



COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

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SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES FISCAL YEAR 2022 APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Chairman's Mark: October 18, 2021

Washington, D.C. – The fiscal year 2022 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill provides a total discretionary funding level of \$44.63 billion, which is \$6.17 billion more than the fiscal year 2021 level. In addition, the bill provides \$2.45 billion for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund, and, in accordance with the Great American Outdoors Act, allocates \$1.9 billion to the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund and \$900 million to 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:

“For too long, programs protecting public lands, public health, and the environment and supporting tribal communities have been operating on fumes. I’m proud to announce that this bill makes unprecedented investments to address climate chaos, respond to and prevent climate-driven wildfires, protect natural places and wildlife, restore the rightful place of science, and rebuild capacity at federal agencies. The bill also makes transformative change in Indian Country by boosting funding for tribal health care by a full 25 percent, and providing budgetary certainty – for the first time ever – through advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service and full funding for contract support costs and tribal leases. This bill delivers in a big way for Oregon and the nation, and it’s critical that the Appropriations process move ahead without delay to make sure these long-overdue investments become reality.”

Key Points & Highlights

Tribal Programs. The bill makes an unprecedented investment to fulfill the federal government’s treaty and trust responsibilities to Native Americans by providing \$18.1 billion for

tribal programs and – for the first time – securing advanced appropriations for the Indian Health Service (IHS). The advance appropriation for IHS for fiscal year 2023 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. For fiscal year 2022, the bill provides \$7.61 billion for IHS, an increase of \$1.38 billion above the fiscal year 2021 enacted level, and an additional \$6.58 billion in advance appropriations for fiscal year 2023. These investments for fiscal year 2022 increase health services funding by 25 percent and include \$2.6 billion for hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses and health services; \$285.3 million for dental health; and \$123 million for mental health programs such as suicide prevention initiatives for Native youth. This funding also increases Indian Health facilities investments by 23 percent for a total of \$1.131 billion for new hospital construction, new and replacement equipment, and water and solid waste infrastructure improvements for Native American communities to prevent the spread of disease.

Tribal programs provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) are collectively funded at \$3.938 billion, an increase of \$433 million above the fiscal year 2021 level, which includes \$24.9 million to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women cases in Indian Country and a new \$7 million Indian Boarding School Initiative to conduct a comprehensive review of the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies.

National Park Service (NPS). The bill provides \$3.463 billion for the NPS, \$340 million more than the fiscal year 2021 level. Within that amount, the bill increases funding for park operations by 9 percent for a total of \$2.93 billion, supporting hiring of more than 1,000 additional employees across the Service to restore losses in staff capacity that have limited the Service in addressing challenges, including increased visitation and impacts of climate change. Funding for park operations also includes \$120 million in new conservation initiatives including the Civilian Climate Corps, climate research and planning, and on-the-ground natural resources projects to improve climate resilience, protect wildlife, restore habitat, and reduce the threat of wildfire. Historic Preservation Fund grants are funded at \$180 million, which is \$35 million more than fiscal year 2021. This includes increases above fiscal year 2021 of \$2 million for State Historic Preservation Offices, \$9 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, \$2.5 million for Historical Revitalization grants, \$5 million for Civil Rights preservation, and \$1 million more for Save America’s Treasures grants. Funding for National Heritage Areas is \$27.1 million, which provides \$500,000 for each area with a completed management plan and continues support for longstanding, mature areas at prior year levels. The bill also provides \$10 million to construct a voting rights center at the Selma Interpretive Center to honor the legacy of civil rights leaders, including the late Representative John Lewis.

Forest Service. The bill provides \$6.2 billion for the Forest Service (excluding \$2.12 billion in additional funds for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve), \$817.3 million more than fiscal year 2021, resulting in a 15.8 percent increase over fiscal year 2021. These increases are provided to radically improve forest restoration and fire risk reduction efforts. The bill doubles

funding for hazardous fuels reduction to \$360 million to allow the Forest Service to treat more of the highest-risk acres and doubles funding for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program to \$80 million, which funds projects backed by diverse stakeholders to improve forest landscapes. The bill restores the Legacy Roads and Trails program to prioritize fish passage improvements and repurposing unnecessary roads as trails. 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 \$3.845 billion for fire suppression, of which \$2.45 billion is provided to the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund, \$100 million more than fiscal year 2021, in accordance with the fiscal year 2022 concurrent budget resolution. 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 and ensuring that all personnel responding to wildfire are fully paid for the time they work.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The bill provides \$1.541 billion for the Bureau of Land Management, \$231 million more than fiscal year 2021 which is an increase of 17.7 percent to the fiscal year 2021 level. National Conservation Lands, which have been chronically underfunded, are increased \$23.7 million for recreation and management planning for new, expanded, and restored monuments, invasive species control, wildfire adaptation and climate resiliency projects. An increase of \$12.6 million is provided for renewable energy development to facilitate new solar, wind, and geothermal projects. The wild horse and burro program receives a \$35.8 million increase 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.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The bill provides \$10.54 billion for EPA, \$1.3 billion more than fiscal year 2021. The recommendation supports an historic restoration of funding and capacity at EPA, including the restoration of nearly 1,000 staff lost in the past decade. Increased funding for EPA’s clean air and climate program as well as the agency’s compliance and enforcement efforts will enable the agency to tackle climate change and support clean air and clean water for communities across the country. In order to ensure that all communities can benefit, these resources are paired with an agency-wide expansion in environmental justice efforts, from \$12 million in funding to over \$200 million, including \$100 million for environmental justice grants.

The bill supports healthy communities and job creation by boosting EPA’s infrastructure grant programs. The bill includes major investments in drinking and waste water infrastructure: \$2.86 billion for the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds, an increase of \$100 million; \$72 million for lead pipe replacement grants, an increase of \$50 million; and \$80 million

for innovative water infrastructure loans through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), an increase of \$15 million. The bill also will protect health and spur economic growth by helping clean up contaminated lands and pollution through \$1.33 billion for EPA's Superfund program, an increase of \$100 million for cleanup at sites on the National Priorities List; \$126 million for brownfields grants, an increase of \$35 million; and \$142 million for diesel engine clean up grants, an increase of \$52 million.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). The bill fully funds payments to counties through the PILT program, which are estimated at a total of \$525 million.

Cultural Programs. The bill provides \$182.5 million each to the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, an increase of \$15 million more for each endowment than the fiscal year 2021 enacted level. Increases will support popular special initiatives like the NEA military healing arts program and the NEH "A More Perfect Union" initiative to highlight the nation's shared history. The bill provides \$1.102 billion for the Smithsonian Institution, \$69 million more than fiscal year 2021. Funding for the National Gallery of Art is continued at \$183.5 million and funding for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is continued at \$40.4 million, both in accordance with the budget requests for those entities.

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 GAOA.

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 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.

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