

115TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
1st Session } { 115-238

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2018

JULY 21, 2017.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. CALVERT, from the Committee on Appropriations,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 3354]

The Committee on Appropriations submits the following report in explanation of the accompanying bill making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018. The bill provides regular annual appropriations for the Department of the Interior (except the Bureau of Reclamation and the Central Utah Project), the Environmental Protection Agency, and for other related agencies, including the Forest Service, the Indian Health Service, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page number</i>	
	<i>Bill</i>	<i>Report</i>
Title I—Department of the Interior:		
Bureau of Land Management	2	7
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	8	11
National Park Service	15	24
United States Geological Survey	20	34
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	23	37
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement	24	39
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement	26	39
Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education	29	41

The Committee recommends \$875,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

The Committee is funding the Office of the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill instead of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill.

Forest Service Accounting, Budgeting, and Management.—The Committee appreciates the Service's efforts to improve its accounting, budgeting, and management systems and practices but believes additional steps are necessary to ensure the Service is fully accountable and transparent with taxpayer dollars. The Committee has included bill language and directives relating to the administrative control of funds, budgeting practices and cost pools, and the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) pilot program. The Committee requests that the Secretary of Agriculture fully engage on these issues and designate a senior staff member with budgeting and management expertise to assist the Service on these matters.

The Committee has learned the Service has outdated, unofficial policy and guidance documents directing the administrative control of funds; that in some cases control practices have been developed in an ad hoc manner; and that the practices vary across regions, forests, and districts. This is contrary to current law (31 U.S.C. 1514) and Office of Management and Budget requirements (OMB Circular No. A-11). Without internal controls, accountability and transparency are impossible to achieve. The Committee includes bill language to require the Service to develop an administration control of funds system, as required by 31 U.S.C. 1514). The Committee expects the system will apply consistently across the Service. The Committee also requests the Service to provide a report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, as soon as practicable, on the estimated cost, staffing, and time requirements for developing and implementing this system.

The Committee would like to assist the Service in its efforts to improve its accounting and budgeting processes. As such, the Committee requests a report by December 31, 2017, on the feasibility of restructuring the Service's budget request. The Committee envisions a request that allocates funding for the Service's major programs between salaries and expenses and project funds. This would allow for the elimination of cost pools, which the Committee believes complicate the Service's accounting and budgeting processes, and increase confidence that funds are used for the purposes Congress intended. The Committee looks forward to working with the Service on this request.

The Committee discontinues the set asides for the IRR pilot. The goal of IRR was to improve the integration and prioritization of the forest restoration program, increase the flexibility of the regions in the pilot to focus on high-priority projects, and to create budgetary and implementation efficiencies. In some cases, the flexibility provided by the pilot allowed regions to better integrate budgeting and project planning. However, budgetary and implementation efficiencies were not realized. The Committee believes that providing national forests the flexibility to identify and focus on high-priority projects will ultimately improve forest health. As such, the Committee directs the Service to identify the positive results of the IRR pilot, such as improved priority-setting and greater cooperation be-