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D. Allan Bromley - Congress [1990]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 21, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN H. SUNUNU

FROM: D. ALLAN BROMLEY 
SUBJECT: Congressional Earmarks for R&D

A few days ago I told you I would send you a study identifying the earmarks made by Congress in FY 1991 appropriations for R&D items that are for particular institutions or locations and were not included in the President's budget. That study is attached.

The study identified 492 such earmarks, totaling \$809.6 million. Of these 325 (\$182.2 million) were in Agriculture, where I understand specific earmarking is customary in Congress.

In other areas, R&D earmarking seems on the rise, with 48 in Energy and between 20 to 30 each in Defense, Interior, GSA, and EPA. In Defense \$253.4 million of the "peace dividend" was applied to R&D earmarks, which were exempted from a previously enacted legal requirement for competition. Also noteworthy is the \$60.7 million in a GSA appropriation for R&D construction at 21 universities and other private institutions. As far as I know, neither GSA nor the Treasury-Post Office subcommittees, where these items originated, normally have responsibilities for such items.

The R&D earmarks have put an extra squeeze of at least \$332 million on the R&D programs as proposed in the President's budget. The most serious impacts appear likely to be in Energy and Agriculture. The other \$475 million of R&D earmarks were covered by increases in the R&D accounts, which presumably means that a corresponding squeeze was applied elsewhere in the budget.

At least 25 of the earmarks appear to call for the establishment of new centers, institutions, or other organizations. In most of these cases, continued federal support in future years seems clearly implied. Thus, this year's earmarks have put a built-in squeeze on future budgets, an effect that will be compounded as additional earmarks are made in future years.

I should emphasize that this study covered only R&D related earmarks, not all earmarks. Thus, it did not cover such items as the Lawrence Welk memorial, highway "demonstration" projects, or the \$200 million earmarked for the Weatherization program in the Energy Department.

It should also be noted that the study was based only on a review of the often meager information in the Congressional reports and bills. Therefore, it did not identify the sponsorship of the earmarks and does not provide a basis for judgments on the merits of the earmarked items or on the motivations of the earmarking. A case-by-case review with agency or Congressional staff directly involved would be needed to determine to what degree each earmark was (1) a response to advocacy by an institution, (2) a parochial initiative in Congress, or (3) a recognition by Congress of a significant national or programmatic need.

If you would wish such a sponsorship analysis, it will take a little time, but we will be happy to produce it for you.

Attachments

Shapley/Bromley memorandum of December 17, 1990, with Tables I, II and III and separate tabulation

cc: Richard G. Darman

file

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