

House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

Website address: <http://appropriations.house.gov/>

Fiscal Year 2018 Interior and Environment Bill

Bill will rein in burdensome regulations, make investments in the nation's infrastructure and natural resources, fight wildfires, and support Native American communities

The fiscal year 2018 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill includes funding for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Forest Service, the Indian Health Service, and various independent and related agencies.

In total, the bill provides \$35.2 billion, \$3 billion above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level, and includes significant investments to address infrastructure and deferred maintenance priorities. These funds are targeted to important programs that support and protect the nation's natural resources, including \$3.8 billion for the Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service to prevent and combat devastating wildfires. The legislation also contains several policy provisions to rein in harmful and unnecessary regulations at the EPA and other agencies.

Wildland Firefighting and Prevention – In total, the bill funds wildland firefighting and prevention programs at \$3.8 billion, fully funding the 10-year average for wildland fire suppression costs for both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service, and providing robust additional funding – \$500 million– for Forest Service suppression operations. The legislation also includes \$614 million for hazardous fuels management, which is \$50 million above the fiscal year 2017 level.

Also included is a package of forest management and fire budgeting reforms that will provide budget certainty for Forest Service programs and activities, reduce litigation, and, most importantly, improve the health of our national forests.

Federal Payments to Local Communities – The bill provides \$530 million for “Payments In Lieu of Taxes” (PILT), fully funding the program. PILT provides funds for local governments in 49 states to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their counties. Without congressional action, many rural communities would face huge budget shortfalls impacting public safety, education, and other local government responsibilities.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The bill freezes base EPA funding at the fiscal year 2017 enacted level of \$8.1 billion. Within this total, EPA's regulatory programs are reduced by \$23.5 million below the current level. EPA's staffing levels have been reduced by 650 positions over the last year, and are presently at 14,172 positions. Overall staffing has been reduced by 3,106 positions since fiscal year 2010.

The bill also targets additional funding provided by the recent budget agreement to infrastructure programs, including:

- A total of \$2.9 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan fund, which states and localities use for water infrastructure projects;
- An increase of \$66 million to accelerate the cleanup of Superfund sites and respond to releases of hazardous substances; and
- A total of \$63 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to leverage federal dollars to provide financing for more than \$6 billion in water infrastructure projects.

This bill also reflects the Administration's goal to rein in outdated, unnecessary and potentially harmful regulations at the EPA. For example, it includes bill language prohibiting the regulation of lead content of ammunition and fishing tackle, relieving livestock operations from EPA permitting requirements, and exempting livestock producers from EPA greenhouse gas regulations.

Also included is a multiple agency directive to EPA, USDA, and DOE to establish clear policies that reflect the carbon neutrality of biomass, as well as a provision prohibiting EPA from making changes to certain agricultural exemptions under the Clean Water Act.

Native American Programs – The Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Education are funded at \$3.1 billion – an increase of \$204 million above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. This includes \$179 million in infrastructure increases for schools, law enforcement, road maintenance, economic development, realty, and water settlements.

The Indian Health Service is funded at \$5.5 billion – an increase of \$498 million above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. This includes operating costs for staffing at new facilities, increases for fixed costs and the Indian Health Care Improvement Fund, and an additional \$340 million for infrastructure improvements at medical facilities.

Office of Surface Mining (OSM) – The OSM is funded at \$255 million in the bill – \$3 million above the fiscal year 2017 level. This includes \$115 million to continue a pilot program to accelerate the reclamation of abandoned mine lands, which will help boost community redevelopment and economic growth. The legislation also continues state regulatory grants at \$68 million.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The bill contains \$1.3 billion for the BLM, an increase of \$80 million above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level.

The bill provides \$60 million, equal to the fiscal year 2017 level, for on-the-ground sage grouse conservation to protect the species and to preserve federal lands for public and private uses, such as energy development, ranching, recreation, and military training. The bill also includes a \$21 million increase to expand energy and mineral development.

National Park Service (NPS) – The legislation includes \$3.2 billion for the NPS, an increase of \$255 million above the fiscal year 2017 level. Within the total, the bill provides an additional \$53 million in funding for park operations. The bill also includes a \$185 million increase above fiscal year 2017 levels to address longstanding deferred maintenance needs, including a \$25 million increase for maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation projects, and a \$150 million increase for deferred maintenance of park service facilities.

U.S. Forest Service – The bill includes \$6 billion for the Forest Service, of which \$2.8 billion is targeted to wildland fire prevention and suppression. The bill also includes a provision prohibiting the Forest

Service or BLM from issuing new closures of public lands to hunting and recreational shooting, except in the case of public safety.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – The FWS is funded at \$1.6 billion in the bill, a \$75 million increase above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. The legislation prioritizes funding to reduce the endangered species delisting backlog and refuge maintenance backlog, to fight invasive species, to prevent illegal wildlife trafficking, and to prevent the closure of fish hatcheries.

The bill also continues a one-year delay on any further Endangered Species Act status reviews, determinations, and rulemakings for greater sage-grouse.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) – The bill includes \$1.1 billion for the USGS, \$63 million above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. Funding is targeted to critical infrastructure investments in natural hazards programs, streamgages, the groundwater monitoring network, and mapping activities. The bill includes \$23 million for an earthquake early warning system to help save lives during natural disasters, and \$26 million to fully fund the development of “Landsat 9” – a satellite program that provides land use measurements that are important to local communities for agriculture, forestry, energy and water resource decisions.

Smithsonian Institution – The Smithsonian Institution is funded at \$1 billion in the bill, \$178 million above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. This level is sufficient to allow all current operations and programs to continue. The agreement also includes \$198 million toward the multi-year renovation at the National Air and Space Museum.

National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities – The bill includes \$153 million for each of the endowments, \$3 million above the fiscal year 2017 level for each endowment.

Eisenhower Memorial Commission – The bill provides \$46.8 million for the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, including \$45 million to complete construction of the memorial.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – The bill provides \$425 million for LWCF programs – \$25 million above the current level. State and local recreation and battlefield preservation programs are prioritized with 53 percent of the funding going to NPS State Assistance, Forest Legacy, American Battlefield Protection, and Highlands Conservation Act programs.

Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) – The CSB is funded at \$11 million, equal to the fiscal year 2017 level.

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