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**SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES
FY2016 INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

***Senate Measure Promotes Responsible Public Lands & Environmental Policies,
Addresses Priorities for Wildfire Suppression, Honors Trust Responsibilities***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The FY2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill today was given subcommittee approval, the first such markup in six years on legislation to fund the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies.

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies on Tuesday approved the measure, making it available for consideration by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on Thursday. The Senate bill totals \$30.01 billion in discretionary appropriations, excluding \$1.05 billion of emergency fire suppression funds.

The Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill includes funding for the Interior Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture), Indian Health Service (Department of Health and Human Services), cultural agencies and other programs.

The Senate measure takes steps to invest in programs that promote responsible resource development on our public lands while funding important environmental programs. The bill provides funding to address backlog construction and maintenance projects for the National Park Service in order to provide for a safe visitor experience. It fully funds contract support costs for the Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs in support of tribal self-determination. The bill also fully funds the 10-year average for firefighting and includes a new budget cap adjustment so that when these funds are exhausted the agency has access to additional resources so they do not have to borrow from other programs to pay for firefighting in severe wildfire seasons.

“I thank my subcommittee colleagues for the time and energy they spent crafting this legislation that balances responsible spending while still producing a bill that reflects the will and priorities of the nation,” said **U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska)**, chairman of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. “The last time an Interior bill was reported by the Appropriations Committee was six years ago, and this document represents the Senate’s return to normal order and marks an important occasion that is long overdue.”

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Highlights of the Senate FY2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill:

Department of the Interior – The bill provides \$11.05 billion overall for the Department of the Interior.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The bill provides \$1.18 billion for BLM, an increase of \$65.5 million above the enacted level. Within this funding, an increase of \$45 million is devoted to sage-grouse activities and \$19 million is allocated for responsible natural resource development activities. The bill also includes a provision giving states flexibility related to the BLM hydraulic fracturing rule.

National Park Service (NPS) – The bill provides \$2.72 billion for the NPS, an increase of \$112.7 million above the enacted level. This includes important increases for construction backlog, maintenance, and new park units established under the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015. An additional \$10 million has been provided for the Centennial Initiative.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – The bill provides \$1.43 billion for FWS, \$2.0 million below the FY2015 enacted level. Important programs increases include funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). The bill also provides funding to maintain continued operation of fish hatcheries. The bill continues the prohibition on listing the sage-grouse as an endangered species.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) – The bill provides \$1.06 billion for the USGS, \$17 million increase over the enacted level. Within this amount, important program increases have been included for energy and mineral resources, mapping, natural hazards, groundwater monitoring network, streamgages, invasive species, and the requested funds for Landsat 9.

Indian Health Service (IHS) – The bill provides \$4.77 billion for the IHS, an increase of \$135 million above the FY2015 enacted level. The bill includes a \$55 million increase for Contract Support Costs, representing the full amount of contract support costs owed to tribes. An additional \$20 million is provided for construction to help address the agency's backlog of priority construction facilities.

Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education (BIA/BIE) – The bill provides \$2.69 billion for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education, an increase of \$92 million above the enacted level. Within this amount, contract support costs are fully funded and important increases for public safety and justice programs receive additional support. An additional \$6.3 million above the enacted level has been provided for construction.

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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The bill provides \$7.6 billion for EPA, \$538.8 million below the FY2015 enacted level. Funding for core EPA regulatory programs is reduced by \$57.1 million while on-the-ground cleanup programs receive a \$21.5 million increase. This funding level is intended to return the agency to its core mission of cleaning up environmental problems instead of writing costly rules that will harm the economy.

The does the following to stop EPA executive overreach:

- Prohibits the EPA from forcing federal plans on states that do not support the Obama administration’s onerous greenhouse gas regulations
- Prohibits the EPA Waters of the United States rule
- Prohibits the EPA from lowering the ozone standard until 85 percent of counties in non-compliance with the current standard come into compliance
- Prohibits the EPA from requiring duplicative financial surety rules on the mining industry
- Continues to prohibit the EPA from regulating certain types of ammunition and fishing tackle

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – The bill provides \$5.12 billion the USFS, an increase of \$67 million above the enacted level. Important increases are included for hazardous fuels reduction, road maintenance and construction, and forest products production.

Wildland Fire Suppression – The bill provides a total of \$3.61 billion to fight wildland fire. This represents fire suppression funded at 100 percent of the 10-year average. The bill also includes \$1.054 billion in emergency spending, which may only be used if all discretionary appropriations are exhausted. Also included in bill language is a fire cap adjustment that would make fire suppression expenditures above 100 percent of the 10-year average eligible for disaster assistance.

Smithsonian Institution – The Smithsonian Institution is funded at \$819.5 million, equal to the FY2015 enacted level.

National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities – The bill includes \$146 million for each Endowment, level with the FY2015 enacted level.

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) – The bill funds the CEQ at \$3 million, equal to the FY2015 enacted level. The bill prohibits further action by CEQ to incorporate climate change into National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews, which is outside of the scope of NEPA.

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