

Washington, D.C. – Today, the House Appropriations Committee met to consider the Fiscal Year 2025 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The measure was approved by the Committee with a vote of 29 to 25.

Image



**Interior and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Mike Simpson (R-ID) said,** “This bill helps reduce energy costs, protects American jobs, and ensures that we can continue access to our public lands to recreate, hunt, and develop on our natural resources. While reining in unnecessary spending, this bill also directs funding where it is needed most. This includes fully funding the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, making great strides to address critical needs across Indian Country, and permanently fixes wildland firefighter pay. I am grateful to Chairman Cole for his leadership, and I am pleased we are one step closer to getting this bill across the finish line.”

**Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) said,** “Our nation is full of natural wonders that provide everything from power to recreational enjoyment. The FY25 Interior measure demonstrates proper stewardship of these vital resources. From the protection of forests and traditional hunting and fishing to U.S. energy and mineral independence, the impact of this bill on everyday life is extensive. As the first Native American to lead this committee, I commend the strong investments that uphold our nation’s trust and treaty responsibilities to our tribal communities. We also provide a permanent pay fix for our brave federal wildland firefighters who protect our public lands and communities. Chairman Simpson proved that we can rein in big government without sacrificing the essential needs of the country.”

Subcommittee Chairman Simpson’s opening remarks are available [here](#).

Chairman Cole's opening remarks are available [here](#).

**Fiscal Year 2025 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act**

The Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act provides a total discretionary allocation of \$38.478 billion, which is \$72 million (0.2%) below the Fiscal Year 2024 enacted level and \$4.407 billion (10%) below the President's Budget Request. The bill also rescinds \$55 million of Department of the Interior funding for the Presidio Trust provided by the Inflation Reduction Act.

The bill fully funds the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and prioritizes funding for Tribes and Wildland Fire Management, including permanently addressing wildland firefighter pay. In addition, the bill provides a \$2.75 billion fire suppression cap adjustment as authorized.

The bill meets the programmatic needs while rightsizing agency funding levels, including a \$1.82 billion (20%) reduction to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### **Key Takeaways**

- **Strengthens our national security and promotes domestic energy production by:**
  - Requiring the Secretary of the Interior to:
    - Resume quarterly onshore oil and gas lease sales.
    - Issue 5-year offshore oil and gas leasing programs on time.
    - Conduct lease sales in the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area, the Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area, and the Alaska region.
    - Conduct Lease Sale 262.
  - Prohibiting funds to cancel oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.
  - Expanding access to critical minerals by blocking certain Bureau of Land Management withdrawals in Minnesota and reinstating mineral leases in the Superior National Forest.
  - Prohibiting the EPA from imposing the methane fee on oil and gas producers created by the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act.
  - Ensuring ancillary mining activities, including exploration operations and construction of a mine access road, are permitted with or without the discovery of a valuable mineral deposit, codifying the Rosemont decision.
- **Prioritizes funding for public safety and critical programs by:**
  - Providing \$2.81 billion (+14.5%) for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, including \$746 million for Public Safety and Justice programs, which is 34% above the FY24 enacted level.

- Providing \$1.47 billion for the Bureau of Indian Education (+7.5%), including \$271 million for Education Construction, which is 15% above the FY24 enacted level.
- Providing \$8.56 billion for the Indian Health Service (+23%) along with \$5.98 billion in advance appropriations for FY26.
- Fully funding PILT estimated to be \$600 million, which is \$85 million above the FY24 enacted level.
- Providing \$3.6 billion, which is \$177 million above the FY24 enacted level, for wildfire activities and permanently addressing wildland firefighter pay and capacity, without using irresponsible budget gimmicks requested by the Administration.
- **Reins in the Biden Administration’s job-killing regulatory agenda by:**
  - Ensuring chemical and pesticide manufacturers are not overburdened with requirements that would drive business overseas and threaten American competitiveness.
  - Blocking EPA’s car regulations on light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles.
  - Prohibiting the EPA from allowing California to require that new small off-road engines, such as lawn care equipment, be zero-emission.
  - Limiting abuse of the Endangered Species Act regarding species such as the sage-grouse, the gray wolf, the lesser-prairie chicken, and the dunes sagebrush lizard.
  - Addressing the harmful impacts of the Cottonwood decision to improve forest management.
  - Blocking the Administration’s NEPA rules that give agencies broad leeway to incorporate climate change in permitting, allow preferential treatment for some projects over others, and include social cost of carbon in permit evaluations.
  - Prohibiting funds for the EPA’s Clean Power Plan 2.0 and regulatory overreach regarding ozone emissions and steam electric power plants.
- **Protects access to our public lands by:**
  - Blocking restrictions on hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands.
  - Stopping the Bureau of Land Management’s Conservation and Landscape Health rule to ensure continued access to public lands for grazing, recreation, and energy development.
  - Prohibiting multiple U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rulings used to weaponize the Endangered Species Act against land users and energy producers.
  - Blocking a regulation that would make it harder for Americans to use traditional ammunition and fishing tackle.

- Prohibiting restrictions on where standard lead ammunition and fishing tackle can be used on certain federal lands or waters unless conditions are met.
- Stopping the Administration's 30x30 initiative to ensure access to federal lands for mineral exploration and development.
- **Focuses the Executive Branch on its core responsibilities by:**
  - Reducing funding for the EPA by 20%.
  - Eliminating all discretionary funding for the Presidio Trust and rescinding \$55 million provided to the Presidio through the Inflation Reduction Act.
  - Reducing funding for the Council on Environmental Quality to the authorized level of \$1 million.
  - Blocking funds for the American Climate Corps, Climate Justice Alliance, and ecogrief counseling.
  - Rejecting eight of the Administration's climate change executive orders.
  - Prohibiting agencies from using the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) in cost-benefit analyses and blocking the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases.
- **Supports American values and principles by:**
  - Prohibiting the use of funds to promote or advance critical race theory.
  - Prohibiting implementation of the Biden Administration's executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
  - Prohibiting funds for COVID-19 mask or vaccine mandates.
  - Prohibiting funds for the National Park Service to provide housing to an alien without lawful status.
  - Ensuring only approved flags are flown over agency facilities.
  - Prohibiting funds for moral conviction discriminatory action.

A summary of the bill is available [here](#).

During the markup, Committee Republicans refused amendments offered by the Democrats that would have:

- Prevented oil and gas lease sales in the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area, the Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area, and the Alaska region, as well as Lease Sale 262.
- Blocked access to critical minerals.
- Allowed the listing of the sage-grouse, gray wolf, and lesser-prairie chicken under the Endangered Species Act and the uplisting of the long-eared bat.
- Limited access for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands.

- Allowed the EPA to impose the methane fee on oil and gas producers created by the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act.
- Allowed the EPA to rush car regulations on light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles.
- Restricted the use of traditional ammunition and fishing tackle.
- Failed to address the harmful impacts of the Cottonwood decision.
- Funded unnecessary and polarizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.
- Promoted or advanced critical race theory.
- Allowed unapproved flags to be flown over federal facilities.
- Exposed Americans to religious discrimination.
- Funded the Administration's wasteful green agenda.

### **Adopted Amendments**

- Simpson #1 (Manager's Amendment) – Makes technical, bipartisan changes to the report.
  - The amendment was adopted by voice vote.
- Simpson #2 (En Bloc) –
  - Directs the Department of the Interior to reissue the final rule delisting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of Grizzly Bears under the Endangered Species Act.
  - Prohibits the National Park Service from designating or managing the Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida as wilderness.
  - Updates enacted offshore decommissioning language to ensure funding is provided for these activities.
  - Prevents the EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule.
  - Prevents the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS).
  - Transfers \$10 million from the Department of the Interior Office of the Secretary account to the EPA U.S.-Mexico water infrastructure program to address water needs.
  - Codifies the State of Florida's Clean Water Act section 404 program.
  - Prohibits funds to list the Upper Columbia River, Washington site on EPA's superfund National Priorities List.
  - The amendment was adopted by a vote of 31 to 23.
- Newhouse #1 – Blocks the U.S. Forest Service's proposed Land Management Plan for Old-Growth Forest Conditions and EPA's Particulate Matter 2.5 rule, which would have devastating impacts on agriculture, the timber industry, manufacturing, and the economy, as well as would restrict forest management efforts to prevent catastrophic wildfire.

- The amendment was adopted by voice vote.

Bill text, before adoption of amendments, is available [here](#).

Bill report, before adoption of amendments, is available [here](#).

A table of included Community Project Funding requests is available [here](#).

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Today, May 17, 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the “Service”) announced a final rule listing the dunes sagebrush lizard (DSL) as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. A designation of critical habitat was found to be prudent but not determinable at this time by the Service, giving the agency up to one year from the time of listing to propose critical habitat.

PBPA is deeply disappointed that the Service has chosen to list the DSL as endangered at this time. This arbitrary decision is not supported by the available science and flies in the face of the state sponsored conservation efforts, which include the enrollment of hundreds of thousands of acres and commitment of millions of dollars in both Texas and New Mexico. The Service mischaracterizes existing data in an attempt to support its unfounded hypothesis that the DSL is in danger of extinction. Moreover, this conclusion is inconsistent with the Service’s 2012 decision not to list the DSL, a decision based on the creation of conservation agreements, which the Service deemed would be effective. In 2020, the Service approved additional conservation efforts for newly active industry on the landscape, and enrollment in these efforts has been tremendous, yet still ignored.

This is another action by the Service showing that regardless of resiliency and effectiveness of state led conservation efforts, such efforts will be ignored in favor of paperwork protections, a favorite tool of environmental activists. Instead, the Service should have recognized the efforts of the communities in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico, the industry in that region and other partners that have had success in conserving the habitat for the lizard. Voluntary conservation measures, already in place, continue to demonstrate value. This listing will bring no additional benefit for the species and its habitat, yet could be detrimental to those living and working in the region. The Service’s refusal to designate habitat shows a lack of comprehensive understanding of the true conditions and needs of the species. This is yet another attempt to single out an industry while utilizing a species and another federal effort to overreach to the detriment of communities across West Texas and Southeast New Mexico. We are proud of the work PBPA members have done and will continue to do to be good stewards of our natural resources through volunteer conservation efforts.”

As a reminder, if you have acreage that could be impacted by this listing decision, you have 60 days from May 20, 2024 to initiate enrollment of acreage in the Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances that are currently available.

As a reminder, there are three conservation agreements which can be utilized for the DSL, two of these are available for acreage in Texas and one in New Mexico:

- New Mexico: DSL Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), administered by the Center for Environmental Health Monitoring and Management (CEHMM)
  - Email: [Emily.wirth@cehmm.org](mailto:Emily.wirth@cehmm.org), Emily Wirth
  - Phone: (575) 885-3700
  - Website: [www.cehmm.org](http://www.cehmm.org)
- Texas: 2020 CCAA for DSL, administered by Canyon Environmental
  - Email: [Chris@canyonenvironmental.com](mailto:Chris@canyonenvironmental.com), Chris Jensen
  - Phone: (801) 602-6883
- Texas: Texas Conservation Plan, administered by American Conservation Foundation (ACF).
  - Email: [admin@ac-foundation.com](mailto:admin@ac-foundation.com)
  - Phone: (254) 242-9745
  - Website: [www.ac-foundation.com](http://www.ac-foundation.com)

While we continued to stay engaged with other stakeholders on this issue prior to the announcement by the Service, on hearing about the decision to list yesterday, PBPA ramped up our communication with state leaders, members of Congress, the media, and other trade associations on this action and on possible next steps. We will continue to look for ways to combat this decision and, in the least, limit the impacts of this decision on your operations.