

REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE BUDGET RESOLUTION HIDES ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT CUTS

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The budget resolution agreed to by Republican conferees does not reflect the real priorities or meet the real needs of the nation. It calls for nearly \$1.4 trillion in tax cuts, much more than we can afford given the uncertainties of the economic and budget projections it uses. And it hides the fact that, to pay for this tax cut, Republicans plan substantial cuts in national energy and environmental programs.

The budget resolution is designed to be a blueprint showing American taxpayers how the Congress of the United States will allocate resources among the many important competing needs we face. Two critical needs we confront right now are the ongoing energy crisis, and the need to maintain effective protection and management of our nation's environment and public health.

The Republican conference budget resolution completely fails to provide adequate resources to meet these energy and environmental needs. It does not include a real funding plan for energy, the environment, or other discretionary programs, postponing announcement of specific deep spending cuts needed to make room for the nearly \$1.4 trillion tax cut. However, under the conference budget resolution, spending will have to be cut. President Bush's FY 2002 Budget, submitted April 9, has more specific information on proposed Republican energy and environmental cuts, including:

- A 36 percent cut in renewable energy;
- A \$141 million cut in energy efficiency research and development;
- A \$382 million cut in Environmental Protection Agency funding for clean water infrastructure;
- The elimination of the Wetlands Reserve Program and three other popular agricultural conservation programs;
- A \$260 million underfunding of the Land, Conservation, Preservation & Infrastructure fund;
- A 26 percent cut in endangered species programs at the Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- A \$25 million cut in Environmental Protection Agency clean air research and enforcement.

Just a few weeks ago, in a series of amendments to the Senate Budget Resolution, Democratic and Republican Senators joined together and took a number of steps to address the nation's pressing energy and environmental needs. They added \$600 million for renewable energy and clean coal; \$4.5 billion to maintain existing climate change work; \$1.65 billion for agriculture conservation; \$250 million to fully fund the Land, Conservation, Preservation and Infrastructure Improvement fund; and over \$1.9 billion for clean and safe water needs.

Democratic Senators also pressed to restore \$50 billion in funding over 10 years for enforcing existing clean air and clean water laws; cleaning up contaminated brownfields; operating our national parks, monuments and wildlife refuges; and other priority ongoing environment and natural resource programs – but were held back by opposition from Republicans.

In contrast, the Republican conference budget resolution contains \$61 billion in unallocated reductions – real cuts that must be made to make room for the nearly \$1.4 trillion in tax cuts. Republicans are trying to hide these reductions until the tax cuts are passed, to avoid a real discussion about whether they reflect the priorities of the American people.