

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Fiscal Year 2014 Interior and Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill**  
**Full Committee Markup**  
**July 31, 2013**

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The Committee will come to order.

Welcome, everyone. Today, we meet to consider the Fiscal Year 2014 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Before we begin, I'd like to remind the Committee that we are expected to be on the floor with the Transportation and Housing bill this afternoon, and ask that you keep your remarks today brief and to-the-point. Thank you for your cooperation.

I'd also like to mention the wonderful news that our friend and colleague, Mrs. Herrera Beutler, and her husband Daniel have welcomed a new baby girl into their family. The baby's name is Abigail Rose Beutler, and she has already proven to be quite the fighter. I'm sure many of you have heard about the miracle of this little one's birth, and I know that Jaime and her family appreciate the outpouring of prayers and well-wishes. Let's keep Jaime and her husband, and especially little Abigail, in our thoughts and prayers, and we wish them all the best for a bright and healthy future.

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Chairman Simpson, Mr. Moran, and the entire Subcommittee – and the staff – faced a difficult set of circumstances this year as you drafted this bill. But you all put your noses to the grindstone, and as a result, we have a solid appropriations bill before us today. I want to commend and thank you for your hard work.

With 10 Appropriations bills behind us, the rubber is now hitting the road. I realize there will be a lot of disagreement about the direction this bill has taken, but we must face facts. The law requires us to cut government spending. And our astronomical federal debt – more than \$16.7 trillion, last I checked – is proof-positive that our spending habits are unsustainable. This Committee must do its part to abide by the law, and to help get our budgets back into balance.

While it's important to right-size discretionary spending, it's also critical that we figure out a solution to what's really driving our federal deficit – mandatory spending. Until the President and this Congress can come together to rein in entitlements and turn off the sequester, we are going to have to keep making serious cuts to discretionary programs like the ones in this bill. Otherwise, we are going to keep putting our country's finances – as well as important government programs – into jeopardy.

The \$24.3 billion allocation this Subcommittee received represents an 18.6% reduction from last year; this level is 25% below the fiscal year 2010 level. To meet this allocation, the Subcommittee had to make some extremely tough choices – some tougher than others.

More than half of these cuts came from the Environmental Protection Agency – which receives 34% less than last year. In this case, these cuts will right-size this overzealous agency. Unfortunately, in recent years, enabled by excessive “stimulus” funding, the EPA has done more harm than good.

The EPA has introduced far too many regulations that wreak havoc on American industry, causing the loss of thousands of jobs, damaging our economic recovery, and putting our energy security at risk. I’ve seen it in my own district – with thousands of jobs lost, and potential rate hikes. I just can’t see how these policies show that the President truly has our middle class at heart.

This reduced funding level, and the provisions within the bill, put a check on these burdensome regulations – allowing for American industry to flourish and grow, and preventing the additional loss of jobs.

The other reductions in this bill come from the elimination of several unnecessary or ineffective programs, as well as cuts to other, lower-priority programs – programs that are “nice to have” but simply cannot be sustained at elevated funding levels during a tight budget year like this one.

These cuts cleared the way for funding our most urgent, “Must-Do” priorities – those that protect the safety and well-being of Americans, and that bolster our economy. Chief among these is wildfire fighting and prevention. These programs receive a slight boost above last year’s enacted levels to fight the devastating forest fires in the West. We mourn the loss of life, as well as the loss of thousands of acres of forestland, that has occurred already this year due to wildfires. In order to prevent losses like this in the future, this funding will help provide updated fire-fighting aircraft, and support additional prevention efforts.

The bill also fulfills our moral and legal commitments to American Indians and Alaskan Natives – and works to address access to health care in their communities. To aid our rural communities facing budget shortfalls that could harm public safety and education, we’ve provided funding that will help offset losses in taxes from federal lands. And we have made sure that our National Parks stay open.

In addition, we targeted our limited tax dollars toward our domestic energy sources – which will help grow our economy and encourage energy independence. Funding for the Office of Surface Mining and Bureau of Land Management will help expedite energy permit processing.

We strongly discourage – and so did not include – proposals by the President to increase gas and oil fees, or impose new fees on the mining industry.

I believe this bill does the best it can with limited tax payer dollars – funding programs critical to the safety and livelihoods of the American people, and clearing the way for ongoing economic growth and job creation. I urge my colleagues to vote “aye” on this bill today.

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