

**Alaska Wilderness League * American Rivers * Californians for Western Wilderness *
Center for Biological Diversity * Clean Water Action * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice *
Endangered Species Coalition * Environmental Defense Action Fund *
EPIC – Environmental Protection Information Center * Friends of the Earth * Greenpeace *
Klamath Forest Alliance * League of Conservation Voters * Los Padres ForestWatch *
National Audubon Society * Natural Resources Defense Council * Ocean Conservancy *
Rocky Mountain Wild * Save Our Sky Blue Waters * Sierra Club * Southern Environmental Law Center
* Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance * Swan View Coalition * The Wilderness Society *
Western Nebraska Resources Council * Western Watersheds Project * WildEarth Guardians *
Wilderness Watch * Wildlands Network**

June 17th, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior Environment
And Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment And Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we write in strong opposition to the Fiscal Year 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We are alarmed at both the many destructive policy riders as well as the damaging funding levels for many programs and agencies in the bill.

We are deeply troubled that this bill has once again become a target for anti-environmental and superfluous policy provisions, which have no place in the appropriations process. This legislation and the

agencies it funds are tasked with responsibly stewarding our land, air, water and wildlife and indeed the shared heritage of all Americans. Instead of fulfilling this substantial responsibility, this bill targets protections that would keep our air clean, our drinking water safe, protect our rivers and oceans from unlimited dumping of waste and protect our imperiled wildlife from substantial harm.

Among the multitude of anti-environmental riders in this legislation, there are unprecedented provisions that would undermine the Administration's efforts to address climate change, block efforts to protect clean air and water, weaken land conservation and undercut endangered species protections. These riders are aimed directly at reducing the efficacy of bedrock conservation laws like the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and the Wilderness Act and have no place in appropriations legislation.

Burdening appropriations legislation with unnecessary and harmful policy provisions will only imperil an already difficult process. Critical funding legislation should not be held hostage by unrelated and damaging riders.

We write as well with opposition to many of the funding levels in the bill. Among the damaging cuts in the bill are further funding reductions to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Water and Drinking Water revolving funds, which would only serve to undermine the protections that Americans support for clean air and water; cuts to Fish and Wildlife Refuge law enforcement, which would imperil visitors to our refuges; and another cut to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, making it a paltry 1/3 of the authorized level. This proposed reduction would substantially threaten incompatible development within—and public access to—federally-protected lands that bolster a robust recreational economy and provide places of refuge and healthy recreation for American families. These are only a few of the damaging funding levels in the bill.

Congress should be investing in America's future—not moving us backward by undermining bedrock laws or cutting funding for programs that help our communities thrive. We urge you to remove harmful policy riders from the bill, oppose any additional anti-environmental policy riders, support efforts to address the wildfire funding challenge and ultimately provide a final vehicle for funding the agencies in the Interior bill that does not harm public health or the environment and instead invests in the air, land, water and wildlife that Americans cherish.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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