



**Full Committee Markup – FY 2019 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill  
June 6, 2018  
Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The Fiscal Year 2019 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill provides critical funding to maintain America's natural heritage – promoting the health and safety of our public lands and protecting vital national resources for generations to come.

The bill prioritizes funding for wildland firefighting and prevention, fully funding the 10-year average for suppression costs. This funding will allow the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to continue safe, effective wildfire response, and protect lives, communities, and resources. I want to commend members and staff for their incredible efforts toward these solutions in the recent omnibus.

Importantly, this bill includes much needed major infrastructure improvements that will improve the lives of Americans. This includes \$2.6 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan fund; \$75 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, which will support water infrastructure development; and an additional \$40 million to accelerate the cleanup of Superfund sites across the country. The national priority list has 1347 projects on it!

And the bill provides \$500 million for Payments in Lieu of Taxes. These payments ensure that rural communities with nontaxable federal lands in their bounds are able to fulfill their local government responsibilities, like public safety and education.

The bill also continues – at adequate levels – funding for other critical Interior and Environment programs that manage our nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. I am also pleased to see \$12 million for the Chemical Safety Board in the bill.

In addition, the bill increases the federal commitment to honoring our treaty agreements with American Indian tribes and Alaskan Natives. This includes support for education, health care, and other important community services.

In addition to these important investments, the bill right-sizes regulatory programs to ensure that our government is working to support American families and their local communities, and not thwarting American economic development.

The bill funds EPA at \$7.958 billion – a reduction of \$100 million below the FY 2018 level. The legislation supports the Administration's proposal to reshape the EPA's workforce.

This streamlining of government operations will ensure the EPA is able to focus on its core duties and reduce waste and other unnecessary spending.

I want to thank the Subcommittee for producing a bill that fulfills the needs of these critical Interior and Environment programs, while limiting the size and cost of our government.

Our FY 2019 Interior and Environment bill prioritizes the American people – preserving our natural and cultural resources, protecting our communities, and supporting economic development.

I urge the Committee to support this legislation.

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