

114TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
2d Session } 114-632

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2017

JUNE 21, 2016.—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. 5538]

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, 2017. 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.

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2017 totals \$32,095,000,000. This amount reflects a \$63,859,000 reduction from the amount appropriated in fiscal year 2016 and a \$1,019,444,000 reduction from the budget request.

program, including management efficiencies, tangible accomplishments, and accountability prior to the consideration of expanding IRR nationwide.

Land Management Planning, Inventory and Monitoring.—The Committee recommends \$36,998,000 for Land Management Planning and \$147,998,000 for Inventory and Monitoring. The Committee does not accept the proposed merging of the Land Management Planning and Inventory and Monitoring line items.

The Committee is aware that the Service, Bureau of Reclamation and others worked together during fiscal year 2016 to initiate a multi-year study to generate new knowledge to quantitatively establish the co-benefits of forest management practices in the Sierra Nevada that could potentially generate water supply and other benefits to the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. The Committee supports the Service's continued participation, through the Western Watershed Enhancement Partnership program, in the analysis of science-based fuel reductions that are mutually beneficial to national forest health and water supply yield and, if merited, recommendations for further congressional action.

Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness.—The Committee recommends \$263,942,000 for Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness, \$2,223,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and equal to the budget request. Of the funds available to Manage Recreation Operations, \$750,000 shall be for the maintenance of rural airstrips. The Committee requests a report on the funding allocated to rural airstrips in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 and directs the Forest Service to consult with Congress, State and local officials, and affected stakeholders, prior to making a determination to close or terminate the use of any rural airstrips.

The Committee encourages the Service to continue long-standing partnerships that support outdoor ethics and stewardship programs.

The Committee again directs the Service to conduct the appropriate analysis regarding any lands that could be incorporated into the Tahoe National Forest and reminds the Service of the importance of engaging all local stakeholders, including local government institutions, private citizens, and community groups, in its analysis.

The Committee understands that the Service is conducting a wilderness inventory and evaluation for portions of the Inyo, Sierra and Sequoia National Forest. Recreation and tourism at these national forests support the economies of many communities near these forests. Under current law and regulation, any land recommended by the Service for wilderness protection will significantly restrict access and recreation in these forests, creating de facto wilderness without congressional approval. The Committee directs the Service to carefully conduct its analysis, ensuring that it takes into full account the economic effects of its decisions, the desires and needs of the local communities and their local, State and federally elected representatives.

The Committee reminds the Service of the importance of making the national forests as accessible as possible to the American people and requests that the Service work with States, local officials, communities, and partners as it implements the travel analysis process.