



Road closed due to damage, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, 2011 © John Garder/NPCA

Prevent the Sequester to Protect Our Air, Water, Wildlife and Public Lands Funding Cuts Will Threaten Jobs, Recreation, and Public Health

The budgetary “sequester” scheduled for January 2013 must be avoided in order to prevent deep and damaging cuts to federal programs that support public lands and the communities and wildlife that depend on them, clean air and water, and a sustainable energy future. Unless Congress identifies another way to reduce the deficit, the consequences will be deeply damaging for programs that are important to protect the environment and public health, which are both popular with the American people and important for local economies. Drastic cuts already have been implemented in domestic discretionary programs, which make up the smallest part of the budget.

The nation’s federal deficit is unsustainable and must be addressed strategically. A balanced approach is needed that does not further cut these important and popular discretionary programs, which already suffer from underfunding and are already facing cuts under the first approximately \$1 trillion decade-long phase of discretionary caps under the Budget Control Act.

Though OMB estimates sequester cuts at 8.2%, that estimate rises to 10.25% when accounting for a year of cuts having to be absorbed over nine months.

An across-the-board cut of an additional eight to ten percent to conservation and environmental programs would be deeply harmful and must be avoided. The American public agrees – a recent [poll](#) conducted by The Nature Conservancy found that 74% of voters say that even with federal budget problems, funding for conservation should *not* be cut.

Congress must work together to protect programs that safeguard the environment, public health, and the lands and wildlife that support the outdoor recreation economy. A balanced solution is needed.

SEQUESTER IMPACTS TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

National Parks:

The sequester could mean the following:

- The cut to park operations would very likely lead to the closure of some national parks. Also likely are closures of campgrounds and visitor centers;
- The loss of rangers, who ensure that visitors have the safe and enjoyable experience they seek;
- Emergency response times in many areas could increase;
- School groups would face the prospect of being turned away;
- Vandalism and looting could increase and monitoring of endangered species and other scientific work would likely be delayed or dropped;
- And ultimately, many visitors to the parks, including international tourists who spend their money in businesses that provide thousands of jobs, might choose to go somewhere else.

Nearly 300 million annual visitors to units of the National Park System support more than \$31 billion in spending and more than 258,000 jobs each year in communities across the country. The sequester would threaten the local economic development that depends on parks being open and adequately funded.

For More Information: Contact John Garder of the National Parks Conservation Association at jgarder@npca.org or (202) 454-3395

National Wildlife Refuges and Fish and Wildlife Conservation:

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest land and water system in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. There is a refuge in every state

and within an hour's drive of most major American cities. Since 2005, uncompensated damages from hurricanes, tornados, and other disasters have subjected the Refuge System to an effective reduction equivalent to nearly one year's total funding. The sequester would have further devastating impacts on refuges that could include:

- Ending major programs at more than 130 refuges or closing many refuges entirely;
- Eliminating more than 200 wildlife management jobs, putting vulnerable creatures and habitats at risk;
- Reducing refuge law enforcement officers by more than 15 percent, threatening the security of visitors and wildlife; and
- Cutting back on recreation and education programs or abolishing some entirely.

About 45 million wildlife enthusiasts visit refuges each year generating an economic contribution of over \$4.2 billion and nearly 35,000 jobs. Agency economists estimate that each 1 percent reduction in refuge visitation would impact \$16.9 million in economic activity.



Other fish and wildlife conservation work that would be harmed by these cuts include:

- Work to combat global illegal wildlife trafficking such as breaking up smuggling rings that traffic in rhinoceros horn, sea turtle parts, and jaguar skins that are often linked to organized crime and drugs;
- Research into fighting White-nose Syndrome, a devastating disease that is killing bats;
- Work to save 1,400 U.S. plants and animals in danger of extinction such as manatees, sea turtles, whooping cranes, sea otters, salmon, and steelhead;
- Efforts to save birds that live in or migrate through the U.S. and grace the backyards and communities of America; and
- Effective collaborations with states and private conservation organizations facilitated

through grants from the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, and Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund.

For More Information: Contact Mary Beth Beetham of Defenders of Wildlife at mbeetham@defenders.org or (202) 772-0231

National Forests:

National Forest System lands encompass an amazing array of habitats from alpine tundra to tropical rain forest, deciduous and evergreen forests, as well as native grasslands and wetlands. About 66 million Americans rely on drinking water that originates from the National Forest System.

The cuts that would occur under the sequester would greatly damage efforts to conserve these unique habitats and species and maintain other benefits of our national forests, including:

- Jobs loss in rural communities: wildfire management, heavy equipment operators, trail and campground maintenance, forest rangers, and foresters;
- Decreased wildfire prevention and response;
- Closure of popular trails due to poor maintenance;
- Campgrounds and bathroom facilities in greater disrepair;
- Unprocessed recreational permits;
- Poor road maintenance, causing increased runoff into the waterways threatening our drinking water supply;
- Halted restoration projects;
- Decreased removal of dead and diseased trees;
- Increase in invasive species overgrowth;
- Inability to manage habitat for creatures such as grizzly bears, bighorn sheep, elk and Canada lynx; and
- Less research on invasive species, pests and diseases.

For More Information: Contact Rebecca Turner of American Forests at rturner@americanforests.org or (202-737-1944 ext. 221)

Bureau of Land Management National System of Public Lands:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands represent some of the last places one can experience

the natural history, cultural treasures, and the wild beauty of the American West. BLM manages more fish and wildlife habitat than any other federal agency.

As a result of sequestration:

- Access for hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and self-directed wilderness adventure could be severely restricted.
- With insufficient staff, an increased risk of vandalism and destruction would be likely.
- It will be much more difficult to monitor and inventory boundaries and roads, which could leave these lands vulnerable to development from surrounding property owners and degradation from off road vehicle use.
- Law enforcement and interpretive staff would be stretched thin, which could make it more difficult to ensure visitor education and safety.
- Critical habitats could become endangered resulting in the decline or loss of vulnerable species such as the Mule deer, black-footed ferret, wolverine, and the iconic sage grouse.

***For More Information:** Contact Cameron Witten of The Wilderness Society at cameron_witten@twc.org or (202-429-8458)*



Land and Water Conservation Fund:

LWCF is the principal federal program for conservation of key lands within our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other popular and sensitive areas, and for support of state and local parks and recreation. It is paid for with non-taxpayer dollars from offshore oil and gas drilling. The sequester would be hugely damaging to LWCF in a number of ways.

LWCF is already raided nearly every year, with nearly \$20 billion of its historical funding going to other purposes. The sequester would mandate even deeper cuts to the program.

- Low LWCF funding levels for our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and BLM areas could cover only administrative costs and small inholdings, leaving little or no funding to meet priority projects with willing-seller contracts or to continue projects already underway.
- Many key inholdings are available on a now-or-never basis. A sequestration-driven program cut to LWCF would not just defer these projects, it would guarantee the permanent loss of recreation access along with resource-damaging development in parks and other public lands across the country.
- Further cuts to LWCF mean cuts to Civil War battlefields, state and local outdoor recreation grants, working forest grants to states, and cuts to state grants for acquisition of properties to allow both conservation and economic development in areas with threatened and endangered species.

***For More Information:** Contact Alan Rowsome of The Wilderness Society at alan_rowsome@twc.org or (202-429-2643)*

Clean Water:

Water is essential to life and critical for a healthy community, prosperous economy, and clean environment. Our nation's water infrastructure is vital to the treatment, distribution, and protection of clean drinking water. Yet old age, continued strain from population growth, lack of investment, and emerging threats from climate change have increased the burden on our current water infrastructure system and waterways. Sequestration will exacerbate these problems and make them more pressing.

Many US cities rely on water supply pipes that are, on average, a century old. Leaking pipes lose an estimated 7 billion gallons of clean drinking water a day and are known to leach contaminants and breed bacteria in drinking water, jeopardizing the health of our nation's communities.

Under sequestration, contaminated waters will continue to pose a serious threat to public health. Every year millions of Americans become ill when they come in contact with or ingest water or shellfish that have been contaminated with microbial pathogens or toxics. Water contamination is linked to

the discharge of untreated sewage which occurs when rain overwhelms combined sewer systems that collect and treat both storm water and sanitary sewage. Substantial upgrades and investments in the capture, treatment, and mitigation of storm water are needed to prevent such discharges from occurring.

For More Information: Contact Scott Slesinger of The Natural Resources Defense Council at sslesinger@nrdc.org or (202) 289-2402

EPA Research:

The Environmental Protection Agency does critical environmental research that private parties and universities do not do. EPA's scientific research is used primarily to determine the necessity and pollutant levels that protect the public health and environment. For example:

- The proposed cuts of 8.2% will cut critical research such as studies to understand and reduce the severity and/or incidence of diseases and disabilities. Research projects include studying the possible environmental sources causing childhood obesity, asthma, and autism and research on childhood exposures to environmental toxicants.
- The EPA air monitoring programs are necessary for researchers and the public to understand how local activities such as oil and gas drilling may lead to air emissions of toxic contaminants linked to health harms including birth defects, asthma, and cancer. These data are also necessary for EPA to track and regulate the emissions of 188 hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) that EPA is charged with regulating under the Clean Air Act.
- EPA must also address dozens of new nanotechnologies used in consumer products, pesticides, and industrial processes. EPA's research to develop a framework for conducting safety assessments and regulating these new chemicals is essential to ensuring that EPA's laws and statutes are relevant to new technologies. In the United States, industry has no requirement or incentives to provide or carry out research on the possible health and environmental impacts of most these new nanochemicals, including potential effects on reproduction, brain development, and chronic diseases such as cancer. EPA will be unable to fill in the gaps with these proposed cuts.

For More Information: Contact Franz Matzner of The Natural Resources Defense Council at fmatzner@nrdc.org or (202) 289-2365

Oceans and Coasts:

For ocean and coastal programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration the sequester could mean:

- Reducing NOAA's budget, which will continue to have a disproportionately negative impact on the coastal and ocean programs critical to fulfilling NOAA's stewardship mission. Shifting sequestration cuts from satellite procurement to the operations budget will decimate many of the coastal and ocean programs which have already been cut over the past several years.
- Reducing Coastal Zone Management Program projects that support activities in 34 coastal states and territories by:
 - Laying off coastal management practitioners, scientists, and educators; slowing down permitting; ceasing projects that protect and grow coastal economies;
 - Impacting local businesses that depend on healthy coastal resources. Studies show that greater than 50% of GDP and more than 66 million jobs are generated in coastal counties.
- Reducing coastal habitat programs, such as the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, will prevent the acquisition and restoration of natural areas for a variety of purposes such as:
 - Conserving wetlands as buffers that have been proven to be wise investments for the protection of coastal cities from storm surge.
 - Preserving and restoring essential fish habitats which ensure that nursery areas for ecological and economically important fish species are available for production -- bolstering the million dollar industries of commercial and recreational fishing.
 - Cutting habitat programs also undercuts federal investments in fishery science, increases risk for economic losses in the small fishing, ecotourism, boating and other businesses along the coast, as well as threatens the safety of our coastal communities.
- Closing visitor centers, eliminating research programs, diminishing enforcement capabilities, and dismantling education initiatives at our 13 national marine sanctuaries and marine monuments.

- Hampering regional efforts to effectively and efficiently manage our oceans and coasts to deal with recovery from dangerous storms, sea-level rise, water quality improvement, and environmental restoration after oil spills and other disasters.
- Undermining our ability to mobilize federal, state, and private dollars to jointly invest in restoration projects. This will harm fisheries and coastal ecosystems for communities and will hinder threatened and endangered species recovery, resulting in more costly reactive measures toward fish recovery.
- Reducing efforts to develop and update fishery stock assessments which inform sustainable annual catch limits in some of the nation's most commercially important fisheries.
- Decreasing population recovery activities for our nation's endangered and threatened species.

For More Information: Contact Emily Douce of the Marine Conservation Institute at Emily.Douce@marine-conservation.org or (202) 546-5346

Environmentally Responsible Siting of Renewable Energy:

Domestically, we're setting sights on continuing to build responsibly sited projects on public lands. In 2005, Congress set a target of 10,000 MW of non-hydro renewable energy on public lands by 2015.

Since 2009, the Department of the Interior has approved a total of 31 new utility-scale renewable energy projects –more than in the past two decades combined. These projects alone are expected to generate enough renewable energy to power 2.3 million American homes. Wind, solar, and geothermal industries have the potential to put thousands of Americans back to work, and when responsibly sited, benefit both local economies and the environment.

For example, the Bureau of Land Management has nearly completed a solar program on public lands across six states in the Southwest that has identified 17 low conflict solar energy zones, areas pre-screened for utility-scale development. The final solar program estimates a total development of 23,700 megawatts to meet regional renewable energy needs. If the sequester were to occur, investments in this type of planning and early analysis of the best places to site renewable energy projects would decrease and permitting of projects would likely lag.



The BLM has received significant interest in developing renewable energy projects on public lands. Applications require adequate staff time and resources to ensure that permits are processed with the speed and attention necessary to increase the domestic production of renewable energy.

Additionally, funding for important Fish and Wildlife Service initiatives, such as sage grouse conservation, are needed to ensure that renewable energy development can proceed in tandem with recovery efforts of this iconic bird.

For More Information: Contact Liese Dart of The Wilderness Society at liese_dart@twc.org or (202) 429-2694

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:

According to OMB, sequestration would result in a automatic, across-board cut of nearly 10% to critical energy and innovation programs within the government. The OMB report predicts a \$148 million to the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy program. To give some perspective, this would be equivalent to cutting the solar energy program at the Department of Energy in half, or equal to eliminating the entire wind and geothermal energy programs, or more than double the current weatherization program budget. This would tremendously damage efforts to create the clean energy technologies of the 21st century and implement energy efficiency. Programs that could be cut include research and development, building code development, appliance efficiency standards, the Weatherization Assistance Program, the Federal Energy Management Program, and many others, that would otherwise continue to deliver benefits. For example, future appliance and equipment standards have the potential to save consumers \$170 billion net on their energy bills and reduce cumulative US energy use by 40 quads.

For More Information: Contact Cai Steger, Natural Resources Defense Council, at csteger@nrdc.org or (212) 727-4529

International Family Planning:

Sequestration would have a devastating effect on the ability of these programs to meet the demand for

voluntary family planning. Based on analysis by the Guttmacher Institute, a cut of ten percent, or \$61 million, from U.S. international family planning programs would mean that at the very least:

- 3,120,000 fewer women and couples would receive contraceptive services and supplies;
- 900,000 more unintended pregnancies, including 70,000 more unplanned births, would occur;
- 420,000 more abortions would take place (of which 300,000 would be unsafe);
- 2,400 more maternal deaths would occur;
- 12,000 more children would lose their mothers.

At the end of 2011, world population reached 7 billion, and the next billion people is expected to be added within 12 years. Population growth in the developing world remains a contributor to deforestation, desertification, the degradation of oceans and waterways, and loss of biodiversity and endangered species. Family planning stands out as an opportunity to improve the health of women and children, while increasing people's resilience to environmental challenges. These cuts would risk lives and undermine real progress towards a sustainable future.

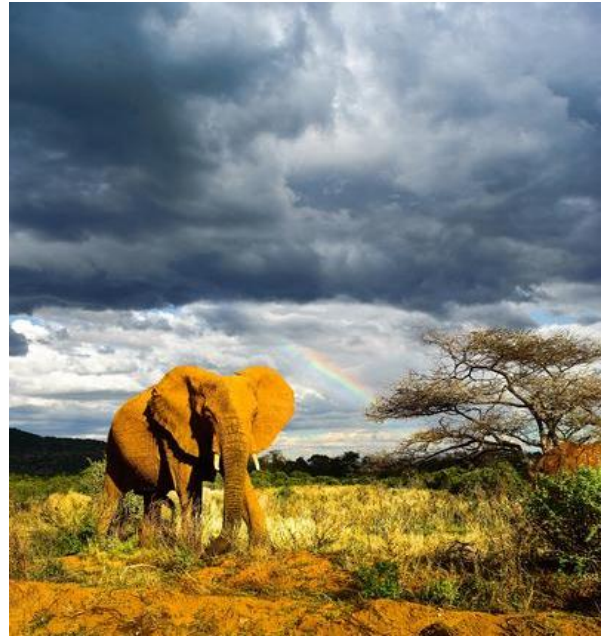
For More Information: Contact Craig Lasher of Population Action International at clasher@popact.org or (202-557-3442)

International Conservation:

Funding to support the protection of some of the planet's most cherished and at risk wildlife species would be threatened, including US programs that are helping to save the last rhinos, tigers, elephants, great apes, and marine turtles at a time when poaching and illegal trade in wildlife products, such as ivory and rhino horn, is skyrocketing. Cuts to these programs could seriously harm conservation efforts in places like Africa, turning the clock back on years of progress and undermining decades of successful US investments. In the past 5 years, rhino poaching has risen 3000% and elephant poaching is at levels not seen in 20 years. Cuts will leave more of these animals defenseless and under the gun.

Funding to protect some of the world's largest and most at-risk areas, including the Amazon Basin and the Southeast Asia's Coral Triangle, would be at risk. The Amazon alone supports 30 million people, from 350 indigenous and ethnic groups, houses one in ten known species on Earth, and is the resource base upon which thousands of American companies depend on for their supply chains. The Coral Triangle's marine and coastal ecosystems sustain the

livelihoods of over 130 million people and contribute an estimated \$2.3 million to the economies in this strategically important region – as well as supplying over half of the world's tuna catch.



The ability of the US government to help the poorest and most marginalized populations build resilience to current climate impacts would be at risk. Inaction not only jeopardizes existing and expected development gains, but also yields a developing world overwhelmed with humanitarian crises rather than planning for long-term growth. Data on disaster risk reduction show that up-front investments could result in a cost savings of \$7 to every \$1 spent.

Investments in clean energy infrastructure in developing countries could be put on hold, delaying progress to reduce global emissions and improve global energy security by helping those countries move towards reliable, diversified, and cost-effective energy supplies.

For More Information: Contact Vanessa Dick of the World Wildlife Fund at Vanessa.Dick@wwfus.org or (202-495-4501)

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

Public Lands

Numerous studies highlight the importance of public lands for the economy.

For example, a recent Department of the Interior [report](#) noted that the Department supports over two million jobs and approximately \$385 billion in economic activity for 2011. A report by the National Park Service and Michigan State University notes that the National Park System contributed more than \$31 billion to local economies in 2010 and supported 258,000 jobs.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, the [Outdoor recreation economy](#) supports 6.1 million direct American jobs and \$646 billion in direct consumer spending each year.

The National Parks Conservation Association released a November 2011 comprehensive [report](#) on the funding challenges facing national parks and the impact that the sequester could have on parks, visitors, and local economies.

The National Wildlife Federation released a [report](#) in October 2011 discussing how Congress can lower the deficit while protecting wildlife and public health.

The Center for American Progress released a September 2011 [report](#) highlighting jobs created through stewardship of America's public lands.

The Wilderness Society released a [report](#) outlining the important role of public lands for job creation.

Lastly, The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation released an October 2011 [report](#) on the economics of outdoor recreation, natural resources preservation and historic preservation in the U.S.

Wildlife Conservation

[Preliminary information](#) from the new 2011 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicates that 90 million Americans spent \$145 billion on bird watching, fishing, hunting and other wildlife associated recreation, up to 18.8 percent from the last survey in 2006. A final study is expected out later this year.

A 2011 [study](#) in Science magazine found that bats save the agricultural industry more than \$3.7 billion per year by consuming harmful pests.

Nature-based tourism in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, much of which is focused on watching the nearly 500 bird species that have been recorded there, was found in a 2011 study to generate \$463 million per year in economic benefits for the four surrounding counties. Read the Texas A&M study [here](#).

Clean Air and Water

The continued economic competitiveness of our future generations depends on a clean, safe water supply; we must act now to address these pressing needs. Immediate investment in our nation's water infrastructure is critical and will create numerous good paying, green jobs.

Every \$1 billion invested in water infrastructure will create more than 20,000 new jobs. Many of the solutions to our water challenges use domestic sourcing, and American-made iron, steel, and manufactured goods which are an important part of water investment initiatives. These initiatives ensure that the public and private funding creates jobs and benefits employment sectors across the national economy. Investing in water infrastructure has the potential to stimulate and support many economic sectors including construction, manufacturing, transportation, and tourism.

The Clean Air Act protects public health and reduces health care costs for all by preventing thousands of adverse health outcomes, including cancer, asthma attacks, strokes, heart attacks, emergency department visits, hospitalizations and premature deaths. A rigorous, peer reviewed analysis, [The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020](#), conducted by EPA in March 2011, found that the air quality improvements under the Clean Air Act will save \$2 trillion by 2020 and prevent at least 230,000 deaths annually.

Oceans and Coasts

Our nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes provide immense economic, environmental, and recreational benefits. The National Ocean Economics Program has estimated that the US ocean and coastal economy contributes more than \$120 billion annually to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through fisheries and seafood production, tourism, recreation, transportation, and construction. Additionally, over 2.3 million jobs in the US depend on the oceans and coasts, 1.8 million of which come from tourism and recreation.

During 2005-2009, [NOAA's Report on the Ocean and Great Lakes Economy of the United States](#) reports that the employment in the US ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes economy grew by 1.4% while the total US

economy lost 2.3%. While the US ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes real GDP grew by 64.9%, the total US real GDP increased by only 1.7%.

All of these economic benefits are dependent upon clean, healthy oceans and coasts, which federal investments are critical in supporting. Protecting and restoring coastal areas results in big economic returns.

For example, for every \$1 million spent on coastal habitat restoration there are 17 jobs created, on average. For high labor intensity restoration projects, more than 30 jobs can be created per \$1 million invested. Programs like the community-based restoration program leverage federal investments at rates over 3-to-1, private to federal dollars. In tough economic times, these are returns we cannot afford to leave on the table.



Renewable Energy

The clean energy sector represents one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States with an average employment growth rate of 8.3%. For every \$1 million invested in renewable energy 16.7 jobs are created, compared to 5.3 jobs per \$1 million for the fossil fuel industry. Also American industries are committed to investing in the renewable energy industry, to the tune of \$48 billion in 2011.

The Department of Energy has been a critical fount of innovation and technological development in the clean energy sector over the last several decades. All told, DOE was responsible for \$18.7 billion in economic benefits from PV systems from 1975 to 2008, which implies a net IRR of 17% over the 33 year stretch. This is just one among the many benefits of DOE research and investment in the past few decades in the clean energy sector. Read more in [Retrospective Benefit-Cost Evaluation of DOE Investment in Photovoltaic Energy Systems, August 2010](#).

Read more on clean energy investments from [Pew Environment Group](#) and [The Wilderness Society](#).

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is the lowest-cost, cleanest, and quickest resource the US has to meet its energy needs. Not only does energy efficiency reduce harmful pollution by cutting fossil fuel use, it also saves

consumers and businesses money on their energy bills – leaving them with more to spend elsewhere in the economy.

DOE, EPA and DOD all have important programs and initiatives to increase the energy efficiency of our buildings, appliances and equipment, industry, and the Federal government.

For example, the U.S. Department of Energy and the US Environmental Protection have reduced energy costs for consumers and businesses by over \$15 billion to date, or more than \$650 for every federal dollar invested. This savings has been achieved through mandatory efficiency standards and test procedures for appliances and equipment, labeling products to inform consumer choice regarding even higher performance (e.g., with ENERGY STAR®), and certifying and enforcing to ensure that products perform as promised. These efforts have also spurred product innovation, while pre-empting the potential regulatory burden on manufacturers of a patchwork of state standards.

Additionally, the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) has cut the energy waste among federal buildings by 24 percent from 1985 to 2001 – a reduction that now saves federal taxpayers roughly \$1 billion each year in reduced energy costs.

International Energy Conservation

The clean energy economy has been surging around the world – having grown over 539% since 2004 – and clean energy investments in developing countries are expected to total more than \$20 trillion over the next 25 years. According to one study, the U.S. could create 280,000 to 850,000 new jobs if it captures just 14% of the clean technology market in the developing world.

CONCLUSION

Congress must find a way to avoid deep cuts to environmental and conservation programs and agencies, especially as deep as those scheduled to happen in the sequester. They must work together to find a solution to our deficit problems that protects these programs that are important for the economy and jobs, for the protection of public health, clean air and water, and our natural and historic heritage.

These programs have already been cut over the last two years, are struggling with years of underfunding, and will already face years of challenges under the spending caps in the Budget Control Act. They are not the place to seek an answer to our nation's fiscal imbalance. A balanced solution to our deficit is needed.