

Alaska Wilderness League • American Rivers • California Wilderness Coalition • Californians for Western Wilderness • Center for Biological Diversity • Center for Food Safety • Clean Water Action • Crow Canyon Archeological Center • Defenders of Wildlife • Earthjustice • Earthworks • Endangered Species Coalition • Environment America • Environmental Defense Fund • Environmental Investigation Agency • Friends of Arizona Rivers • Friends of Gold Butte • Friends of Ironwood Forest • Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks • Friends of the Earth • Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument • Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument • Grand Staircase Escalante Partners • Great Old Broads for Wilderness • League of Conservation Voters • Los Padres ForestWatch • National Audubon Society • Natural Resources Defense Council • Ocean Conservancy • Oceana • Oregon Natural Desert Association • Partnership for the National Trails System • Scenic America • Sierra Club • Soda Mountain Wilderness Council • Southern Environmental Law Center • Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance • The Wilderness Society • Tuleyome

June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we write in opposition to the destructive policy riders included in the Fiscal Year 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We also write with deep concern about many of the funding levels in the bill.

We are alarmed 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 over 20 anti-environment riders in this legislation, there are 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 and the Clean Water Act and have no place in appropriations legislation.

Congress has had an opportunity to return the appropriations process to regular order this year, but burdening legislation with unnecessary and harmful policy provisions will only derail an already difficult process. Critical funding legislation should not be held hostage by unrelated and damaging riders.

We write as well with deep concern about the funding levels in the bill. We are concerned that significant wildfire suppression needs are not being funded through supplemental appropriations as has traditionally been the case, causing damaging constraints to the to the Interior Subcommittee's allocation. The failure to identify an alternative funding mechanism for fire suppression has contributed to an unrealistic allocation that has led to deep cuts to important programs.

Among the damaging cuts in the bill is a 9 percent cut to the Environmental Protection Agency, which would only serve to undermine the protections that Americans support for clean air and water. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is cut by almost 20% below the enacted level and is well below the authorized level of \$900 million. The 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.

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,

Alaska Wilderness League  
American Rivers  
California Wilderness Coalition  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Food Safety  
Clean Water Action  
Crow Canyon Archeological Center  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Earthworks  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental Investigation Agency  
Friends of Arizona Rivers  
Friends of Gold Butte  
Friends of Ironwood Forest  
Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument  
Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument  
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
League of Conservation Voters  
Los Padres ForestWatch

National Audubon Society  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Ocean Conservancy  
Oceana  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Partnership for the National Trails System  
Scenic America  
Sierra Club  
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
The Wilderness Society  
Tuleyome