

SUMMARY
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
FISCAL YEAR 2019 APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Washington, D.C. – The fiscal year 2019 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill provides a total discretionary funding level of \$35.552 billion, which is \$300 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level and \$7.276 billion more than the President’s request.

The bill soundly rejects the broad, damaging cuts proposed by the Trump Administration to conservation, environmental protection, and cultural programs and provides critical increases to key tribal, land management and infrastructure priorities. In addition, the bill does not contain poison pill riders and rejects more than 25 new policy riders contained in the House bill that weakened the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and other major environmental laws.

Key Points & Highlights

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).— The bill provides \$8.849 billion for the EPA, \$25 million more than fiscal year 2018 and \$2.658 billion more than the President’s budget request. The bill rejects the Administration’s proposals to cut research by 45 percent, grants by 48 percent, and enforcement of environmental and public health laws by 25 percent. It also rejects the request to fund large scale buyouts of 3,500 agency scientists and health experts, which would have cut roughly 17 percent of the EPA’s total workforce.

The bill maintains funding for the State Revolving Funds at the fiscal year 2018 level, including \$1.164 billion for Drinking Water and \$1.694 billion for Clean Water. The Water Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan program is increased to support lending of \$7.3 billion, \$600 million more than fiscal year 2018. The bill provides \$25 million for lead contamination testing at schools and child care centers, \$25 million for lead reduction projects in rural areas, and \$15 million for water projects in communities working to improve compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, which is \$15 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level for these three programs combined.

The bill also makes targeted funding increases for programs with longstanding track records improving public health and the environment, including Brownfields grants (\$87 million provided), Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants (\$87 million provided), and rural water technical assistance and training (\$15 million provided).

National Park Service (NPS).—The bill provides \$3.223 billion for the NPS, \$20.5 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level and \$521 million more than the President’s budget request. National Heritage Areas funding is continued at the fiscal year 2018 level of \$20.3 million and the Historic Preservation Fund is funded at \$102.7 million, \$5.7 million more than fiscal year 2018. Within that amount, the bill provides \$49.7 million for State Historical Preservation Offices, \$14.5 million for Civil Rights site preservation grants, \$8 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, \$13 million for Save America’s Treasures grants,

and \$5 million for historic revitalization grants. The bill also provides \$364.7 million to address construction and deferred maintenance needs at national parks, an increase of \$5 million above the fiscal year 2018 level.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT).—The bill fully funds payments to counties through the PILT program, which are estimated at a total of \$500 million.

Wildland Firefighting.—The bill provides \$2.05 billion for fire suppression at the Forest Service and Department of the Interior, an amount that covers the 10-year rolling average of actual firefighting expenditures plus an additional \$500 million for the Forest Service in case suppression costs exceed the 10-year average, as they have in recent years.

Tribal Programs.—The bill provides \$5.804 billion for the Indian Health Service, \$267 million more than fiscal year 2018 and \$380 million more than the President’s budget request. The agreement provides \$4.103 billion for health care services, an increase of \$151 million above the fiscal year 2018 level. Within that amount, the bill fully funds staffing needs for newly constructed health care facilities and includes \$10 million in new funds for grants to tribes to address opioid and substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery efforts. Contract support costs are fully funded at an estimated level of \$822 million, an increase of \$104 million above fiscal year 2018. The agreement also funds health facilities construction and maintenance at \$878.8 million.

Programs provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) are funded at \$3.081 billion, an increase of \$17.5 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level. The agreement provides \$358.7 million for BIA and BIE construction and maintenance programs, including \$238.3 million for education construction requirements.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).—The bill provides \$435 million, an increase of \$10 million above the fiscal year 2018 level, for Federal land acquisition and conservation grants provided through the LWCF. The President’s Budget proposed a negative total for LWCF, in the amount of -\$12.9 million, due to rescissions of \$46 million from previously appropriated funding. LWCF is critical for improving recreational access to our federal lands, protecting iconic landscapes, delivering grants to states and local governments to create and protect urban parks and open spaces, and providing farmers and ranchers with easements to allow them to continue to steward their private lands in the face of development pressures.

Cultural Programs.—The agreement provides \$155 million each to the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, an increase of \$2 million more for each endowment than the fiscal year 2018 enacted level, rejecting the Administration’s proposal to terminate these programs. The bill provides \$1.043 billion for the Smithsonian Institution, the same level as fiscal year 2018. Funding for the National Gallery of Art is increased by 1 percent, for a total of \$168.4 million, and funding for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts increases by 2 percent, for a total of \$41.3 million, above the fiscal year 2018 levels.

Poison Pill Rider Outcomes

The agreement eliminates more than 25 new poison pill riders contained in the 215th Congress House bill, including dropping the following provisions:

- Language to delists wolves in Wyoming and the Great Lakes region;
- Language to repeal the Obama Administration’s Waters of the United States rule;
- Language to exempt major California water conveyance and storage projects from further environmental review;
- Language to address royalties from oil and gas development of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge;
- Language to prevent Clean Water Act permitting for agricultural nutrients;
- Language to restrict a number of Endangered Species Act actions, including blocking listing of the lesser prairie chicken; and
- Language to block enforcement of Obama-era methane standards.

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