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Government Contractors Brace for Shutdown

April 4, 2011

U.S. businesses are bracing for layoffs and disruptions along their supply chains if the federal government shuts down later this week because of an impasse over the federal budget.

Several Democratic and Republican lawmakers said Sunday they expect a budget deal to emerge by the current April 8 deadline. Businesses and lobbying groups in Washington say the uncertainty alone is causing problems.

Especially hard hit are small and mid-sized businesses that rely on steady flows of revenue from federal contracts to provide a wide array of products and services such as information technology consulting, building construction and maintenance, or food service at national parks.

"Because the budget's not known, agencies won't release the awards [and] the new work isn't coming in," says Libby Kavoulakis, who owns Metis Group LLC, which contracts with federal civil and defense agencies to dispose of unused government real estate.

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