



Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development

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June 25, 2018

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, support for environmental stewardship and its moral and human dimensions should be given priority. Adequate funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Interior (DOI) is essential since all people depend on the environment for their livelihood, health, recreation and survival.

In March, Congress passed a budget package for FY 2018 that maintained or increased funding for many EPA and DOI programs that protect natural resources and safeguard public and environmental health. With the appropriations process for the next fiscal year well underway, it is time once again to uphold these values and oppose unnecessary and harmful cuts to environmental stewardship. President Trump's budget plan for fiscal year 2019 calls for an unacceptable \$4.1 billion cut to stewardship programs of the EPA and the DOI.

The House and Senate bills that have advanced out of committee improve upon the President's request in a few important ways. Overall, funding for DOI programs remains steady at 2018 levels, and both bills include commendable increases to the National Park Service. The House also proposes an increase in funding for Superfund cleanup, an essential component of the EPA's mandate to maintain clean air, water, and soil. Funding for EPA's geographic programs are also maintained. Yet, the House bill also includes some disappointing cuts, including \$100 million to EPA funding overall, as well as a \$65 million decrease in funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Senate bill that passed out of committee rejects harmful cuts to the EPA while focusing funding on strong environmental stewardship.

In your deliberations, you are urged to maintain, or if possible, increase funding to the EPA and DOI, as these agencies oversee crucial programs that protect our nation's natural resources. Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund should continue to be maintained, as it is key to good environmental stewardship. You are also urged to adopt the funding increases as reflected in the House bill mentioned above.

As pressures on environmental resources continue to grow, it must be remembered that "only when 'the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognized with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations,' can those actions be considered ethical" (*Laudato Si'* no. 195). The federal budget is a moral document, and the funding of programs that care for creation and serve vulnerable people and communities carries with it ethical implications. Continuing on the path of creation stewardship is essential.

Sincerely yours,

Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of Venice
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development