

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.

The Committee recommends \$291,982,000 for Forest and Rangeland Research, \$982,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and equal to the budget request.

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA).—The Committee recommends \$77,000,000 for the FIA program, \$2,000,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and equal to the budget request.

The Committee finds that State forestry agencies and their cooperators are often able to accomplish critical FIA work with equal quality at lower costs than the Service. The Service is directed to work with State foresters to identify ways to more efficiently deliver the program in all States, including timely inventory updates, and should explore opportunities to work with additional State forestry agencies and their cooperators who can accomplish necessary field work at lower cost.

Forest Products Laboratory.—The Committee recommends \$19,200,000, as requested, for the Forest Products Lab and its programs, including \$5,200,000 for the Engineered Properties and Structures research program.

Northern Long-Eared Bat.—The Committee is encouraged by the Service's research, in partnership with private landowners, State agencies and nonprofit organizations that successfully treated northern long-eared and other bats for white-nose syndrome and strongly urges the Service to continue this important effort.

Urban Forest Research.—The Committee encourages the Service to support urban forest research initiatives, related social and socio-economic research, and cooperative activities that help cities monitor and care for their urban forests. The Committee directs the Service to provide information and tools, including inventories of urban forests, to help cities, towns, and metropolitan areas systematically assess the health and changing conditions of their urban forests and to plan strategic actions to sustainably maintain these forests.

Bighorn Sheep Research.—The Service is urged to collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management and the Agricultural Research Service on research involving the risk of disease transmission between domestic and bighorn sheep.

Wood Products.—Mass timber and other wood products, when appropriately used in the construction of buildings and other infrastructure, have been shown to withstand wind, seismic and other natural forces. The Committee acknowledges that these products should be considered for inclusion in any categorization of resilient products by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies.

Forest Carbon Research.—The Committee encourages the Service to work with other U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies and offices to establish the methods and tools needed to quantify forest carbon as a resource.

Water, Air, and Soil Research.—The Committee notes that the Service's research program has the potential to improve air quality monitoring technologies and air quality data and encourages the Service to collaborate with other Federal agencies and research partners in this field.

Post-fire Treatment Report.—The Committee directs the Service to provide a report within 60 days of enactment of this Act regarding its salvage operations. The report should include, by fire and

year for the past 10 years, the number of acres of Forest Service land burned by high-severity fires; the number of severely burned acres proposed for salvage harvest; the number of acres on which salvage harvest was actually performed; and the length of time between the fire being declared contained and 1) the completion of the NEPA process proposing and analyzing a salvage operation; 2) offer of timber sale or stewardship contract to perform a salvage operation; and 3) the number and outcome, if any, of legal proceedings against a proposed salvage operation.

Technical Report Update.—The Committee requests that the Service update General Technical Report PNW-GTR-486 regarding the environmental effects of post-fire logging during fiscal year 2017.

Research Program Report.—The Service is directed to update the report provided to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations that describes its research program in detail. The report should be transmitted as part of the fiscal year 2018 budget request. It should include information on each research laboratory, including their relationship to the research stations, their goals and purpose, the funding provided for each of the previous five fiscal years, the funding proposed to be provided in fiscal year 2018, the allocation of funding between research and administrative costs, the allocation of funding and projects between in-house and extramural research, and the number of scientists and support staff. The report also should include similar information for each research station.

Bill Language.—The Committee provides three-year spending authority for this account.

STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

Appropriation enacted, 2016	\$237,023,000
Budget estimate, 2017	234,004,000
Recommended, 2017	244,038,000
Comparison:	
Appropriation, 2016	+7,015,000
Budget estimate, 2017	+10,034,000

The Committee recommends \$244,038,000 for State and Private Forestry, \$7,015,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$10,034,000 above the budget request.

Landscape Scale Restoration.—The Committee recommends \$14,000,000 for Landscape Scale Restoration, equal to the fiscal year 2016 level and \$9,513,000 below the budget request.

The Committee supports continuing to use the majority of these resources for interstate competitive processes and recommends these projects address national and State priorities as identified in State Forest Action Plans.

Forest Health Management.—The Committee recommends \$114,600,000 for Forest Health Management, \$15,000,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$22,540,000 above the budget request. As noted elsewhere in this report, the additional funds are provided to address severe insect and disease conditions, particularly in Forest Service Region 5. An additional \$10,000,000 is provided for Federal forest lands, and an additional \$5,000,000 is provided for cooperative lands.