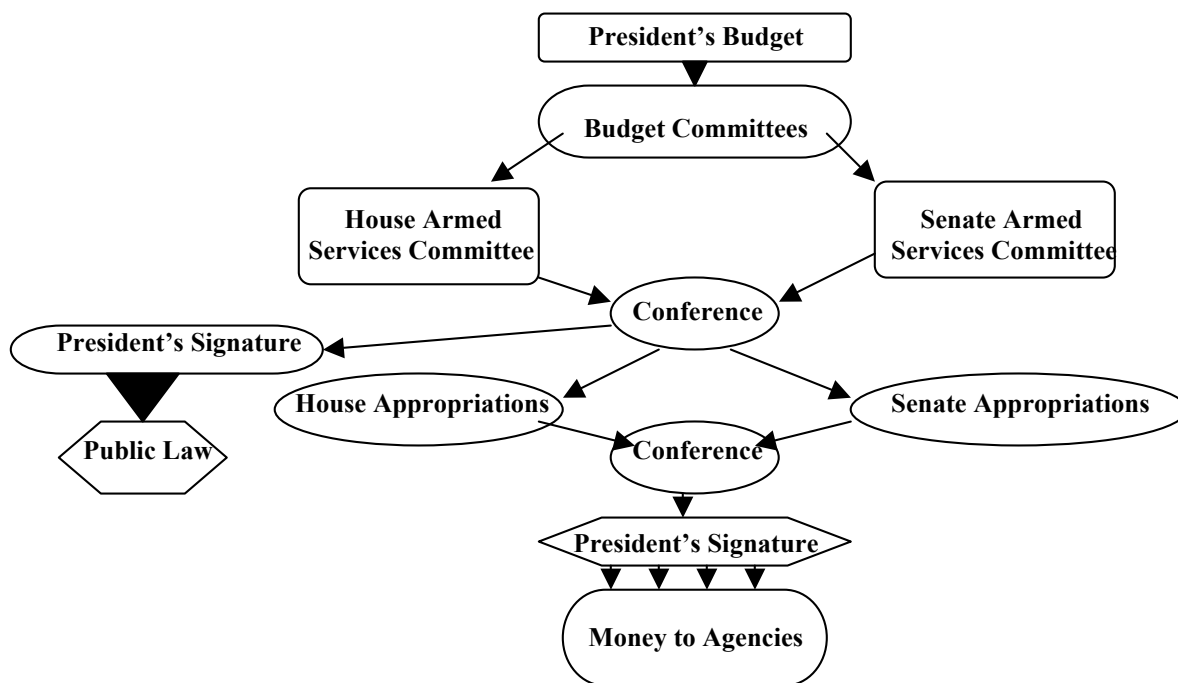
Authorization

DOE's nuclear weapons activities (which includes cleanup) are *authorized* by an act of Congress each year. The House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee authorize all Federal spending on military programs, including DOE programs, each year with the **Defense Authorization Act**. The committees develop bills, which must then be passed by both Houses of Congress. After the Senate and House both pass their versions of the bill, they must go to **Conference** to work out the differences. The final *conference bill* then must be passed by both the House and Senate before going to the President to be signed into law. Authorization doesn't necessarily mean CASH. While a program can't get MORE money than authorized, it can get LESS. Which leads us to...

Appropriations

All Federal programs must have *appropriated* funding in order to spend money. Each area of government is covered by one or more appropriations bills that set the actual money that can be spent by agencies. The House and Senate

Appropriations Committees draft appropriations bills, which then must be passed by Congress and signed by the President before any government body can get operating funds. DOE funding is included in the **Energy and Water Appropriations bill**, developed by the Energy and Water Subcommittee of Appropriations in both House and Senate. The House and Senate each pass a bill, and then go to *Conference*, where they haggle out the differences. The final version, after passing the House and Senate on the floor, goes to the President for his signature. Finally, the budget is complete for that fiscal year, the agency can spend its money, and then the whole process starts over again.



Got all that? Ok, now to change the rules

1. *Appropriating money before it is authorized.* Frequently the Appropriations Committee starts its work before the authorizing Committee even begins. In several years, the Energy and Water Appropriations bill was finished well before the Defense Authorization bill passed Congress.
2. *Including policy issues on Appropriations.* Although all policy type decisions are supposed to be done in the authorizing bills, and not on appropriations (known as legislating on appropriations), it often happens that Congress sneaks in policy changes in the spending bills. Nuclear waste is a popular issue to deal with in this manner.
3. *Late or no Budget Resolution.* Often the authorizing and appropriating committees start making decisions on the various budgets before there is a budget resolution setting maximum limits. The budget resolution can be delayed because of a variety of policy issues or debates about spending levels. When that happens, both the authorizing and appropriations committees often start work on their budgets without waiting.
4. *Continuing Resolutions (CR).* If Congress is unable to reach agreement on its appropriations bills in time for the Oct. 1 start of the new fiscal year, it can pass a continuing resolution. This allows the government to continue spending money at the same level as the prior year appropriation. If a CR is not passed, the government will shut down, as happened in 1996.
5. *Supplemental Appropriations.* Even after a fiscal year has started, Congress can pass a Supplemental Appropriations bill to add money to certain programs. Although this type of appropriation is supposed to be used for emergency spending (ie, disaster relief), it often is used for other spending, such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.