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**CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT,
2016**

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**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

on

H.R. 2029 / Public Law 114-113

[Legislative Text and Explanatory Statement]

Book 2 of 2

Divisions G-L



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(H.R. 2029; P.L. 114-113)

**DIVISION G—DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016**

[CLERK'S NOTE: Reproduced below is the material relating to division G contained in the Explanatory Statement regarding H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016. ¹]

DIVISION G—DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The following statement is an explanation of the effects of Division G, which makes appropriations for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Forest Service, the Indian Health Service, and related agencies for fiscal year 2016. Report language contained in House Report 114–170 and Senate Report 114–70 providing specific guidance to agencies regarding the administration of appropriated funds and any corresponding reporting requirements carries the same emphasis as the language included in this explanatory statement and should be complied with unless specifically addressed to the contrary herein. This explanatory statement, while repeating some language for emphasis, is not intended to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein.

In cases where the House report, Senate report, or this explanatory statement directs the submission of a report, such report is to be submitted to both the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. Where this explanatory statement refers to the Committees or the Committees on Appropriations, unless otherwise noted, this reference is to the House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies and the Senate Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

The Committees direct each department and agency funded in this Act to follow the directions set forth in this Act and the accompanying statement, and not reallocate resources or reorganize activities except as provided herein or otherwise approved by the Committees through the reprogramming process as described in this explanatory statement. This explanatory statement addresses only those agencies and accounts for which there is a need for greater explanation than provided in the Act itself. Funding levels for appropriations by account, program, and activity, with comparisons to the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and the fiscal year 2016 budget request, can be found in the table at the end of this division.

Unless expressly stated otherwise, any reference to “this Act” or “at the end of this statement” shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of this division.

¹The Explanatory Statement was submitted for printing in the Congressional Record on December 17, 2015 by Mr. Rogers of Kentucky, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations. The Statement appears on pages H9693–H10471 of Books II and III.

Drought, Forests and Wildfires.—Severe and prolonged drought can increase the rate at which trees die and devastating wildfires occur. In light of the number of dead and downed trees on public lands in the West, the Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management are directed to work with State and local governments in drought-stricken regions to facilitate the prompt removal of dead and downed trees on these lands and to prioritize funding to reduce the threat of devastating wildfire threats to communities, drinking water supplies, utilities, and groves of ancient trees.

Making Litigation Costs Transparent.—The Department of the Interior, EPA, and the Forest Service are directed to provide to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, and to make publicly available no later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, detailed Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) fee information as specified in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015.

State Wildlife Data.—The Department of the Interior and the Forest Service are expected to prioritize continued coordination with other Federal agencies and State fish and wildlife agencies to recognize and fully utilize State fish and wildlife data and analyses as a primary source to inform land use, planning, and related natural resource decisions. Federal agencies should not unnecessarily duplicate raw data, and when appropriate, should evaluate existing analysis of data prepared by the States, and reciprocally share data with State wildlife managers, to ensure that the most complete data set is available for decision support systems.

Land Grants, Acequias and Community Ditches.—The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture are urged to recognize the traditional use of State-recognized community land grants, acequias, and community ditches in the American Southwest during the land use planning process.

Multi-Agency Transparency.—In order to increase transparency, the Department of the Interior, Forest Service, and Environmental Protection Agency are encouraged to disclose costs associated with analyses required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Greater Sage-Grouse.—The agreement provides a total of \$63,250,000 for sage-grouse conservation, including \$60,000,000 for the Bureau of Land Management and \$3,250,000 for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The agencies are directed to focus this funding toward on-the-ground conservation measures to improve and preserve sage-grouse habitat and the sagebrush ecosystem. The Bureau is reminded of the concerns outlined in the House and Senate reports as Congress continues to hear complaints about the effect of the sage-grouse land use plan amendments, which are not limited to activities within Bureau controlled sage-grouse habitat. In order for the sage-grouse, communities, and States to thrive, all partners must work in good faith. As such, the Bureau and the Forest Service are directed to closely work with each of the 11 States and the affected communities to address the issues unique to each State and seek to collaboratively resolve all issues. The Bureau is directed to provide guidance to its State offices and partners on how it will update sage-grouse habitat maps, adopt new