

**House Report 109-465 - DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL,
2007**

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF THE HONORABLE DAVID OBEY

The Minority cannot fault the fairness of the process followed by our Committee in producing the fiscal year 2007 Interior Appropriations bill. Minority Members were consulted throughout the process and the bill reflects our input in a number of important areas. But a fair process by itself does not produce an acceptable product. This bill's principal responsibility is to provide for the environmental and conservation needs of America's people and its natural resources. The bill as reported simply does not fulfill that responsibility. Because of this failure, America's water and air will be dirtier, its pristine natural landscapes and historic structures will be less protected, and visitors to its national parks, refuges and forests will experience declining levels of service.

The Interior bill's failings did not occur by accident. The overall lack of funds to address national needs is the direct result of a Republican fiscal plan for 2007 that values tax cuts for the most well-off over critical priorities like protecting the environment. This Republican plan provides \$9.4 billion less for domestic programs than the amount necessary just to maintain current service levels and the 2007 Interior bill now presented to the House reflects the damage which is the inevitable result.

The \$25.9 billion allocated for Interior and Environment programs in this bill is \$145 million below the FY 2006 enacted level and roughly \$800 million below the level necessary to maintain current services for programs under this Subcommittee's jurisdiction. The result is significant and damaging reductions in many conservation and environmental programs and in service programs for Native Americans. Members should be aware of the most critical reductions when they review the bill's impact on their communities and their constituents. For example:

In most cases the Subcommittee has only been able to fund 70 percent of increases mandated by law for federal pay and for other fixed costs for the federal agencies which manage our national parks, refuges, and forests. As the recent GAO report on the nation's national parks made clear, this inevitably will mean cutbacks in staff and cutbacks in visitor services for people who visit our parks and other federal facilities.

Despite facility maintenance backlogs of at least \$12 billion in our parks, refuges and forests, funding for construction projects throughout the bill are cut by \$216 million below last year and more than \$400 million below the

level six years ago. There is no funding at all for new schools on Indian reservations. The cutbacks in construction funding are shown on the following table:

CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY TABLE
[In millions of dollars]

	FY 2001 Committee v. Pres.	FY 2006 Committee v. FY06	FY 2007 President Committee v. FY 2001	FY 2007 Committee v. FY 2001
BLM		17	12	6
5	-1		-6	
USFWS		89	75	20
20	-35		-49	
NPS		300	333	229
1	-103		-70	
BIA		357	272	215
1	-56		-141	
IHS		85	38	18
19	-1		-48	
USFS		521	431	383
28	-20		-110	
Total, construction	1,369	1,161	871	945
74	-216		-424(-31%)	

Funding for the Clean Water Revolving Fund is cut by another \$200 million below the 2006 level. Over the last three years the Clean Water program, which EPA sites as one of its most effective programs, has been reduced by \$662 million or nearly 50 percent. This means either essential infrastructure repairs for this country's aging water infrastructure will not occur or local water and sewer rates will increase as communities pick up the federal share of these costs.

Other state grant programs broadly supported in the House are cut below the current rate. This includes a \$4 million cut in PILT, as well as significant reductions in wildlife grants and the North American Wetlands programs. Stateside conservation grants are completely eliminated. Over the last 5 years assistance to states for environmental or conservation purposes have been reduced by more than \$750 million as shown below:

STATE GRANTS SUMMARY TABLE
[In millions of dollars]

	FY 2001 Committee v. Pres.	FY 2006 Committee v. FY06	FY 2007 President Committee v. FY 2001
2007Committee			

Clean Water SRF		1,350	887	688
688		-199		-662
LWCF `Stateside`		90	28	0
0		-28		-90
North Am. Wetlands Conservation		40	39	42
37	-5	-3		-3
State Wildlife Grants		75	67	75
50	-25	-17		-25
PILT		215	232	198
228	30	-4		13
Landowner Incentives		0	24	24
15	-9	-9		15
Total, state grants		1,770	1,277	1,027
1,018	-9	-259		-752(-42%)

Funding for federal land acquisition and to help States preserve open spaces is cut by \$98 million in this bill and by more than \$400 million since 2001. Funding in this area has been cut by more than 80 percent in the last four years as follows:

LAND ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION HISTORY TABLE

[In millions of dollars]

		FY 2001	FY 2006	FY 2007	President	FY 2007
		Chairman	Chairman v. Pres.	Chairman v. FY06	Chairman v. FY 2001	
BLM		47	9		9	
3	-6		-6		-44	
USFWS		121	28		27	
20	-7		-8		-101	
NPS		125	34		23	
28	5		-6		-97	
USFS		151	42		25	
8	-17		-34		-143	
Subtotal, land acq		444	113		84	
59	-25		-54		-385	
Forest Legacy		60	57		61	
13	-48		-44		-47	
Total, land conservation		504	170		145	
72	-73		-98		-432(-86%)	

During consideration of the bill in Committee, the Minority offered an amendment to add \$800 million to the bill to address its most critical failings. The amendment was part of a fiscally disciplined, balanced Democratic approach that would return Congressional budgeting to the principle of `paying-as-you-go,' providing additional funding for key domestic investments and reducing the deficit by scaling back supersized tax cuts for those making more than \$1 million per year. The amendment would have

reduced their tax savings from \$114,000 per year to approximately \$112,000. Unfortunately this amendment was rejected on a party line vote. The failure of the Majority to adopt this responsible amendment is particularly ironic given that the same day the Majority pushed legislation through the House that provides high income taxpayers additional tax cuts of \$42,000 while families with incomes of \$50,000 per year would only get on average a \$46 tax cut.

While these fiscal failings are very troubling to the Minority, we were pleased that the Full Committee did approve the addition to the bill of an important Sense of the Congress Resolution regarding global climate change. This resolution states, in summary, that global climate change is real; that human activity is an important causal agent of this change; and, importantly, that mandatory controls on greenhouse gases will be necessary to address the problem. This important statement of principles is the first step towards real action on climate change by the Congress. We urge the full House to also endorse it when the bill is considered on the Floor.

In summary, despite an open and fair process, a faulty economic policy from the President and the Republican Majority has left the Congress in the position of not having enough money to fulfill our fundamental stewardship responsibilities for the environment and our public lands. This did not happen by accident. A decision was made to starve domestic government and we are now paying the price.

