



HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Democratic Caucus

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Budget in Brief:

The President's Budget Cuts Environmental Protection Programs

Two Straight Years of Environmental Cuts — The Administration touts its commitment to clean air, clean water, and environmental preservation and conservation, but reality does not match the rhetoric. By 2006, funding for environmental programs will be cut by 9.0 percent below the 2004 enacted level. This would be the first time since 1981 that environmental programs would be cut in two consecutive years.

Budget Cuts Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Funding — EPA funding is cut once again in 2005 by 7.2 percent from the 2004 enacted level. This includes an \$822 million cut in water quality programs and a \$93 million cut in scientific research.

Clean Water Needs Ignored — The President reduces water quality funding by \$822 million, to \$1.8 billion, in 2005. Of this, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund is cut by nearly \$500 million from the 2004 enacted level of \$1.3 billion. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is essentially frozen in 2005 at \$850 million.

Abandoning Our Nation's Farmers and Ranchers — The President cuts vital Farm Bill programs that would help farmers and ranchers protect and enhance natural resources by more than \$400 million in 2005 alone. The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is capped at \$209 million for 2005, far below what is needed to carry out the program. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is cut by \$215 million (a 17.9 percent cut); the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) by \$26 million (31.1 percent); and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program by \$150 million (100 percent). The large backlog for these and other programs, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), is also not addressed.

Continued Push to Drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) — Despite strong opposition in Congress, for the fourth consecutive year the President seeks to open the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas exploration at the risk of destroying a national treasure.

Taxpayers Will Pay the Bill for Corporate Polluters — The 2005 budget slightly increases funding to clean up the nation’s worst hazardous waste sites. However, all of the funding this year is supplied from general revenues, and the President does not reinstate the expired Superfund taxes levied on corporations. As a result, the “polluter pays” principle is abandoned. Corporate polluters will not be held accountable for their actions and taxpayers will foot the entire bill for corporate hazardous waste cleanup.

Shortchanging the Conservation Trust Fund — Just as in past years, the President fails to fully fund the Conservation Trust Fund, disregarding our most pressing conservation, recreation, wildlife, and preservation needs. The budget only provides \$1.7 billion for 2005, which is \$500 million below the authorized level.

Failed Promise to Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) — The budget provides \$900 million for the LWCF in 2005. The President once again claims to meet his pledge to fully fund the LWCF. In reality, only one third of this amount is provided for the intended LWCF purposes of preserving parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and open space; the remainder is diverted to unauthorized programs.

Unmet Fire Prevention Needs — The President does not fully fund his Healthy Forests Initiative, providing only \$476 million of the \$760 million authorized for hazardous fuel reduction. State and private forestry programs are cut by more than 23 percent and rural fire assistance is cut by nearly 50 percent in 2005, further increasing the risk of wildfires.

Leaving Our Cities Behind — The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program is eliminated, leaving countless economically distressed cities without the means to renovate and rehabilitate critically needed park and recreation facilities.

Leading Source of Groundwater Contamination Not Addressed — Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) funding is cut by 4.6 percent in 2005. There are currently 136,000 confirmed releases that have not been addressed where leaking petroleum and MTBE are contaminating groundwater and drinking water supplies.

Endangered Species at Further Risk — The core Fish and Wildlife Service endangered species program is cut by 5.5 percent below the 2004 enacted level. More than 200 species currently listed under the Endangered Species Act that are on the verge of extinction will be in jeopardy and another 250 species will not receive needed protection.

Weakened Ability to Decontaminate Anthrax, Ricin, and Other Toxins in Buildings — The President eliminates an \$8 million EPA research program on decontaminating buildings attacked by toxins. EPA admits this will “force it to disband the technical and engineering expertise that will be needed to address known and emerging biological and chemical threats in the future.”