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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal Government Functioning Without Annual Funding Bills

BY EILEEN S. SMITH

Recently, Congress passed another continuing resolution to keep the government operating until the elections in November.

Although the 2003 federal fiscal year began on Oct. 1, 2002, the Senate and House Appropriations Committees have not completed their work on the bills that provide funds for the more than 100 federal departments and agencies. The Senate Appropriations Committee began hearings on September 30, but has not passed its bill at the time of this writing.

On October 9, the House Appropriations Committee reported out a Fiscal Year 2003, VA-HUD appropriations bill, which provides funding for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The bill includes $512 million for veterans' health care and $4.598 billion for housing activities.

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By BYELLEN S. SMITH

BY ASHLEY B. SMITH

A new climate study has found that large amounts of black carbon (soot) are released into the atmosphere, causing changes in precipitation and temperatures over regions of China and India. The study was conducted by researchers from the NASA's Earth Science Enterprise.

The researchers found that black carbon and biomass burnings have significantly increased in the region over the last several decades. This increase has led to changes in temperature and precipitation patterns, which can have significant impacts on agriculture, water resources, and human health.

The study, published in the journal Nature, analyzed data from multiple sources, including satellite observations and ground-based measurements. The results show that black carbon and biomass burnings contribute to warming and drying trends in the region, which can lead to increased droughts and floods.

The researchers also found that the effect of black carbon on climate is more significant than previously thought. They estimate that the warming effect of black carbon is comparable to that of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

The results of this study have important implications for climate change policy and for understanding the impacts of human activities on the Earth's climate. Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying these changes and to develop strategies to mitigate their effects.