

**Alaska Wilderness League * American Bird Conservancy * American Rivers * Audubon
Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Environmental Defense Action Fund
Friends of the Earth * Greenpeace * League of Conservation Voters
Natural Resources Defense Council * Oceana * Ocean Conservancy
Population Action International * Population Connection * Sierra Club
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance**

December 18, 2013

Dear Senate and House Appropriations Committee Members,

We congratulate the members of Congress for the vote to approve the 2014-15 Bipartisan Budget Act. As regular order is underway and the Appropriations Committees are working on finishing appropriations for 2014 by January 15, 2014, we urge the Committee to keep the bills clean of harmful policy riders.

Appropriations bills are intended to provide the government, its agencies, and the American people with the services needed to keep our nation running. As such, these bills should not be vehicles for unrelated or radical policies, many of which would never pass through Congress on their own. By attaching riders that undermine environmental protections to critical legislation in a cursory and unruly fashion, Congress is limiting examination of the issues and denying Americans resources and assistance that are needed immediately.

Riders do not save taxpayers a single cent, but they often cost citizens through the environmental and health harms they cause. Burying complex policy changes in broad spending bills, usually with little debate, should not be used as a way to push through anti-environmental measures that otherwise could not become law and that lack public support. Spending bills are difficult enough to pass without weighing them down with issues that do not affect government spending. During these difficult economic times and polarized Congressional dynamics, lawmakers should be focused on providing the public with the assistance it needs, not holding invaluable legislation hostage by including irrelevant and damaging riders.

Congress should be investing in America's future—not moving us backward by undermining bedrock laws or cutting funding for programs needed by our communities. That's why we urge the Committee not to attach damaging policy riders to these bills.

Sincerely,

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