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Biosecurity Experts Commend Congress for Historic Increase in Project BioShield Funding, Increased Support for National Health Security in Omnibus

America faces real, imminent threats from intentional chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) attacks. Serious naturally occurring pandemics and infectious disease threats, such as pandemic influenza and Ebola, do not respect borders. The government cannot protect the American people on its own. An effective, highly functioning public-private partnership is the best way to prepare. Members of the Alliance for Biosecurity share a strong commitment to improving our national security in partnership with the federal government through public-private partnerships.

The Alliance for Biosecurity recognizes Congressional leaders for a historic increase to one of the key biosecurity enterprise programs, Project BioShield, and appreciates significant increases to other accounts like the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), Pandemic Flu, and the Biomedical Advanced Research Development Authority (BARDA).

Former Congressman and Alliance Co-Director Jack Kingston noted, “This historic increase is a solid step in ensuring preparedness and response activities are adequate to protect the American people. The more proactive we are, the more money we save in the long run. Ultimately, we save lives should an attack occur.”

Notably, Project BioShield Special Reserve Fund (SRF) received a \$200 million increase, nearly 40% over FY17. First funded in 2004, SRF has received an annualized funding level of about \$510 million for the past 15 years. This funding level has not allowed the public-private partnership to take the necessary steps to enhance our nation’s ability to protect its citizens. The program has been critical to the nation’s biodefense for over a decade by advancing the development of more than 50 million doses of drugs against anthrax, smallpox, botulinum toxin and radiological threats. The lack of robust, stable, and consistent funding to fill gaps in the nation’s preparedness efforts through public-private partnerships that develop life-saving countermeasures has increased the risk for potential CBRN threats. Since there is no commercial market for these products, Project BioShield serves as an incentive for companies to invest in research and development in this field.

“Funding these critical biosecurity programs strengthens the nation’s ability to prepare, prevent, and protect the American people from public health threats and emerging infectious diseases,” said Chris Frech, Co-Chair of the Alliance for Biosecurity. “Public-private partnerships will play a role in ensuring that this translates into the necessary medical countermeasures and infrastructure to support this cause.”

The increase in BARDA and SNS of 5-6 percent, respectively, are also appreciated to help ensure the enterprise works together. Furthermore, the increase to restore the Pandemic Flu account from prior year decreases recognizes the potential threat and allows for critically important work in this area to proceed.

“We are pleased to see the funding decisions taken as a step in the right direction for the sustained protection of the US population against natural and man-made threats,” said Alliance for Biosecurity Co-Chair Brent MacGregor. “In particular, the pandemic influenza budget line is a distinct improvement over prior years’, although we still assert the need for multi-year funding to ensure a robust community of industry partners with the government.”

The Alliance recognizes the hard work of appropriators like Rep. Tom Cole, Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Sen. Roy Blunt, and Sen. Patty Murray, who provide leadership over these subcommittees as well as their dedicated staff. The Alliance also commends the leadership of Rep. Susan Brooks and Rep. Anna G. Eshoo and all the members of the Congressional Biosecurity Caucus who have worked with the Alliance to educate other members on the critical importance of these issues in this public-private partnership enterprise. Finally, the new leadership in the Administration is key to allow for an open dialogue on the threats and resources needs.

The Alliance recognizes this as a tangible step to better improve effectiveness of the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise (PHEMCE). The Alliance was also encouraged by Congressional support for the alignment of the SNS in the Office of Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). This move will better improve the effectiveness of how these funds are spent and managed during any unforeseen event. The Alliance looks forward to continuing efforts with the Congressional leaders and the Administration to improve our national preparedness efforts.

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The Alliance is the leading industry voice on biosecurity issues and is an efficient, strategic organization committed to building and strengthening the partnership between government and industry to provide solutions to threats facing our nation. The Alliance advocates for public policies and funding to support the rapid development, production, stockpiling, and distribution of critically needed medical countermeasures. Learn more online at AllianceForBiosecurity.com and by following us [@AllianceCBRN](https://twitter.com/AllianceCBRN) on Twitter.