

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET ON THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES: MORE OF THE SAME MISPLACED PRIORITIES

Key Points:

- **The President's budget slashes Clean Water funds, which states use to help improve wastewater treatment facilities, by 37 percent.**
- **Putting the interests of oil companies first, the President's budget calls for drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge – one of the nation's last pristine, untouched wildlife refuges.**
- **The President's budget underfunds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs by \$841 million or 93 percent.**

Democrats believe that on every issue our nation faces, we must pursue policies that take our country in a new direction. The Bush Administration's FY 2008 budget fails on that score; it continues with more of the same wrong priorities of the past six years that have failed the American people. It is fiscally reckless, adding trillions to the deficit over the next 10 years, and morally irresponsible, slashing funding for key priorities such as health care and education, critical to America's middle class. Democrats are fighting for a budget that reflects the values of America's middle class.

Cuts overall environmental programs by 5 percent. For the seventh year in a row, the Bush budget proposes significantly cutting funding for programs that protect public health and the environment. The budget provides \$28.7 billion in appropriations for these programs – which is a cut of \$1.7 billion or 5.4 percent below the FY 2007 enacted level.

Cuts EPA funding by 7 percent. The Bush budget cuts funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by \$508 million or 7 percent below this year's enacted level, which would impact all of EPA's important functions, including enforcement of key environmental statutes. If the Bush budget is enacted, the EPA budget would have been slashed from \$8.4 billion in FY 2004 to \$7.2 billion in FY 2007 – a cut of 14 percent in four short years.

Assumes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. For the seventh year in a row, the Bush budget assumes opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas exploration – something which the Congress has repeatedly rejected. The Bush budget assumes \$4 billion in ANWR lease bonuses for the Federal Treasury over the next five years.

Abandons the principle of “polluter pays” for Superfund toxic waste site cleanups. One in four people in America lives within four miles of a major toxic waste site on the “Superfund” list, but the number of annual Superfund cleanups has dropped by almost 50 percent since the beginning of the Bush Administration. The Bush budget is proposing only \$1.2 billion for Superfund cleanups in 2008, which will continue the slow pace and continue to shift the cost of these cleanups onto the taxpayers.

Slashes Clean Water funds by 37 percent and essentially freezes funding for safe drinking water. The Bush budget slashes funding for the states' Clean Water revolving loan funds, which help improve wastewater treatment facilities, by \$396 million – a 37 percent cut. If the Bush budget is enacted, Clean Water funding would have been slashed from \$1.3 billion in FY 2004 to \$688 million in FY 2008 – a cut of 47 percent in four short years. The Bush budget also essentially freezes funding for states' Safe Drinking Water revolving loan funds at this year's enacted level – providing \$842 million, an increase of 0.6 percent.

Cuts Environmental Justice funding by 28 percent. The President's budget cuts funding for environmental justice programs by nearly \$2 million – or 28 percent – below this year's enacted level. Environmental justice programs protect the health and welfare of low-income and minority communities from environmental toxins related to industrial pollution.

Calls for a massive sell-off of our public lands. President Bush includes two highly controversial proposals from last year's budget, which were widely criticized – proposals to sell off massive amounts of public land. Under the Bush budget, 300,000 acres of National Forest lands and 500,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands over the next five years would be put on the auction block.

Underfunds Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs by \$841 million or 93 percent. The President's budget not only fails to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the authorized level of \$900 million, but also continues the trend of significant cuts seen in past budgets. For FY 2008, the President's budget provides only \$59 million for LWCF purposes, which is \$841 million below the \$900 million authorized level and \$86 million below the FY 2007 enacted level. Indeed, the Bush budget completely eliminates LWCF's State Conservation Grants. For the last forty years, this grant program has provided state and local parks and recreation directors desperately needed funding to help them preserve open space and develop recreational facilities.

Underfunds combating groundwater contamination. The President's budget provides only \$72.5 million for Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) funding, which is slightly less than this year's funding – despite the fact that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 authorizes \$605 million for the LUST program in FY 2008 and the LUST Trust Fund is estimated to have a balance of over \$2.7 billion.

Underfunds brownfields cleanup and assessment grants. The Brownfields Revitalization Act that President Bush signed in 2002 authorizes \$200 million a year for brownfields cleanup and assessment grants, a priority for the nation's mayors. And yet the budget requests only \$89 million in FY 2008, plus \$23 million in administrative costs – only 56 percent of the \$200 million authorized level. The \$89 million request for grants is 26 percent below the President's request for FY 2006.

Increases funding for national park operations, although the increase is partially offset by cuts in other national parks programs. A bright spot in the President's environment/natural resources budget is that it increases funding for national park operations by \$250 million in FY 2008. However, although any increase in national park budgets is a positive step, many Democrats are concerned that the increase is partially offset by cuts in other national parks programs, including construction, historic preservation, and federal and state land acquisitions.

Cuts farm conservation programs. While the President's budget provides expanded conservation funding in the new farm bill, it also substantially cuts 2008 farm bill conservation funding by \$396 million for programs such as the Conservation Security Program (CSP) (cut by \$135 million below the level needed to maintain current services) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) (cut by \$251 million below the level needed to maintain current services.)

Cuts energy efficiency programs. The President's budget cuts energy efficiency programs, even though DOE research on core energy efficiency programs has been cut by 37 percent in real terms since FY 2002. [Alliance to Save Energy, 2/5/07] For example, it cuts the Federal Energy Management Program, which has reduced energy use in federal buildings by 24 percent over 15 years. [Center for American Progress, 2/20/06]

