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Appropriations Committee Releases Fiscal Year 2019 Interior and Environment Bill

Legislation will fully fund efforts to fight wildfires, maintain public lands for the future, roll back harmful environmental regulations, and meet commitments to Native American communities

Washington, May 14 -

In total, the bill provides \$35.252 billion, equal to the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. These funds are targeted to important programs that support and protect the nation's natural resources, including \$3.9 billion for the Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service to prevent and combat devastating wildfires. The legislation also contains several policy provisions to rein in harmful and unnecessary regulations at the EPA and other agencies.

“The bill ensures that funding is targeted to maintaining the health and safety of our public lands – including the protection from and the fighting of devastating wildfires – and will help protect vital national resources for generations to come,” House Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen said. “In addition, it continues the hand-in-hand work with the Administration to stop economically harmful, unnecessary regulations at the Environmental Protection Agency and others, to make sure core U.S. industries have the opportunities they need to thrive.”

“The Interior Subcommittee has made every effort to balance a host of competing needs and provided the Interior Department, EPA and other agencies under our jurisdiction with the resources necessary to carry out their mission. Our bill funds a number of American priorities like our

National Park Service, the Smithsonian, Native American programs, efforts to prevent and combat wildfires, and the development of an earthquake early warning system for the West Coast. Once again we provide important funding for EPA programs that clean our environment, but do not increase the size of the federal bureaucracy. I appreciate the input of all of our Subcommittee members,” Interior Subcommittee Chairman Ken Calvert said.

Highlights:

Wildland Firefighting and Prevention – In total, the bill funds wildland firefighting and prevention programs at \$3.9 billion, fully funding the 10-year average for wildland fire suppression costs for both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service, and providing robust additional funding – \$500 million– for Forest Service suppression operations. The legislation also includes \$655 million for hazardous fuels management, which is \$30 million above the fiscal year 2018 level.

Federal Payments to Local Communities – The bill provides \$500 million for “Payments In Lieu of Taxes” (PILT), \$35 million above the budget request. PILT provides funds for local governments in 49 states to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their counties. Without congressional action, many rural communities would face huge budget shortfalls impacting public safety, education, and other local government responsibilities.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The bill funds EPA at \$7.958 billion, \$100 million below the fiscal year 2018 level. Within this total, EPA’s regulatory programs are reduced by \$228 million below the current level. The legislation supports the President’s proposal to reshape the Agency’s workforce by providing resources requested to offer buyouts and voluntary separation agreements to employees.

The bill also targets additional funding provided by the recent budget agreement to infrastructure programs, including:

- A total of \$2.6 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan fund, which states and localities use for water infrastructure projects;
- An increase of \$40 million to accelerate the cleanup of Superfund sites to return them to productive use and spur economic development; and
- A total of \$75 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to leverage federal dollars to provide financing for more than \$8 billion in water infrastructure projects.

This bill reflects the Administration's goal to rein in outdated, unnecessary and potentially harmful regulations at the EPA. For example, it includes a full repeal of the economically damaging "**Waters of the United States**" regulation.

Also included is bill language prohibiting the regulation of lead content of ammunition and fishing tackle, relieving livestock operations from EPA permitting requirements, and exempting livestock producers from EPA greenhouse gas regulations.

Also included is a multiple agency directive to EPA, USDA, and DOE to establish clear policies that reflect the carbon neutrality of biomass, as well as a provision prohibiting EPA from making changes to certain agricultural exemptions under the Clean Water Act.

Native American Programs – The bill increases the Federal commitment to honoring government-to-government treaty and Trust agreements entered into with American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Indian Health Service is funded at \$5.9 billion, \$370 million above the fiscal year 2018 level. The Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education are funded at \$3.1 billion, \$40 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. Proposed cuts are restored and fixed costs are funded. Increases are provided for staffing newly constructed hospitals; urban health clinics; the Indian Health Care Improvement Fund; road maintenance; police

officers and courts; schools and colleges; economic development; and forest management. Contract Support Costs continue to be fully funded.

Office of Surface Mining (OSM) – The OSM is funded at \$229 million in the bill. This includes \$90 million to continue a pilot program to accelerate the reclamation of abandoned mine lands, which will help boost community redevelopment and economic growth. The legislation also continues state regulatory grants at \$68 million.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The bill contains \$1.4 billion for the BLM, an increase of \$55 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level.

The bill provides \$60 million, equal to the fiscal year 2018 level, for on-the-ground sage grouse conservation to protect the species and to preserve federal lands for public and private uses, such as energy development, ranching, recreation, and military training. The bill also includes a \$6.2 million increase to expand energy and mineral development.

National Park Service (NPS) – The legislation includes \$3.25 billion for the NPS, an increase of \$53 million above the fiscal year 2018 level. Within the total, the bill provides an additional \$50 million in funding for park operations. The bill also includes a \$175 million increase above fiscal year 2018 levels to address longstanding deferred maintenance needs, including a \$40 million increase for maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation projects, and a \$135 million increase for deferred maintenance of park service facilities.

U.S. Forest Service – The bill includes \$6.1 billion for the Forest Service, of which \$3 billion is targeted to wildland fire prevention and suppression. The bill also provides a \$19.5 million increase to combat pests, diseases, and invasive species in our Nation’s forests and includes a provision prohibiting the Forest Service or BLM from issuing new closures of public lands to hunting and recreational shooting, except in the case of public safety.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – The FWS is funded at \$1.6 billion, an \$11 million decrease below the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. Significant investments continue to be made to reduce the deferred maintenance backlogs within the National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish Hatchery System and to ensure that all fish hatcheries continue to operate. Funding to recover and delist threatened and endangered species is increased by \$5.5 million, including a \$2.5 million increase for Recovery Challenge matching grants to share the costs of recovery with corporate and other non-governmental partners. Proposed cuts are restored to the National Wildlife Refuge Fund and other cost-shared grant programs, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, which is increased by \$2 million. Bill language is included to delist recovered gray wolves and prevent the unnecessary listing of greater sage-grouse. Strong budgets continue for fighting invasive species and illegal wildlife trafficking.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) – The bill includes \$1.2 billion for the USGS, \$19 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. Funding is targeted to critical infrastructure investments in natural hazards programs, streamgages, the groundwater monitoring network, and critical materials mapping activities. The bill includes \$21 million for an earthquake early warning system to help save lives during natural disasters; a \$13 million increase for the streamgage network; and \$11 million for the Three Dimensional Mapping and Economic Empowerment Program. The bill also fully funds the development of “Landsat 9” – a satellite program that provides land use measurements that are important to local communities for agriculture, forestry, energy and water resource decisions.

Smithsonian Institution – The Smithsonian Institution is funded at \$1 billion in the bill, \$12 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. This level is sufficient to allow all current operations and programs to continue. The bill also includes \$225 million toward the multi-year renovation of the National Air and Space Museum.

National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities – The bill includes \$155 million for each of the endowments, \$2 million above the fiscal year

2018 level for each endowment.

Eisenhower Memorial Commission – The bill provides \$1.8 million for salaries and expenses for the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. Funding to complete construction was provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – The bill provides \$360 million for LWCF programs. State and local recreation and battlefield preservation programs are prioritized with 62 percent of the funding going to NPS State Assistance, Forest Legacy, American Battlefield Protection, and Highlands Conservation Act programs.

Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) – The CSB is funded at \$12 million, \$1 million above the fiscal year 2018 level.

For the text of the draft bill, please visit:

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP06/20180515/108314/BILLS-115HR-SC-AP-FY2019-Interior-SubcommitteeDraft.pdf>

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