



Conservation Federation of Missouri

728 West Main Street ♦ Jefferson City MO 65101-1559

573-634-2322 ♦ 800-575-2322 ♦ 573-634-8205 (fax)

Mike Schallon
President

Dave Murphy
Executive Director

July 21, 2011

The Honorable Jo Ann Emerson
2440 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Emerson:

The Conservation Federation of Missouri is the oldest and largest citizen conservation organization in Missouri, comprised of 80 affiliate organizations representing 95,000 members. As an affiliate partner of the National Wildlife Federation, the Conservation Federation of Missouri represents dedicated conservationists from all walks of life and political stripes, from hunters and anglers to backyard gardeners, nature enthusiasts and conservation advocates. What we have in common is a deep commitment to protect wildlife habitat and to ensure clean air and water for every Missourian. Because of that commitment, we reject the Interior and Environment FY 2012 Appropriations bill that was recently passed by the House Appropriations Committee. The bill includes significant cuts to the conservation programs that protect America's resources, as well as numerous policy riders that threaten America's environmental conservation legacy.

Conservation has long enjoyed strong, bipartisan support in Congress. Unfortunately, the FY 12 Interior Appropriations bill amounts to a radical departure from the longstanding national commitment to making the air we breathe and the water we drink cleaner and safer. The bill dramatically slashes funding for our nation's most important wildlife conservation and habitat restoration programs while blocking enforcement of several bedrock public health and environmental laws.

One rider in the bill explicitly extends loopholes in the Clean Water Act that jeopardize drinking water for 117 million Americans and throws away over 20 million acres of wetlands and prime wildlife habitats. The Interior Appropriations bill also bans the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from working to close these loopholes, which threaten wetlands such as those in the Prairie Pothole Region—the breeding grounds for the majority of North America's ducks. Many other water riders included in the bill would further weaken the Clean Water Act and block EPA efforts to protect America's waters.

Several riders would also weaken the Clean Air Act and would limit EPA's ability to implement limits on toxic air pollution, giving violators a free pass to foul our nation's air and water. In addition to saving over 160,000 lives a year the Clean Air Act protects our trout streams from acid rain, our lakes from toxic mercury pollution, and our forests from tree killing smog, yet this bill would undermine this important law.

“Guarding Our Natural Heritage”

www.confedmo.org

Another funding limitation in the bill would prevent the Fish and Wildlife Service from using funds to list new species under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, the bill prevents the Service from using funds to designate critical habitat for species that have already been listed as threatened or endangered. This funding moratorium paralyzes the Fish and Wildlife Service in its attempts to move forward on a backlog of over 250 candidate species in need of listing and protection, and prevents the Service from performing fundamental management activities for listed species.

The Interior Appropriations bill also includes severe cuts to some of the America's most important wildlife and clean energy programs, including:

- A reduction of \$2.1 billion below last year's funding level, \$3.8 billion below the President's budget request, and \$468 below the fiscal year 2006 levels
- A total cut to climate change programs of \$83 million (22%) from FY 2011 levels
- A decrease in land acquisition funding of \$239 million (79%)
- An 80% cut (\$61.8 million) to the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- A 7.5% cut (\$455.3 million) to the National Wildlife Refuge System
- A \$12 million cut to the National Landscape Conservation System
- A 21% cut (\$315 million) to the US Fish and Wildlife Service budget
- A 64 % cut (\$40 million) to the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program
- A 58% decrease in funding for the North American Wetland Conservation Act
- A 95% decrease in funding for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
- The elimination of funding for the National Environmental Education Act, the nation's only federal law committed to environmental education

America's investment in wildlife is not to blame for the budget problems we face today. Over the past 30 years, America's investment in parks, wildlife, clean water, and clean air [has fallen from 1.7% of federal spending to 0.6% of federal spending](#). This includes the full budgets for the Department of Interior and EPA. And the payoff for this tiny sliver of overall federal spending is enormous: programs implemented by Department of Interior and EPA alone generate 3 million jobs in communities throughout America. A serious effort to address the deficit would tackle the \$4 billion in annual subsidies for already extremely profitable oil and gas corporations and a host of other tax breaks and subsidies for big polluters.

Ensuring clean air, clean water and abundant wildlife is not a discretionary and wasteful function of government but a basic and core value that Americans believe in. We ask you to vote against the Interior Appropriations bill when it comes to a vote in the full House, to oppose its anti-conservation and anti-American riders and to work to restore funding for wildlife conservation, natural resource protection and environmental restoration programs that benefit all families and communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dave Murphy
Executive Director