



# Chairman Hal Rogers

---

## House Committee on Appropriations

**Full Committee Markup – Fiscal Year 2015 Interior and Environment Bill**

**July 15, 2014**

**Opening Statement As Prepared**

---

Good morning, and welcome to our 11<sup>th</sup> Full Committee markup.

Today, we will consider the Fiscal Year 2015 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill.

I would like to commend you both for your commitment to this bill and to the subcommittee. This bill has the privilege of being bookmarked by the beginning of Mr. Calvert's tenure as chairman of the subcommittee, and the near-end of Mr. Moran's service on this Committee and in Congress. So I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Calvert, on a successful maiden voyage. And thank you, Mr. Moran, for your passionate dedication to the Committee and this institution. We will miss you, and we wish you the very best for the future.

As of last week, we have passed 6 bills off the House floor – all under regular order, allowing every Member to offer amendments and have their voices heard. And, as you know, we are in the process of considering our 7<sup>th</sup> bill on the House floor this week. I'm proud of all that we've achieved so far, and I look forward to getting closer to our goal of passing all 12 bills through this committee before August.

The Interior and Environment bill we have before us provides just over \$30 billion in funding for programs that support our nation's rich natural heritage, energy production, and the well-being of our local communities.

Within this total, this bill prioritizes \$4.1 billion in critical funding needed to prevent and combat devastating wildland fires, improve our suppression tactics, and help fill the expected shortfall in funding for this year.

It also increases funding for important programs for our Native Americans, including the Indian Health Service, and the Bureau of Indian Services and Education.

And it includes \$442 million for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program – providing a one-year extension of this vital program that provides a lifeline to rural communities, using discretionary dollars to fund a mandatory program because the authorizers haven't acted.

But this bill also makes important steps to free American individuals, families, industries, and businesses from the burdens of the President's overreaching, harmful regulatory agenda.

For the last five years, the Administration has been hell-bent on adding layer after layer of regulatory red tape to the economy – limiting development and growth, hampering job creation, and ultimately saddling American families with the check.

No other agency has done more to inflict this type of pain than the Environmental Protection Agency – from the new “Waters of the United States” proposal, in which the EPA seeks to gain control of most of the country by regulating any land where water could conceivably run, to their new standards for greenhouse gas emissions at power plants, which would drive up manufacturing costs, push more hard-working Americans to the unemployment lines, and increases expenses for consumers.

So this legislation includes provisions to stop these onerous regulations, among others, and allow our economy the chance to grow and flourish.

The bill also reduces the EPA’s budget by \$717 million – or 9 percent – below last year’s enacted level, and cuts back EPA’s staffing levels to the lowest level since 1989. This will help the agency streamline its operations and focus its activities on its core duties – rather than on expanding its regulatory portfolio.

In addition, the bill takes steps to correct the agency’s flagrant defiance of this Committee. To this end, we have reduced the EPA Office of Congressional Affairs, as well as the EPA Administrative offices by 50 percent from last year. Let this be a warning – we will not tolerate agencies withholding the accurate, complete information that this Committee needs to do its job.

The EPA is not the only agency in this bill that faces reductions to its budget. The bill trims funding wherever possible, targeting lower-priority programs for cuts, and not including funding for several unnecessary programs, such as Fish and Wildlife’s Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. I thank the Subcommittee for making the tough decisions needed to ensure this bill stays within its allocation.

In closing, I want to again thank Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member Moran, the Subcommittee, and the staff for their hard work on this legislation. This does exactly what an Appropriations bill should do: It funds the federal government responsibly; it eliminates the excess; and it exercises the will of the Congress to rein in the Administration’s unprecedented bureaucratic overreach and help our economy grow.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill today.

#####