



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Norm Dicks (D-WA), Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

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I want to welcome the Members of the Subcommittee, Chairman Mr. Obey and Ranking Member Mr. Lewis, and the public to the mark-up of the fiscal year 2010 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

I am very pleased to be able to present what I believe is a very fine Bill. This Bill provides historic increases for vitally needed environmental improvements and for Native American programs, especially Indian Health. The Bill also has generous allocations for our public lands, for science, and for cultural agencies, as I will describe in a moment.

This Bill is a good Bill thanks to the allocation provided by Full Committee Chairman Obey. He recognized that this Bill has been underfunded for years and his allocation allows us to begin to catch up. The Bill I am presenting today totals \$32.3 billion, which is \$25 million below the President's request and \$4.7 billion above the fiscal year 2009 level, not counting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

This Bill demonstrates a clear break from the past. During the previous Administration, the programs and activities funded by this Subcommittee really suffered. The requests for the Interior Department went down by 16 percent, the EPA by 29 percent, and the non-fire Forest Service accounts went down by 35 percent. Now we beginning to address major shortfalls and invest in America's environment. Some will say that this Bill invests too much for clean drinking water and wastewater, but they are wrong. Every American deserves safe water to drink, and it is vital that we clean up our waterways. It is time we get serious about this problem.

This Bill is based on a lot of hard work by many people. This subcommittee held 20 separate hearings with 37 different witnesses, including Administration officials, various GAO and Inspector Generals, and other experts. We heard from 99 different public witnesses and received written testimony from an additional 94. Although the detailed budget justifications came to us late, we have had ample time to examine the Obama Administration proposals.

The Subcommittee had to make difficult choices on projects and programs funded in this bill. Through hearings and briefings, we carefully reviewed the proposed budget and have recommended a number of reductions and terminations. Some of these were the result of recommendations made by the GAO and the Agency and Departmental IGs following thorough consideration of their investigatory findings. In total, we have reduced or terminated \$195 million from the fiscal year 2009 enacted level and \$300 million from the budget request.

I am proud to be able to present this Bill with my friend and ranking member, **Mr. Simpson**. I am sure there are things in this mark that he does not agree with, but we have had a solid, bipartisan process and excellent minority participation at our hearings. And I think this bipartisan approach has improved the Bill.

Before we begin, I want to take a few minutes to describe some of the key features of this Bill.

First, this Bill provides historic increases and focused funding to **protect the environment**. The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and specific infrastructure grants receive \$3.9 billion to provide loans and subsidized assistance to more than 1470 communities by helping local communities improve their drinking water and wastewater systems. This includes \$2.3 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to ensure our nation's waters meet the goals of the Clean Water Act, and \$1.4 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to protect public health by improving drinking water systems.

I also want to point out that a portion of the revolving funds will be available with subsidies, rather than through conventional loans with interest. This Subcommittee received more than 1200 requests from Members of Congress for infrastructure grants. American communities are screaming for a more affordable way to provide clean and safe water.

The Bill allocates \$667 million to protect major American lakes, estuaries, and bays. This funding is \$89 million above the President's Request and \$544 million above 2009. This Bill fully funds the President's request of \$475 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. This landmark effort will involve the coordination and collaboration of 16 Federal agencies, all of the States of the Great Lakes Region, local government and citizens groups, and Canada in an unprecedented effort to restore the Great Lakes. This Bill also makes significant investments to protect other American great water bodies including Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, the Gulf of Mexico, the Chesapeake Bay and others. This mark also increases funding for the network of National Estuaries so all 28 programs will receive \$1 million per year.

By now I think all of us here can agree that **global climate change** is one of the largest problems we will face. All told, this Bill has \$419 million for climate change adaptation and scientific efforts, which is \$24 million above the President's budget and \$189 million above the 2009 level. We have included \$21 million for the EPA to address the requirement that the U.S. produce 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. We also include \$10 million to continue grants at EPA to encourage local communities to find ways to cut their greenhouse gas emissions.

The Bill includes the full request for the Department of the Interior of \$178 million for climate change programs, including \$67 million for priority climate change research at the U.S. Geological Survey. This also includes \$80 million for climate change planning and on-the-ground conservation efforts at the Fish and Wildlife Service, including \$40 million for climate change activities through the State Wildlife Grants program. In addition, climate change adaptation activities at the BLM, Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs receive \$31 million. I am especially proud that the Bill includes \$15 million, as requested, for the National Global Warming and Wildlife Science Center at the U.S. Geological Survey.

The second main area I want to discuss is our efforts to **empower Native American communities**. In this Bill, the Committee provides \$6.8 billion for Indian programs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service. This is \$654 million above the 2009 level and \$39 million above the request. The significant increases for health care, Tribal law enforcement and education reflect our commitment to providing for the health, safety, and well-being of Native Americans.

This Bill provides an historic increase of \$471 million above the enacted level for the Indian Health Service. This will total \$4.0 billion, an increase of \$18 million above the President's request. The Bill provides \$144 million above the 2009 level for contract health services that allow sites to purchase services they are not able to provide, such as transportation and emergency care. The increases provided will support Tribal self-governance and improve the quality and availability of critical health care services for Native Americans.

The Bill also provides the Bureau of Indian Affairs a total of \$2.6 billion, which is \$21 million above the President's request and \$182 million above the 2009 level. Of the increases, \$30 million is for law enforcement to strengthen police programs, detention center operations and Tribal courts.

The third main area I want to feature is our support of the **public lands**, including those managed by the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and the BLM. This Bill provides much of the funding requested to help land managers make up for lost ground during the past Administration.

Before discussing the land management agencies, I'll mention the major investments we are making for **wildland fire** at the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior. This Bill has an unprecedented total of \$3.55 billion for all of the fire accounts, which is \$316 million above 2009 and \$58 million above the President's Request. This Bill increases overall wildfire suppression funding by \$419 million, or 32% over 2009. The fire suppression total includes \$250 million for the new wildfire suppression contingency reserve accounts. This Bill invests in hazardous fuels reduction projects with an increase of \$91 million, or 17% over the request, to an historic funding level of \$611 million. This will reduce wildfires in the future and protect communities and watersheds.

This Bill provides \$2.7 billion for the National Park Service, which is \$195 million above last year and \$27 million above the President's request. This funding continues the 10-year initiative to upgrade our parks before the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, by providing a \$100 million increase in park operations. We also fund the \$25 million for Park Partnership cost share projects.

I am particularly proud of our past and present efforts to improve the National Wildlife Refuge System. This Bill provides \$503 million for the refuge system, which is \$40 million above the 2009 level and \$20 million above the President's request. This increase provides critically needed staff and funding to implement climate change strategies, and improve conservation efforts.

This Bill also cares for the land management, State assistance, and science programs at the U.S. Forest Service. The non-fire Forest Service budget is provided \$2.77 billion, which is \$160 million above 2009 and \$68 million above the President's Request. I want to point out that this Bill provides \$100 million for the Legacy Road and Trail Remediation program at the Forest Service to protect streams and water systems from damaged forest roads. This effort is a key part of our effort to protect the national forests and grasslands.

Before concluding, I want to mention the investments we are making for the **cultural agencies** supported by this Bill. We have included \$170 million for both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. As our hearings demonstrated, the endowments are vital for preserving and encouraging America's arts and cultural heritage. This funding totals \$17 million above the President's request and \$30 million above last year.

This Bill also supports the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum complex, with an increase of \$15 million above the President's request and \$43 million above 2009. The recommended funding total is \$774 million.

I know that this is a lot to cover. Indeed, there are some substantial increases in this Bill I am bringing forth. But these programs are vital to virtually all Americans, and these investments will make for a better environment and will help care for our nation's trust responsibilities. I want to thank Chairman Obey for his efforts to protect the environment by providing us with an allocation adequate to begin tackling these problems.