



News from Congressman

Jim Moran

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OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JIM MORAN ON THE FY 2011 INTERIOR
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP
JULY 22, 2010

I welcome the Members of the Subcommittee, Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Mr. Lewis, **and the public to the mark-up of the fiscal year 2011 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.**

This bill is based on a lot of hard work by many people. This Subcommittee held 20 hearings with 21 different Administration witnesses. In addition, we held a series of Native American and public witness hearings where we heard from 81 different witnesses and received written testimony from an additional 165 people. Recently, we held a hearing to review the response to the BP Oil Spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, at which we heard from 5 different witnesses about the Administration's response to the Gulf disaster and the implications for this bill.

I want to thank our Full Committee Chairman, Mr. Obey, for his guidance, support and vision. Chairman Obey, we will certainly miss you next year. I also want to recognize my predecessor in this Chair. Congressman Dicks has been an inspiration throughout his 34 years of service on this subcommittee. His depth of knowledge, his dedication to the issues, and his concern for our environment are matched by no one in this body. He is a superb role model and tough act to follow.

I am proud to present this bill with my friend and ranking member, Mr. Simpson. I am sure there are things in this mark that he does not agree with. To ensure the bill is bipartisan in content, we have honored almost every report and bill language issue brought to my attention by the minority. I truly hope that this good faith effort will generate bipartisan support for this bill.

The bill before us provides \$32.24 billion for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Forest Service, the Indian Health Service and a host of smaller, but very important, environmental and cultural agencies. This amount is equal to last year, but \$133 million below the President's request. Despite the generous allocation from our Full Committee Chairman, this was not an easy bill to craft. We faced three overriding issues.

First, the President's request included a number of very good, new proposals. Unfortunately, with an allocation below his request, we could not fund them all at the level he requested. To make those reductions, and to provide for badly needed increases in other areas, we took a hard look at all programs. We have suggested quite a few reductions that I believe are defensible. In total, we have reduced or terminated more than \$700 million from the budget request.

Second, we reluctantly accepted the President's proposal to absorb fixed costs at the Department of the Interior. I realize that this is a departure from past Subcommittee recommendations. However, we took this action, which is less than 1% of the Department's overall budget, because the Department assured us that the impact would be minimal. I believe that absorbing fixed costs for one year will not break the Department. But, I know that absorbing fixed costs, cutting construction budgets and continuing to defer maintenance is not sustainable. I expect future budget requests to return to a more appropriate balance.

Third, we had to address the worst environmental disaster in the history of our country. The events of April 20, when the Transocean Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded, causing 11 people to tragically lose their lives, and the events of April 22 when the rig sank, will shape this bill for years to come. Unfortunately, the situation is still in flux. Oil continues to contaminate the Gulf. Much of the wild and marine life in Gulf is in grave jeopardy. The region's fragile economy is on the brink. In addition, numerous environmental and safety reviews are incomplete; the reorganization of the old MMS, now the Bureau of Ocean Energy, has yet to be completed; and studies of the cause and impacts of the spill have not been concluded. And we have not received from the Administration its proposal for additional funding.

So this bill before you takes incremental steps. Important steps, but ones we know are just the first in a series of changes. As the appropriations process moves forward and new information and findings come to light, including a complete budget proposal from the Administration, I am committed to making additional changes as appropriate. Until that time, this bill moves forward in response to the BP disaster in the following ways:

- We temporarily suspend further leasing or pre leasing activities on the Pacific Coast and North Atlantic Coasts. We establish a similar temporary suspension for Bristol Bay Alaska, which the President has withdrawn from oil leasing because of its extensive fisheries;
- We impose a temporary suspension on further leasing and pre-leasing on the South and Mid-Atlantic coasts, while additional operational safety procedures and regulations are established to protect these areas.
- We nearly double the number of OCS inspectors to 130, to allow the new BOE to increase offshore inspections and compliance and we do this by increasing offshore inspection fees to \$40 million, up from the current \$10 million;

- We increase support for BLM onshore oil and gas oversight staff by \$10 million to ensure that the BLM has the resources to cover more of the oversight costs of energy development on public lands;
- We provide \$4 million above the request to study the impact of oil and gas development on marine environments;
- We provide \$10 million above the FY 2010 level to phase out the troubled royalty-in-kind program and increase oversight of revenue collections and compliance.
- We provide \$2 million above the FY 2010 Enacted level to the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for an independent investigation into the root causes of the spill.

These are just the first steps. I anxiously await the results of on-going Administration studies and reviews so that we have a blueprint for further action. But there is more in the bill worth noting.

Native American Programs

This bill makes a significant commitment to support and empower Native Americans. This is the one area of the bill where we resisted reductions. This mark includes \$6.9 billion for Indian programs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service, which is \$303 million above 2010.

The bill provides \$4.4 billion for the Indian Health Service, almost 9% above the 2010 level, and the largest increase in this bill. The bill includes an additional \$83 million for contract health services to allow tribal hospitals and clinics to purchase services they are not able to provide themselves. An increase of \$45 million will continue to support Tribal self-governance and improve the quality and availability of critical health care services for Native Americans.

The bill also provides the Bureau of Indian Affairs a total of \$2.5 billion and supports important initiatives in law enforcement, trust resources and education. Most importantly, this budget provides a \$21 million increase over 2010 for contract support costs, building on this Committee's support for Tribal self-determination and self governance.

Environmental Protection and Climate Change

The bill provides \$10 billion for the US Environmental Protection Agency, including over \$3.2 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure assistance that will be used to assist 1208 American communities meet the clean and safe drinking water needs of their citizens. Of that amount, \$1.9 billion funds the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to ensure our nation's waters meet the goals of the Clean Water Act, and \$1.2 billion funds the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to protect public health by improving drinking water systems. An additional \$1.3 billion is provided for the Superfund program. These three programs alone will create thousands of new jobs in the private sector.

I also want to point out that again this year we make a portion of the revolving funds available with subsidies, rather than through conventional loans with interest. We are committed to helping communities find more affordable ways to provide clean and safe water.

The bill provides \$473 million to protect major American lakes and estuaries, and fully funds the \$300 million request for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. This bill also makes significant investments to protect other American great water bodies including Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, the Gulf of Mexico, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Mississippi River, and increases funding above the request for the National Estuaries Program.

The bill includes \$455.5 million for climate change adaptation and scientific efforts, which is \$9 million above the request and \$91 million above 2010. We have included \$42 million for EPA research on Climate Change and response, \$58 million for EPA and state regulatory programs, and \$129 million for EPA Climate Protection Programs and Grants. We have also provided the requested amount of \$23 million for USGS Regional Science Centers and National Wildlife Centers and \$168 million for other Department of the Interior Climate Change programs. The bill also includes \$15 million for Forest Service and Smithsonian research programs.

In addition, there are funds in this bill to deal with intersex fish. I believe the male small mouth bass that are being found with undeveloped ovaries are the canaries in the coal mine. The bill focuses more federal resources towards research on endocrine disrupting chemicals by providing \$7 million for USGS scientific research and \$32 million for EPA's research grants and screening programs. This is an area of research I intend to monitor closely and firmly believe more needs to be done.

Land Management and Acquisitions

For support of our **public lands** we have provided in total \$25 million more than last year and almost \$100 million above the request. This includes increases above the request for refuge management, land resource management at the BLM, increased operations of our national parks, increases above last year for the national forest system, and restoration of the Legacy Road and Trail program.

We were unable to provide the total requested increase for land acquisition. Specifically, we have not funded the BLM's request for a national horse preserve, since it lacked significant detail on implementation. We have provided a large funding increase for wild horse management and included language, which stresses the need for humane horse treatment, an emphasis on population control using birth control, and allows efficient and safe long-term care of excess horses.

Wildland Fire

The bill before you provides \$3.268 billion for wildland fire preparedness, suppression, hazardous fuels reduction and other important fire fighting programs. The bill does not fund the request for new Suppression Contingency Reserve funds. These new accounts were not justified and they would be duplicative of the newly authorized FLAME accounts. It is important to note that with the amounts recommended in the suppression and FLAME accounts and with \$333 million transferred into the Forest Service preparedness account, the bill fully meets the \$1.603 billion, 10-year average of actual expenditures on all emergency and discretionary funded suppression, adjusted for inflation.

In addition to the funds provided through this bill, the Interior Department and Forest Service predict that they will carry over into 2011 more than \$500 million in fire suppression funds from prior years. To date, we have been blessed with a moderate fire season. For instance, on July 14 of this year, there were only 48 fire crews nationally on the job whereas on the same date in 2009 there were 134 crews and on July 14, 2008 there were 687 crews fighting fires. However, if the fire season takes a turn for the worse in August or September, and if the carry over is much less than predicted, we will re-evaluate the fire suppression recommendation.

Congressional Priorities

We have restored many grant programs that have for years been Congressional Priorities, including Save America's Treasures, Heritage Area Partnerships, Preserve America, wildlife protection grants, HBCU, State-side LWCF grants, Endocrine Disrupter Research, and Climate Community Grants.

Cultural Programs

Before concluding, I want to mention the investments we propose for the **cultural agencies** supported by this bill. These increases recognize the value we place, as a Nation, on our artistic and cultural heritage. We have included \$170 million for each of the Endowments. This reflects a combined increase of \$5 million above 2010 and more than \$17 million above the request.

This bill also supports the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum complex, by providing \$797.6 million, which is an increase of \$36 million above 2010 and reflects the committee's continued commitment to a number of other cultural institutions including the National Gallery of Art, the Kennedy Center and the Presidio.

In conclusion, this is a good bill and I urge the Subcommittee to support it.