112TH CONGRESS, 1st Session } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT 112–151

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2012

JULY 19, 2011.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. SIMPSON, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 2584]

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, 2012. 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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marinas. In keeping with Executive Order 12866, the Committee directs the Service to carefully consider the impact to concessionaires of such operational changes.

The Committee understands that any transfer of lands currently withdrawn by the Bureau of Reclamation surrounding the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge must first undergo an open public process; and further, the Committee believes that the highest priority in transferring acres should be given to the Bureau of Land Management in recognition of its current management responsibilities on these acres.

Migratory Birds, Law Enforcement, and International Conservation.—The Committee recommends $122,048,000 for migratory birds, law enforcement, and international conservation, $6,176,000 below the fiscal year 2011 enacted level and $8,000,000 below the budget request. The Committee has included language below directing the Service to combine landscape conservation cooperatives, bird joint ventures, and national fish habitat partnerships.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation.—The Committee recommends $128,343,000 for fisheries and aquatic resource conservation, $10,596,000 below the fiscal year 2011 enacted level and $7,669,000 below the budget request.

The Committee has restored the proposed $3,388,000 shortfall in the budget for mitigation hatchery operations and critical supplies, with the understanding that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will reimburse the Service an amount of $3,800,000 during fiscal year 2012, subject to appropriations. The Committee directs the Service to continue to seek reimbursement from the remaining agencies for mitigation hatchery operations, and to redirect any additional reimbursed funding to deferred maintenance.

The increase proposed for the fish passage program is funded at $500,000 instead of $1,000,000. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan program's climate change initiative is funded at $2,000,000, which is equal to the fiscal year 2010 enacted level. The Committee has included language below directing the Service to combine landscape conservation cooperatives, bird joint ventures, and national fish habitat partnerships.

The Committee is concerned about the continued rapid spread of invasive zebra and quagga mussels in the West. The Committee understands that prevention measures are lacking at many Federally-managed water bodies, despite Federal coordination and planning efforts through the aquatic nuisance species task force. The Committee has added to the President's fiscal year 2012 budget $1,000,000 to implement the highest priority prevention measures called for in the February 2010 Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters, specifically the implementation of mandatory inspection, decontamination, and law enforcement programs at all high-risk Federally-managed water bodies.

Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Adaptive Science.—The Committee recommends $20,000,000 for the cooperative landscape conservation and adaptive science initiative, $10,970,000 below the fiscal year 2011 enacted level and $17,483,000 below the budget request.

The Committee recognizes a limited Federal role in science-based, landscape-level conservation of our nation's natural resources, including fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. The con-

cept is not new; in fact it has been underway for some time in other agencies such as the Forest Service and the National Park Service, and in other Fish and Wildlife Service programs such as bird joint ventures and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. How these and other efforts fit together is of grave concern to the Committee.

The Fish and Wildlife Service continues to struggle in developing this initiative. Fundamental, unanswered questions pertaining mostly to roles and responsibilities of partners and existing programs have been asked by too many for too long. Furthermore, Service partners are overwhelmed by the increasing volume of Service partnership efforts at a time when State, local, tribal, and non-profit organization budgets are flat or decreasing.

Despite the Committee's concerns about how the Service has been implementing this initiative, the Service has made a strong case to this Committee as to why the initiative is necessary. The Service's current business model, containing an abundance of authorizations and programs, is not working as well as it could. Programs are stove piped. Habitats are being lost. The health of most species for which the Service has a trust responsibility is either unknown or poor.

In this budget climate more than ever, new initiatives such as this must either be achieving economies of scale, or must be offset, or both. By proposing to cut the budget for climate change planning and adaptive science capacity, this Committee is directing the Service to: (1) more fully develop the initiative in a limited number of areas; and (2) combine the initiative with bird joint ventures and national fish habitat partnerships. The Committee urges the Service to take into account these directives as it develops and submits its fiscal year 2013 budget request.

Bill Language.—The Committee has included bill language prohibiting the use of funds for certain Endangered Species Act activities. The bill also provides limited no-year funding for certain law enforcement and environmental contaminants activities.

CONSTRUCTION

Appropriation enacted, 2011	$20,804,000
Budget estimate, 2012	23,088,000
Recommended, 2012	11,804,000
Comparison:	
Appropriation, 2011	−9,000,000
Budget estimate, 2012	−11,284,000

The Committee recommends $11,804,000 for construction, $9,000,000 below the fiscal year 2011 enacted level and $11,284,000 below the request. The amounts recommended by the Committee compared with the budget estimates by activity are shown in the table at the end of this report.

The Committee expects the Service to allocate funding to projects in the order of priority presented in the fiscal year 2012 budget request.