

**American Forests * American Rivers * Clean Water Action * Defenders of Wildlife *
Earthjustice * Earthworks * Endangered Species Coalition * Friends of the Earth * Green
for All * Hip Hop Caucus * Interfaith Power & Light * International Fund for Animal
Welfare * League of Conservation Voters * Los Padres ForestWatch * Marine
Conservation Institute * Natural Resources Defense Council * Oceana * Partnership for
Policy Integrity * Sierra Club * Southern Environmental Law Center * The Wilderness
Society**

July 17, 2018

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to oppose H.R. 6147, the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which does not responsibly or adequately fund the federal government or the hundreds of programs and thousands of civil servants tasked with implementing our nation's landmark environmental laws that protect people in this country and our air, climate, water, wildlife and treasured American landscapes. The bill also contains numerous anti-environmental policy riders that simply have no place in a funding bill.

While not every organization on this letter works on every issue, please find below our collective voting recommendations for amendments to H.R. 6147:

We urge NO votes on the following amendments:

Division A: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

1. Biggs #129: This amendment would undermine the incredibly important Land and Water Conservation Fund. This amendment would do far more damage to our public lands than its claimed benefit. LWCF is a critical tool in protecting the National Parks as well as BLM and all other public lands ensuring access to recreation, and making their management more efficient. No amendment should mask an anti-conservation agenda by pitting these two critical needs against each other, when in fact they are two sides of the same coin.

33. Palmer #65: This amendment would defund the very successful Diesel Emission Reduction Act which protects human health by reducing harmful particulate and NOx emissions from diesel

vehicles. The program has bipartisan support and a record of pollution reductions, especially in areas of poor air quality and should be continued.

38. Biggs #111: This proposed amendment would cut approximately 10% of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds from the United States Forest Service, causing real damage to ongoing projects while having no real impact on deficit reduction. The LWCF, which is not derived from taxpayer dollars, is the premier conservation program in the country and ensures access for recreation, hunting and fishing, increases management efficiency driving down costs, and conserves key areas within forest boundaries from private development.

43. Mullin #138: This amendment seeks to block EPA from implementing its Methane Pollution Standard, the first-ever limits on methane pollution from the oil and gas sector (the largest emitter of methane) and would block future efforts to regulate existing sources of methane. EPA's standards require proven, low-cost safeguards that will yield net climate benefits of \$170 million in 2025 and will generate significant public health benefits as well by curbing smog- and soot-forming Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions and hazardous air pollutants.

44. Mullin-Gohmert-Gosar-Perry #139: This amendment would command the federal government to blind itself to the economic costs of climate change. These costs, which affect businesses, families, governments and taxpayers, could reach hundreds of billions of dollars through rising health care costs, destruction of property, increased food prices, and more.

46. McMorris Rodgers #14: This amendment would prevent the implementation of vital standards that protect communities from exposure to toxic contaminants, such as PCB, arsenic, and mercury, in the fish they eat. This action would ignore court decisions, the EPA, and the voices of Native American tribes, Asian Pacific-islander communities, and fishing interests, all of which agreed that strong seafood consumptions standards are necessary to protect public health and water quality.

47. Loudermilk-Griffith #2: This amendment would prohibit funds from being used to regulate semi-truck trailers under the Clean Air Act. The EPA rule regulating emissions from medium and heavy-duty trucks went into effect on January 1, 2018, and is estimated to reduce CO2 emissions by about 270 million metric tons, save about 530 million barrels of oil, and provide \$49 billion in net program benefits and \$42 billion in net savings to vehicle owners over the life of vehicles built for the 2014 to 2018 model years.

48. Lamborn #70: This amendment would block federal funding for the threatened Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), thwarting recovery efforts for this western species, which continues to experience habitat loss and face other threats

throughout its range. It would eliminate crucial recovery programs for the mouse that require federal funding, such as Habitat Conservation Plans, and leave stakeholders uncertain about whether projects can go forward without violating the ESA.

49. Lamborn #68: This amendment would devastate conservation and recovery efforts for listed species any time the Fish and Wildlife Service fails to meet its obligation to complete a 5-year review of the species' status as required by the ESA. The agencies are often prevented from completing these reviews on time due to lack of funding or competing priorities. As of early 2018, nearly 1,000 listed species lacked up-to-date five-year reviews. This amendment would leave species without current reviews in a state of limbo, because they would retain their ESA status, but all federal funding for recovery efforts, law enforcement efforts, and consultations would be blocked.

50. Goodlatte #5: The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the largest pollution cleanup plan ever developed by the EPA. The TMDL was spurred by insufficient restoration progress and poor pollution control practices by the states in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. This amendment would seriously impair EPA's ability to ensure progress through basic oversight and contingency actions that EPA is authorized to undertake by the Clean Water Act.

53. Burgess #157: This amendment blocks EPA from utilizing the Title 42 Special Pay Program – an important program that allows agencies to offer higher pay in certain specialized fields and provide recruitment and retention bonuses. It is important for agencies to have pay flexibilities and other tools and incentives available so that they are able to compete in the labor market for top-notch science and medical talent. Taking this authority away from EPA is yet another attempt to weaken the effectiveness of our environmental laws by preventing EPA from meeting its staffing needs.

54. Blackburn #168: This amendment arbitrarily cuts 1% from a budget that has been summarily underfunded for years. Congress should be investing in these programs which support communities and local economies across the country, rather than cutting them.

55. Emmer-Nolan #71: This amendment poses a grave risk to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, America's most-visited Wilderness Area. An on-going two-year scientific study is expected to be completed in the upcoming months and could show how sulfide-ore copper mining would pollute the Boundary Waters for centuries. The final decision on any withdrawal will be made by Secretary Zinke, but the Emmer-Nolan amendment forbids the Secretary from considering the scientific analysis and overwhelming public input in support of strong protections for the Boundary Waters.

56. Grothman #143: This amendment would block the latest life-saving ozone standards entirely, threatening millions of vulnerable Americans like children, the elderly and asthmatics.

58. Young #10: This amendment would prohibit the Department of the Interior from changing the current placer mining plans of operations as it pertains to revegetation within the area. This amendment would stop the Department of the Interior from performing reclamation of vegetation and wildlife habitats that fall under the criteria that pertain to specific gold mines in Alaska.

59. Perry #149: This amendment is just another attempt to roll back the Clean Air Act and block any potential plan to address climate change. Instead of listening to the national security experts, faith leaders, scientists, energy innovators, health professionals and many others who are sounding the alarm on climate change and have implored our nation's elected officials to support action, this amendment simply seeks another way to say "no."

60. Pearce #117: This amendment would block federal funding for the endangered New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), thwarting recovery efforts for the rare southwestern subspecies, which has suffered a significant reduction in occupied localities due to habitat loss and fragmentation throughout its range. It would eliminate crucial recovery programs for the mouse that require federal funding, such as development and approval of Habitat Conservation Plans, and leave stakeholders uncertain about whether projects can go forward without violating the ESA.

61. Palmer #64: This amendment attempts to defund EPA's criminal law enforcement activities. These include issuing warrants or arresting criminals for violating criminal laws, including methamphetamine laws, in their presence. The amendment is intended to make it easier for polluters to get away with the most egregious criminal environmental activities that cause even the most serious risks to human health.

62. Pearce-Marshall #118: This amendment would prevent the Fish and Wildlife Service from listing the imperiled lesser prairie-chicken under the Endangered Species Act. FWS is currently reviewing the status of the lesser prairie-chicken, which occupies less than 15 percent of its former range and continues to face numerous threats. According to a November 2017 conservation assessment by the North American Grouse Partnership, lesser prairie-chicken populations are now at or near historic lows with an estimated 97 percent decline in populations and a 92 percent decline in rangewide occupancy.

63. Gosar #173: This amendment is opposed by millions of Americans and the over 99.9% of public comments on the Ironwood Forest National Monument during the Administration's

review. This would open Ironwood Forest National Monument to destructive mining and drilling and prevent the Interior Department from managing it for its monument values. The monument has the support of the city council, local sportsmen, local businesses and many others and opening it to mining would provide virtually no benefits but many drawbacks to the local community.

65. Denham #60: This amendment would preempt California law as applied to New Melones reservoir (part of the federal Central Valley Project), in order to prevent the federal government from complying with new state water quality standards that are being adopted to restore and protect native salmon runs and the health of the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers. In addition to preempting state law, this amendment likely would harm other water rights holders, the livelihoods of salmon fishermen, and the health of the Bay-Delta estuary.

66. Abraham-Westerman #35: This amendment would force the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to allow pesticide-promoting, genetically engineered crops on national wildlife refuges where farming is permitted, preventing the agency from managing these public lands for healthy natural ecosystems. It would override agency policy prohibiting the use of GMOs on refuges unless it is essential to meet wildlife conservation objectives, facilitating damaging commercial agriculture operations in sensitive wildlife habitat.

69. Hice #163: The Office of Environmental Justice at EPA has historically provided a valuable role in informing agency actions and their impact on or benefit toward marginalized communities. The impacts of environmental degradation are often most heavily felt by distressed communities and the Office of Environmental Justice has traditionally played an important role in ensuring equity in how the agency carries out its mission of protecting public health and the environment.

70. Smith-Gianforte #3: Congress included citizen suit provisions in the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the ESA to ensure enforcement of critical public health and environmental protections, when agencies failed to act. However, this amendment disallows recovery of legal fees for settlements and would prevent many communities from being able to get legal representation to enforce these laws, leading to more polluted air and toxins in our drinking water. This amendment will also unnecessarily prolong litigation, adding burdens to agencies and courts.

We urge YES votes on the following amendments:

Division A: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

17. Johnson-Griffith #92: Current bill gives money to three states - KY, WV, and PA - for an AML Pilot program to combine abandoned mine reclamation with economic development. This amendment would increase the number of states to six - top three plus VA, AL, and OH. All six states were included in FY17 and 18, and are included in Senate approps 2019.

23. Vargas-Davis-Peters #59: The U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) funds the planning, design and construction of high-priority water and wastewater infrastructure for underserved border communities. The program protects U.S. public health and the environment by funding essential drinking water and wastewater projects that otherwise would be financially unfeasible for these communities.

24. Esty-McKinley #82: This amendment would help cities and towns clean up Brownfield sites by increasing State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) by \$7M. These grants would fund the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of Brownfield sites (properties that may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substance, pollutants, and contaminants). Cleaning up these Brownfield sites can help bolster local economies, facilitate job growth and improve and protect the environment.

25. Grijalva #96: This amendment would increase the DOI Inspector General's account during a time of expanded need for the office, with a Secretary of the Interior facing a broad array of ethics investigations.

37. Polis #107: This amendment will increase funding to reduce hazardous fuels to protect communities and firefighters from damaging wildfires, while decreasing funding from the Forest Products line item, which is narrowly focused on underwriting the production of timber from national forests.

40. Beyer #26: This amendment strikes a provision in the bill which creates confusion about exemptions allowing polluters to more easily dump dredged or fill material into our waterways, destroying fish and wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity and degrading water quality downstream.

41. Beyer #25: This amendment strikes a provision of the bill that repeals the 2015 Clean Water Rule. The Clean Water Rule is a commonsense safeguard that protects the drinking waters

sources of 117 million people in the U.S., as well as streams, headwaters, wetlands and other water bodies that serve as habitat for wildlife, reduce flooding risk, and naturally filter pollution.

42. Moore #34: The Great Lakes Advisory Board plays a critical role in providing advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator in terms of programmatic and resource allocation across the Great Lakes Basin. The Advisory Board represents a broad range of interests including business, agriculture, foundations, environmental justice groups, education organizations, environmental groups, academia and state, local and tribal representatives.

51. Gallego #134: Our foundational environmental and public resource protection laws exist to protect our environment and publicly owned resources and ensure their use is done responsibly, with care toward the environment and to the benefit of all taxpayers. This amendment underscores that value and the need to take special care with publicly owned resources.

57. Connolly-Price #29: This amendment would prohibit funds from being used to change or modify the minimum and first-ever federal standards established for the safe disposal and management of toxic coal ash, one of the largest industrial waste streams in the nation. Laden with heavy metals and toxic pollutants, nearly 1,400 aging and leaking toxic coal ash landfills and dams threaten human health and the environment across the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and disproportionately impact low-income and minority communities.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

American Forests

American Rivers

Clean Water Action

Defenders of Wildlife

Earthjustice

Earthworks

Endangered Species Coalition

Friends of the Earth

Green for All

Hip Hop Caucus

Interfaith Power & Light

International Fund for Animal Welfare

League of Conservation Voters

Los Padres ForestWatch

Marine Conservation Institute

Natural Resources Defense Council

Oceana

Partnership for Policy Integrity

Sierra Club

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The Wilderness Society