WASHINGTON — A nuclear science research facility at Michigan State University is on track to get the full $100 million requested by the Obama administration to continue construction this fiscal year.

That's despite the fact earlier versions of the bill included slightly less money for the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams.

The funding is included in a massive $1.1 trillion federal spending package that will keep government funded through September.

The wrap-up bill is needed because lawmakers did not pass any of the individual annual spending bills before the fiscal year started in October. Federal agencies have been operating under short-term funding measures since then.

The House’s version of the funding bill for the Energy Department, which is building FRIB, initially included $98 million for continued construction. The Senate’s version had $95 million. But the bill Congress is expected to clear before leaving town for the holidays includes the $100 million that was expected to be needed in 2016. It’s an increase from the $90 million approved for 2015.

“This new funding will bring MSU one step closer to creating thousands of jobs in our state,” said Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.

Mark Burnham, MSU's vice president for government affairs, said school officials are pleased with the amount, “which supports the next phase of the project.”

Construction of the $730 million facility is supposed to be completed by 2022, but MSU hopes everything will be finished by 2020.

The project has been allocated $218 million in federal funding since 2009, according to Stabenow and Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich. The senators said they lobbied the heads of the Senate panel that writes the Energy Department's spending bill to include the full $100 million in this year's bill.

All work on FRIB is supposed to be completed by 2022, but MSU hopes everything will be finished before that.

The facility will contain a superconducting linear accelerator able to accelerate beams of heavy ions to more than half the speed of light.

Research at the facility will expand understanding of the origins of the stars and planets, advance medical technologies and strengthen research related to the military and life sciences. It's expected to increase the number of isotopes with known properties from about 2,000 to more than 5,000.

The 2,009-page spending bill released early Wednesday morning does not include most of the controversial provisions Republicans wanted to add to block President Obama’s policies on topics ranging from immigration to armor-piercing bullets.

But it includes a major Republican goal of lifting a 40-year ban on exports of domestic crude oil.

The spending bill will be paired with legislation to extend dozens of expiring tax breaks worth hundreds of billions of dollars to corporations and individuals. The 233-page measure will permanently extend the enhanced child tax credit and earned income tax credit that were boosted by the 2009 stimulus bill, and extend through 2019 a popular corporate tax break that allows companies to more quickly depreciate the value of new equipment. The two bills also delay for two years unpopular taxes that were part of Obama's signature health care law.

Despite the fact the massive bills were released in the middle of the night, Congress still expects to pass them over the next few days.

The federal government is operating on a short-term spending measure that runs out Wednesday. To prevent a government shutdown, the House and Senate will move another short-term bill providing funding through Tuesday, providing enough time for both chambers to vote on the spending and tax measures.

In the House, it is most likely that the spending bill will pass with few Republican votes and the tax bill will pass with few Democratic votes. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Wednesday “Republicans’ tax extender bill provides hundreds of billions of dollars in special-interest tax breaks that are permanent and unpaid for. These massive giveaways to the special interests and big corporations are deeply destructive to our future.”
The combined legislation covers everything government does, and, as usual, contains scores of provisions limiting how federal money can be spent. For example, the legislation again bars Obama from closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility where terror suspects are held or spending money to build a new facility to house them, and prohibits the U.S. from implementing the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. But Democrats noted it does not include provisions barring implementation of Obama’s plan to defer deportations for children brought to the U.S. illegally and some of their family members.

The bill bans the government from listing the sage-grouse as an endangered species, but does not include Republican-backed provisions to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating air emissions related to global climate change.

The bill does not prohibit the administration from resettling Syrian refugees in the U.S., as many Republicans and some Democrats hoped, but it does include (/story/news/2015/12/16/visa-waiver-changes-part-government-spending-bill/77360978/) new anti-terrorism limits on visitors from 38 countries who can travel to the U.S. without a visa. While the legislation extends existing prohibitions on abortion-related spending, it does not include a ban on federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which has been a key goal of Republicans for much of the fall.

“This bill provides responsible funding for nearly all of the federal government, while helping to stop wasteful and unnecessary spending and reining in regulatory overreach that hinders growth and job creation,” said House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers, R-Ky. “But it also represents a compromise that Members on both sides of the aisle can and should get behind.”

*Contributing: USA TODAY reporters Bart Jansen and Erin Kelly.*

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