

Over 130 Environmental Groups Oppose Deep Cuts to Environment and Natural Resources Programs in the President's FY18 Budget Proposal

March 16, 2017

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we write to strongly oppose the damaging cuts to conservation, natural resources and environmental programs in the President's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request.

These critical conservation and natural resource programs account for just over 1 percent of the federal budget, yet they provide invaluable benefits: clean air for children to breathe, clean water for families to drink, healthy public lands and rivers that support a booming outdoor recreation economy, vibrant wildlife populations, sustainable fisheries, resilient ecosystems, and renewable energy that helps address climate change and powers a clean, sustainable future. These benefits are foundational to the U.S. economy and create high quality American jobs that cannot be exported.

Our environment and natural resource management agencies have seen their budgets cut and their workforce dwindle for years. This has resulted in many serious consequences: reduced scientific research and monitoring, inadequate conservation and land management actions, growing maintenance backlogs, reduced visitor services and recreational investments, and other impacts. There is a significant and growing need for Congress and the Administration to invest in conservation programs, yet this budget would do the exact opposite.

Over the past several decades, investments in conservation and environmental programs have fallen dramatically. The Congressional Budget Office projects that in the next decade federal non-defense spending will fall to the lowest level ever recorded, as a percentage of GDP.

Americans deserve a federal budget that protects public health, prioritizes conservation, addresses climate change, and ensures the world we leave our children is cleaner, healthier and more sustainable than the one we inherited. Our federal agencies have been doing everything in their power to tighten their belts and do more with less, but years of repeated budget cuts have taken their toll. This budget proposal would exacerbate an already difficult situation and leave the health of our communities and our environment hanging in the balance.

Furthermore, we were alarmed at the many policy riders in the FY17 appropriations bills that threaten the environment and undermine environmental protections. We urge that this year's appropriations process keep bills clean of these riders. Anti-environmental riders do not enjoy the support of Americans who value clean air, water, lands and wildlife, and only serve to threaten an already challenged appropriations process.

Congress should reject this devastating budget proposal and anti-environmental riders and restore much needed funding to conservation and natural resources programs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alaska Wilderness League
American Bird Conservancy
American Forests
American Rivers
American Society of Landscape Architects
Arizona Conservation Partners
Arizona Wilderness Coalition
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
Biodiversity for a Livable Climate
Bluestem Communications
Cahaba River Society
California Wilderness Coalition
Californians for Western Wilderness
Center for Biological Diversity
Charles River Watershed Association
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Clean Water Action
Coastal Coordination Program, The Ocean Foundation
Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Conserve Southwest Utah
Crow Canyon Archeological Center
Defenders of Wildlife
Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Delaware Nature Society
Delta Institute
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environment Arizona
Environment California
Environment Colorado
Environment Connecticut
Environment Florida
Environment Georgia
Environment Illinois

Environment Iowa
Environment Maine
Environment Maryland
Environment Massachusetts
Environment Michigan
Environment Minnesota
Environment Missouri
Environment Montana
Environment Nevada
Environment New Hampshire
Environment New Jersey
Environment New Mexico
Environment New York
Environment North Carolina
Environment Ohio
Environment Oregon
Environment Rhode Island
Environment Texas
Environment Virginia
Environment Washington
Environmental Defense Action Fund
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
Environmental Working Group
Florida Wildlife Federation
Food & Water Watch
Friends of Alewife Reservation
Friends of Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Kalmiopsis
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Friends of the St. Joe River Association
Friends of the Upper Delaware River
Galveston Bay Foundation
Gathering Waters
Grand Canyon Trust
GreenLatinos
Gulf Restoration Network
Heart of the Lakes
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters - USA - JPIC
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Indiana Wildlife Federation
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Interfaith Power & Light
Iowa Environmental Council
Islanders for the San Juan Islands National Monument

Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League of America – National Great Lakes Committee
Kentucky Resources Council
Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Klamath Forest Alliance
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Lake Champlain Committee
League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch
Marine Conservation Institute
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Abounds
New Hampshire Rivers Council
Nor'East Chapter of Trout Unlimited
North Carolina Conservation Network
Ocean Conservancy
Ocean River Institute
Oceana
Ohio Environmental Council
Ohio River Foundation
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Partnership for the National Trails System
PennEnvironment
Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes
Restore America's Estuaries
River Network
Rivers & Birds
Rogue Riverkeeper
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Save the Bay
Save the River – Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
Scenic America
Sierra Club
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Tennessee Clean Water Network
The Conservation Alliance
The Trust for Public Land
The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay
The Wilderness Society
Tuleyome

Western New York Environmental Alliance
Wisconsin Environment