



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup Fiscal Year 2015 Appropriations Bill for Energy and Water Development June 18, 2014 Opening Statement As Prepared

Congratulations to both Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur on producing a well-thought-out, reasonable bill.

This is Chairman Simpson's first bill at the helm of the Energy and Water Subcommittee, and I commend him for his fine work bringing this bill before the Committee today.

The FY 15 Energy and Water Appropriations bill has three clear priorities: reinforcing our national defense through nuclear security; boosting our economy by facilitating important infrastructure projects and investing in American energy; and holding the line on federal spending.

In this bill, we targeted the funding toward programs that focus on these goals, and reduced spending where prudent and where it is in the best interest of our nation.

Funding for nuclear weapons programs has been increased above last year's level to maintain the safety and readiness of our nuclear stockpile. As we face an ever-changing global landscape, upholding our nuclear deterrence posture and preparing for any future nuclear threats remains extremely important to our national security.

The bill also protects funding for the Army Corps of Engineers, providing a slight increase above last year's enacted level and nearly \$1 billion more than the President requested.

Army Corps programs have an immediate, direct impact on public safety and our economy, and help facilitate trade and commerce valued at more than \$1.7 trillion each year. It is our duty to ensure that the Army Corps can continue its important work updating dam safety, performing flood mitigation, and improving our waterways.

Environmental cleanup is also important to the safety and well-being of communities across the nation, and this legislation provides \$5.6 billion to address nuclear cleanup and other environmental management activities.

Within the Department of Energy, we prioritized funding for energy programs that encourage economic competitiveness and that utilize our nation's vast natural resources. We make sound investments in coal, natural gas, and other fossil energy sources. Investing research dollars in these critical areas will push us toward greater energy independence and will help keep energy costs down for Americans across the country.

While advancing energy and infrastructure that will grow the American economy, the legislation also puts the brakes on the Obama Administration's destructive and misguided regulations. For example, the bill rolls back damaging regulatory attacks on small business and other industries by prohibiting unnecessary changes to federal jurisdiction over our nation's waterways.

This proposal is deeply concerning on many levels, not the least of which is the unknown costs associated with what is clearly a massive and intrusive change in federal regulation. In her own testimony before the subcommittee just a few weeks ago, the Assistant Secretary for the Corps expressed bewilderment and confusion as to how much these regulations would cost the American taxpayer, how many man-hours it would take to implement, and how such a change would benefit our already struggling economy. The Corps clearly does not know what it is doing on this, and is setting the stage for yet another regulatory disaster.

In addition to addressing this new "waters" rule, the bill also prohibits changes in the definition of "fill material," which could effectively shut down coal and other mining operations throughout the country.

In addition to fighting these onerous regulations and advancing our national security and economic interests, the bill also keeps a close eye on our federal coffers. In total, the bill provides \$50 million less than last year, reflecting the tough decisions needed to restore balance to the federal budget.

The subcommittee assessed each and every program funded by this legislation, and targeted lower-priority programs for reductions. For instance, renewable energy programs are cut by \$113 million from last year's level, and the bill contains vigorous oversight requirements over how DOE, the Army Corps, and other agencies are spending taxpayer dollars.

In summation, this is a well-balanced, responsible bill that reflects careful budget decisions and invests tax dollars in proven, effective, and needed programs. I commend Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Kaptur, the Subcommittee, and the staff for their careful work on this bill, and I urge the Committee to support it today.

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