



# COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

## CHAIRMAN PATRICK LEAHY

**For Immediate Release:**

July 28, 2022

**Contact:**

Jay Tilton (Appropriations): (202) 224-2667

Martina McLennan (Merkley): (202) 224-3753

### SUMMARY

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES FISCAL YEAR 2023 APPROPRIATIONS BILL

*Chairman's Mark: July 28, 2022*

**Washington, D.C.** – The fiscal year 2023 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill provides a total discretionary funding level of \$42.217 billion, which is \$4.217 billion more than the fiscal year 2022 level. In addition, the bill provides \$2.55 billion for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund, \$2.282 billion in emergency funding, and \$5.577 billion in advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service. Finally, in accordance with the Great American Outdoors Act, the bill allocates \$1.9 billion for projects within National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund and \$900 million for projects within the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

**U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.),** Chair of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, said:

*“All Americans deserve clean air and water, healthy forests and ecosystems, and infrastructure that works for them, no matter where they live across the country—and this bill delivers. As Chair of the Senate Interior Subcommittee on Appropriations, I wrote the bill to fund programs that modernize our water systems, combat climate chaos, protect our national parks, monuments and outdoor recreation, champion critical projects long-sought by communities and tribes in every corner of America and so much more, all while creating good-paying jobs and stripping out damaging, poison-pill riders that harm the environment. And at a time when wildfires are an ever-growing threat to the West, including my home state of Oregon, this bill makes big investments in preventing and fighting dangerous megafires and the hazardous smoke they produce. I am excited to see how these investments will play a key role in strengthening America for generations to come.”*

**U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),** Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said:

*“This bill makes critical investments to protect our environment, including significant increases to help combat and mitigate the effects of climate change and to preserve ecosystems and what is left of our pristine landscapes. It includes funds to ensure the air we breathe and water we drink are safe and clean. I am particularly pleased that it a more than 50 percent increase in funding*

*for the EPA's climate and clean air programs, and a historic \$180 million investment to support environmental justice programs. The bill also provides a 14 percent increase for wildfire suppression in response to devastating fires that have ravaged the Western states, funding that is greatly needed. It is imperative that we act now to protect this beautiful land for generations to come and this bill will advance that goal."*

### **Key Points & Highlights**

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** The bill provides \$10.6 billion for EPA, an increase of \$1.1 billion to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. To bolster efforts to tackle climate change and protect clean air, the bill increases EPA's climate and clean air programs by \$231 million (54 percent). These enhanced resources will support EPA efforts to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution and include major investments in expanded air quality monitoring, including an increase of \$50 million for community air monitoring. To protect communities from harmful pollution, the bill includes a \$70 million (26 percent) increase for EPA's enforcement and compliance programs. The bill includes an historic \$180 million investment in environmental justice at the Environmental Protection Agency. This funding—an increase of \$80 million (80 percent) as compared to the fiscal year 2022 funding level—will provide critical support to community partners in their efforts to eliminate pollution and create a clean and healthy environment for a revitalized future. The bill fully funds the EPA's toxic chemicals program by providing an increase of \$65 million (66 percent), providing significantly increased resources to meet the agency's expanded responsibilities under the bipartisan 2016 Lautenberg amendments.

The bill also invests in healthy communities and job creation by supporting EPA's infrastructure grant programs. Funding includes major investments in clean water: more than \$550 million in water infrastructure community initiated projects identified across the country; \$2.865 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, \$185 million for grants to address non-point source pollution; \$31.5 million to address lead in schools; \$51 million to address combined sewer overflows; nearly \$75 million for innovative water infrastructure loans through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA); and \$13 million to establish two new water grant programs to address tribal water resources and establish a pilot program for alternative water sources. The bill also will protect health and spur economic growth by helping clean up contaminated lands and pollution through \$1.29 billion for EPA's Superfund program, \$96 million for brownfields grants, and \$96 million for diesel engine clean up grants.

**Tribal Programs:** The bill invests in the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities to Native Americans by providing \$11.52 billion for tribal programs. For fiscal year 2023, the bill provides \$7.38 billion for the Indian Health Service, an increase of \$762 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. These investments increase health services funding by 11 percent by providing \$2.7 billion for hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses and health services, an increase of \$389.7 million to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level; \$260 million for dental health; and \$127 million for mental health programs such as suicide prevention initiatives for Native American youth, and telebehavioral health programs. This funding also increases Indian Health facilities investments by 15 percent for a total of \$1.08 billion for new hospital construction, new and replacement equipment, and water and solid waste infrastructure improvements for Native American communities, critically important for public health.

The bill also provides an advance appropriation of \$5.577 billion for the IHS for fiscal year 2024. That amount is equal to the fiscal year 2023 amount with the exception of funding provided for Electronic Health Records, Sanitation Facilities Construction, and Health Care Facilities Construction, which are provided only an annual appropriation in recognition of the project-based nature of those accounts. Overall, the vast majority of Indian Health Service funding, and all such funding supporting the provision of health services to Native Americans such as patient care and medical equipment, is provided an advance appropriation. The Committee recognizes that budget uncertainty due to temporary lapses of appropriations and continuing resolutions have an effect on the orderly operations of critical healthcare programs for Native American communities. This budgetary change will enable IHS to continue to provide health services without interruption or uncertainty, improving the quality of care and providing peace of mind for patients and medical providers.

Tribal programs provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) are collectively funded at \$4.022 billion, an increase of \$422 million (11.7 percent) above the fiscal year 2022 level. This funding provides a number of increases to support Tribes to tackle the effects of climate change through programs like the Tribal Climate Resilience Program, boosts public safety and justice programs to address issues like Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women cases in Indian Country, continues support of the Indian Boarding School Initiative that looks into the troubled legacy of federal Indian boarding schools, and accelerates new school construction across the BIE school system to ensure children are afforded a safe place to learn.

**National Park Service:** The bill provides \$3.578 billion for the National Park Service, \$313 million more than the fiscal year 2022 level, which will restore about half of staffing losses since 2010 and fully fund the request for deferred maintenance and construction. The bill also provides targeted increases across the country to better tell the story of the struggle for racial justice through our national parks. In addition, the bill also provides increases to fiscal year 2022 funding of \$3.3 million for State Historic Preservation Offices, \$5 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, \$2.5 million for Historical Revitalization grants, \$2.25 million for Civil Rights preservation. Funding for National Heritage Areas is \$27.1 million and for Save America's Treasures grants is \$26.5 million.

**Forest Service:** The bill provides \$6.4 billion for the Forest Service (excluding \$2.21 billion in additional funds for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve), \$499 million more than fiscal year 2022. These increases are provided to radically improve forest restoration and fire risk reduction efforts and to increase year-round staffing to carry out this work. The bill increases hazardous fuels reduction projects to \$247 million to allow the Forest Service to treat more of the highest-risk acres. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program is maintained at \$28 million, which will fund more projects backed by diverse stakeholders to improve forest landscapes. Additional increases are provided for grants to states for fire protection and forest stewardship, and for research on fire behavior, invasive pests, and disease.

**Wildland Firefighting:** The bill provides a total of \$4.4 billion for fire suppression, of which \$2.55 billion is provided to the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund and \$450 million

is provided as an emergency supplemental. This is \$550 million (14 percent) more than fiscal year 2022. Since the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141), which authorized the Reserve Fund, the average annual cost of suppression has exceeded assumptions that informed the funding levels currently assumed in the Reserve Fund. Fiscal year 2021 was the most expensive year on record, for the first time costs exceeded \$4 billion, and fiscal year 2022 is tracking similar year-to-date expenditures. The emergency supplemental funding was calculated based on actual average costs of firefighting in the 4 years since enactment of the Reserve Fund. This additional funding gives the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior an assured amount of funding to be used when regular appropriated funds are spent. The bill also makes available funding to fulfill the President's commitment to improve compensation for federal firefighters, including providing at least \$15 an hour in pay.

**Fish and Wildlife Service:** The bill provides \$1.8 billion for the Fish and Wildlife Service, an increase of \$264 million (17 percent) to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. This funding includes a number of increases to support wildlife conservation across multiple areas from combatting international wildlife trafficking, to supporting landmark conservation laws like the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and supporting the National Wildlife Refuge System. Specifically, the bill increases Ecological Services by \$35 million for Endangered Species Act activities, provides an additional \$5 million for law enforcement activities and \$4.2 million for international affairs to combat wildlife trafficking, and provides an increase of \$31 million for the Refuge system. Other increases to combat invasive species and habitat restoration are also provided.

**Bureau of Land Management:** The bill provides \$1.53 billion for the Bureau of Land Management, \$120 million more than fiscal year 2022. National Conservation Lands, which have been chronically underfunded, are increased to \$68 million for recreation and management planning for new, expanded, and restored monuments, invasive species control, wildfire adaptation and climate resiliency projects. The wild horse and burro program receives \$156.6 million to accelerate removals from degraded and drought-plagued areas, to house horses off-range, and to jumpstart a fertility control program to reduce the future horse population. Additional increases provide resources for wildlife habitat restoration, including in the sagebrush steppe, and abandoned mine and orphaned oil well cleanup.

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT):** The bill fully funds payments to counties through the PILT program, which are estimated at a total of \$515 million.

**Cultural Programs:** The bill provides \$195 million each to the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, an increase of \$15 million for each endowment compared to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. Increases will support popular special initiatives like the National Endowments for the Arts military healing arts program and the National Endowment for the Humanities "A More Perfect Union" initiative to highlight the nation's shared history. The bill provides \$1.175 billion for the Smithsonian Institution, \$112 million more than fiscal year 2022. Funding for the National Gallery of Art is included at \$209 million and funding for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is included at \$45.4 million.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** The bill allocates \$900 million for Federal land acquisition and financial assistance to states provided through the LWCF via the Great

American Outdoors Act (GAOA). This program 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.

**National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund:** The bill allocates \$1.9 billion for deferred maintenance projects for the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Forest Service as part of a five-year deferred maintenance initiative under the Great American Outdoors Act.

**Disaster Recovery:** The bill provides \$1.828 billion in emergency funding for disaster recovery needs for the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs based on estimates provided by the Department of the Interior. As climate change increases the severity and frequency of wildfires, flooding, and other weather-related events, the Committee finds that additional resources are needed to ensure that the Service can protect these treasured spaces and continue to make them accessible to the public. Recent disasters such as catastrophic flooding impacting Yellowstone National Park and its gateway communities make it clear that funding beyond the scale of the annual bill is insufficient to recover from major disasters. Funding is provided totaling \$1.233 billion for Yellowstone National Park, \$121.2 million for Denali National Park and Preserve, \$320 million for Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and \$153.5 million for other disaster recovery needs.

**Eliminates Controversial Legacy Policy Riders.** The bill excludes several controversial legacy policy riders that were enacted in prior year appropriations bills, including a rider blocking an Endangered Species Act finding on the sage grouse. The bill modifies a prior year poison pill rider that legislated the science surrounding the carbon neutrality of biomass by adding a requirement that the best available science be used in all policy decisions related to biomass emissions. The bill does not include any new poison pill riders.

#####