

House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Hal Rogers

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

FY 2015 Omnibus – Interior & Environment Appropriations

Legislation will provide funds to fight wildfires, promote domestic energy production, and for national parks, while blocking regulatory overreach

The Interior and Environment portion of the Omnibus prioritizes funding to address the nation's most important public lands issues, including fighting and preventing wildfires, maintaining our vast natural resources, and expanding domestic energy production. Overall, the legislation provides \$30.4 billion for Interior and Environment programs.

The bill also includes several policy provisions to help rein in harmful regulatory overreach by the Administration that ties businesses and industries in unnecessary, harmful, bureaucratic red tape and hinders economic growth.

Wildfire Fighting and Prevention – In total, the bill provides \$3.5 billion for wildfire fighting and prevention programs within the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service. This will address wildland fire suppression operations for the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service at the full 10-year average level. In addition, the bill provides \$526 million for hazardous fuels reduction activities, which is \$21 million above the President's budget request.

The bill also provides a total of \$65 million to acquire aircraft to enhance firefighting capacity, effectiveness, efficiency, and safety. This funding is essential to support the phase out of numerous antiquated aircraft.

Domestic Energy Production – The bill helps encourage domestic energy production to further the nation's goal of energy independence and to reduce energy costs for consumers. For example, the legislation:

- Does not include Administration and Senate proposals to impose new fees on onshore oil and gas producers;
- Provides a \$13 million increase for the Bureau of Land Management to improve onshore energy and minerals development; and
- Provides \$150 million for the Office of Surface Mining, including \$69 million in state grants to allow states to implement programs without increasing fees on the mining industry.

National Park Service (NPS) – The bill provides \$2.6 billion for the National Park Service, the same as the President's request. This includes \$2.3 billion for the Operation of the National Park System (ONPS), \$63.1 million for National Recreation and Preservation, \$56.4 million for Historic Preservation grants, and \$138.4 million for construction of facilities.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The bill cuts the EPA by \$60 million below the fiscal year 2014 level, providing a total of \$8.1 billion for the agency. Overall, EPA funding has been reduced by

\$2.2 billion – or 21% – since 2010. In addition, the bill continues reductions to EPA staff, bringing staffing to the lowest level since 1989. Within the EPA, the bill:

- Does not include a White House proposal to spend \$66 million on new or expanded EPA regulatory programs;
- Provides \$2.35 billion in grants to states for local drinking water and sewer construction projects through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds; and
- Funds the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$300 million – the same as the fiscal year 2014 level.

The agreement also includes several policy provisions to rein in regulatory overreach at the EPA. These provisions will help prevent excessive bureaucratic red tape that unnecessarily burdens American businesses and industries and slows economic growth. Some of these provisions include:

- A prohibition on funding for the EPA to regulate lead content in ammunition or fishing tackle under the Toxic Substances Control Act;
- Exemptions for livestock producers from onerous greenhouse gas regulations;
- A provision requiring the Administration to report to Congress on federal agency obligations and expenditures on climate change programs;
- A directive to enhance congressional oversight of EPA’s review of mining permits; and
- A directive for EPA to identify solutions for an in-home lead test kit that meets EPA criteria and reduces costs for consumers, remodelers, and families.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The BLM is funded at \$1.1 billion – \$14 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level – to provide for the effective stewardship of the nation’s vast public lands.

The legislation also seeks to protect American ranchers from regulations that increase costs and harm their livelihoods. For example, the bill does not include Administration and Senate proposals to charge \$6.5 million in new grazing fees on BLM and Forest Service lands, and provides \$79 million for Range Management to continue to reduce the backlog of grazing permit applications.

U.S. Forest Service – The bill provides \$5.1 billion for the Forest Service – which includes full funding for wildfire prevention and suppression. The legislation also includes a provision requiring the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service to report on non-emergency closures of public lands to hunting, fishing, shooting, and other recreational activities.

American Indian and Alaska Native Programs –The bill helps to meet the nation’s treaty obligations to American Indians and Alaska Natives by increasing funding for health care and education. The legislation funds the Indian Health Service at \$4.6 billion – \$208 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level – and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Education at \$2.6 billion – \$70 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – The FWS is funded at \$1.4 billion, \$12 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level. Within the total, the bill provides: \$1 million to compensate ranchers for livestock killed by wolves; \$2 million to stop the spread of invasive quagga and zebra mussels in the West; and \$5.5 million to stop the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. The legislation also continues funding for effective state wildlife grant programs, and includes funding and a directive to ensure national fish hatcheries remain open and at full production.

Sage-Grouse – To stop actions by the Fish and Wildlife Service that would have severe economic consequences on Western states and the nation’s efforts to become energy independent, the bill prohibits funding for the Service to issue further rules to place sage-grouse on the Endangered Species List. The bill also includes \$15 million within the BLM to conserve sage-grouse habitat to continue efforts to protect the species and its natural environment for the future.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) – The bill includes \$372 million for PILT, a program that provides funds to local governments to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their jurisdictions. When combined with the PILT funding authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014, the total for PILT in the next year is the full amount of \$442 million.

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