

# *House Appropriations Committee*

*Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen*

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

## **FY 2017 Omnibus Summary – Interior and Environment Appropriations**

*Priorities include: reining in regulatory overreach, responsibly using the nation’s natural resources, fighting devastating wildfires, and promoting safe and reliable drinking water*

The Omnibus 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 \$32.28 billion for these programs and agencies, \$121 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level.

In addition, the legislation contains policy provisions to stop bureaucratic regulatory overreach that harm U.S. industries and hinder economic and job growth.

### **Bill Highlights:**

**Wildland Firefighting and Prevention** – In total, the bill funds wildland firefighting and prevention programs at \$4.2 billion, including \$407 million in emergency funding. It fully funds the 10-year average for wildland fire suppression costs for both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service. The legislation also includes \$570 million for hazardous fuels management, which is \$25 million above the fiscal year 2016 level.

**Federal Payments to Local Communities** – The bill provides \$465 million for the “Payments In Lieu of Taxes” (PILT) program, the full funding level. 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.

**Water Infrastructure** – To help address the ongoing problem of lead in drinking water across the U.S., which can cause dangerous health risks, the bill provides additional legal authority allowing states to provide debt relief in areas with elevated levels of lead in drinking water. The bill also provides targeted increases for water infrastructure programs such as:

- \$2.3 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), equal to the fiscal year 2016 enacted levels. These funds help improve the safety of drinking water and create jobs in every state;

- An additional \$10 million for the new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation (WIFIA) program, which when combined with funds from the previous CR, will leverage more than \$3 billion in new infrastructure projects.

The bill also includes a “Buy America” provision for drinking water infrastructure projects.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** – The bill funds the EPA at \$8.06 billion, a reduction of \$81.4 million below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$209 million below President Obama’s budget request. Within this total, the EPA’s research and regulatory programs are reduced by \$52 million below the current level and over \$300 million below the previous administration’s request. The bill provides an additional \$7.5 million to accelerate the cleanup of Superfund sites.

The legislation rejects the previous Administration’s proposed increase in staffing, holding the EPA to the current capacity of 15,000 positions, the lowest since 1989. It supports recent Executive Orders to encourage economic growth by providing flexibility for the Administration to review and rewrite the “Clean Power Plan” and other environmental regulations.

To stop the EPA’s anti-growth agenda that includes various harmful, costly, and potentially job-killing regulations, the bill contains a number of legislative provisions. Some of these include:

- A prohibition on the EPA from making changes to certain agricultural exemptions under the Clean Water Act;
- A directive to EPA, USDA and DOE to establish clear policies that reflect the carbon neutrality of biomass;
- A reporting requirement on the backlog of mining permits awaiting approval; and
- A prohibition on the regulation of the lead content of ammunition and fishing tackle.

**American Indian and Alaska Native Programs** – The Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Education are funded at \$2.9 billion – an increase of \$69 million above fiscal year 2016. This includes necessary increases for schools, law enforcement, road maintenance, and economic development.

The Indian Health Service is funded at \$5.0 billion – an increase of \$232 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This includes operating costs for staffing at new facilities, and increases for rising contract support costs, medical inflation, and a growing and aging population.

**Office of Surface Mining (OSM)** – The OSM is funded at \$253 million in the bill – approximately the same as the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This includes \$105 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, and rejects the President’s proposal to impose additional and duplicative federal oversight over the program.

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** – The bill contains \$1.2 billion for the BLM, an increase of \$15 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level.

The bill rejects the previous administration's proposal to increase oil and gas inspection fees, which could increase energy costs nationwide. It also rejects the previous Administration's proposal to raise fees on American ranchers for grazing on federal land.

The bill provides an increase of nearly \$9 million above the fiscal year 2016 level for on-the-ground sage grouse conservation to protect the species and to preserve federal lands so that they can continue to be used for multiple uses, such as energy development, ranching, and recreation..

**National Park Service (NPS)** – The legislation contains \$2.9 billion for the NPS, an increase of \$81 million above the fiscal year 2016 level. This funding provides targeted increases for park operations and maintenance to help reduce the maintenance backlog and addresses other priorities related to the Park Service's centennial anniversary.

**U.S. Forest Service** – The bill includes \$5.6 billion for the Forest Service. More than half of this funding – \$3.2 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, and a provision prohibiting the Department of Interior from administratively creating new wilderness areas.

The bill includes several reforms to the Forest Service's accounting, budgeting, and management practices to improve transparency and accountability.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)** – The FWS is funded at \$1.5 billion in the bill, an \$11 million increase above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Within this amount, the legislation prioritizes funding to reduce the endangered species delisting backlog and 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, \$23 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Funding is targeted to programs dealing with natural hazards, streamgages, the groundwater monitoring network, and mapping activities. Also, within the total, the bill includes \$10 million for an earthquake early warning system to help save lives during natural disasters, and fully funds "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 \$863 million in the bill, \$23 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The increases will improve the long-term storage of collections and increase security.

**National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities** – The bill includes \$150 million for each of the endowments, \$2 million above the fiscal year 2016 level.

**Eisenhower Memorial Commission** –The bill provides \$45 million for construction of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission and directs the Commission to use prior year funds to begin site preparation. The agreement also extends the authority to build on the present site.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** – The bill provides \$400 million for LWCF programs, a reduction of \$50 million below the fiscal year 2016 level and \$75 million below the President’s request. State and local recreation and battlefield preservation programs are prioritized, while federal land acquisition is reduced.

**For the full Committee Report on the Interior and Environment portion of the Omnibus, including a detailed funding table, please visit:**

**<https://rules.house.gov/sites/republicans.rules.house.gov/files/115/OMNI/DIVISION%20G%20-%20INT%20SOM%20FY17%20OCR.pdf>**

#####