



Chairman Ken Calvert

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

**FY 2018 Subcommittee Markup - Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
Appropriations Bill
July 12, 2017
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee markup of the fiscal year 2018 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill. I want to thank our colleagues—especially Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey—for joining us today.

Before we get into the details of the bill, I want to take a moment to thank my good friend and our ranking member, Ms. McCollum, for her partnership and work on this bill. I also want to thank each of our Subcommittee Members for their active participation in our hearing process this year and the collegiality that continues to be a hallmark of our Subcommittee's deliberations.

The fiscal year 2018 Interior and Environment bill is funded at \$31.456 billion which is \$824 million below the FY17 enacted level and \$4.3 billion above the budget request. We have made a sincere effort to prioritize critical needs within our subcommittee allocation and in reviewing nearly 5,200 Member requests.

The Committee has again provided robust wildland fire funding in its fiscal year 2018 bill. Fire suppression accounts are fully funded at the ten-year average level. The Committee has also provided a \$5 million increase over fiscal year 2017 for hazardous fuels accounts.

This bill also makes critical investments in Indian Country—a top priority of this Committee. Overall, funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Education is \$381 million above the budget request, while funding for the Indian Health Service is \$398 million above the budget request.

The bill fully funds contract support costs and tribal grant school support costs; provides funding to staff newly constructed health facilities; improves public safety; invests an additional \$15 million in fiscal year 2018 to address critical needs of schools throughout the BIE system; and invests an additional \$130 million to correct funding disparities across the Indian Health system.

This bill provides \$465 million in fiscal year 2018 for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, equal to the fiscal year 2017 enacted level.

Overall, funding for EPA is reduced by \$528 million, or 6.5 percent, from fiscal year 2017. Several of our Members will be pleased to know that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is maintained at the fiscal year 2017 enacted level of \$300 million.

The bill continues to invest in water infrastructure and cleaning up contaminated land. These programs help create jobs and spur economic development in communities all across the nation. The bill provides \$5 billion worth of investment in water infrastructure through funding in the WIFIA program and the Clean Water and Drinking Water revolving loan funds.

The bill also supports the Administration's priority to begin reshaping the workforce at the EPA. And the bill accelerates the cleanup of contaminated Superfund and Brownfields sites. Specifically, the bill provides a \$47 million increase for on-the-ground Superfund remedial work, and increases funding for Brownfields by \$10 million over the fiscal year 2017 enacted level.

The bill also provides \$2.9 billion for the National Park Service. The bill increases the construction account by \$10 million and maintains increases provided in the fiscal year 2017 enacted bill to address longstanding park operations and deferred maintenance needs. We have also attempted to address a number of concerns within the Fish and Wildlife Service accounts. The bill restores popular grant programs to fiscal year 2017 enacted levels. It also restores funds to combat international wildlife trafficking; protects fish hatcheries from cuts and closures; continues funding to fight invasive mussels and Asian carp; and reduces the backlog of species that are recovered but not yet de-listed.

The bill also provides \$275 million for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs that enjoy bipartisan support.

This markup is the beginning of a long process and I look forward to coming together—as we do each year—to find common ground. In that spirit, I will continue to work with Ms. McCollum and the Members of the Subcommittee.

With that, I'm now happy to yield to Ms. McCollum for any opening remarks she would like to make.

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