



****UPDATED****

March 26, 2015

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the National Parks Conservation Association, we respectfully ask you to please oppose any amendments to the budget resolution that would do further harm to our national parks, air, land, water, and wildlife. Specifically, please consider our views on the following amendments.

We OPPOSE the following amendments:

Portman #322: This amendment would hinder the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to establish and enforce rules to protect human health and clean air allowed for under the Clean Air Act by requiring the agency to meet vague and unreasonable standards of proof of future impacts.

Cassidy #341: This amendment would promote offshore energy development, in particular oil and gas production, above all other considerations including risk to coastal communities, fishing interests and other offshore uses. This amendment would allow the Chairman of the Committee of the Budget to make any allocations to promote this risky practice.

Fischer #361: This amendment would prevent any consideration of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) or climate change in environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It would institutionalize climate denial into all major federal projects and force agencies to make decisions without vital information, thereby preventing the development of projects and use of taxpayer dollars in a responsible and resilient way and putting the safety, security, and economic well-being of local communities at severe risk.

Daines #388: This amendment would block the creation of new national monuments by undermining the Antiquities Act and subjecting these federal lands to approval by state lawmakers and local officials. This important 100-year old law has been used to protect some of our most important places from the Grand Canyon to the Statue of Liberty and this amendment would only serve to make it harder to protect more nationally-significant places.

Daines #390: This amendment would require agencies to review every regulation they have implemented over the course of the past ten years. This redundant and wasteful requirement would undermine regulatory efficiency and delay the adoption of important public health protections.

Portman #396: This amendment strikes at the heart of the federal Clean Air Act by letting each state simply walk away from national clean air requirements, giving polluters free rein to continue to allow unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into our air. It sets a dangerous precedent by allowing any state to decide that a national clean air law is merely optional, threatening public health in states downwind.

Hatch-Inhofe #414: This amendment seeks to prevent the Department of the Interior from implementing its newly updated regulations governing hydraulic fracturing on federal and Indian lands. Consistent, uniform regulations are sorely needed to prevent damage to land –including national parks—which are adjacent to oil and gas development.

Gardner #443: This amendment would greatly undermine the United States’ ability to protect rivers and streams on federal lands. It would prohibit any federal land management agency from placing any limit on the exercise of water rights as a condition for issuing a permit or other approval to use public lands or a waterway.

Coats #459: This amendment would increase logging, mining, oil and gas drilling and livestock grazing on federal lands to offset the costs of maintaining roads, facilities and other infrastructure. It would prioritize resource extraction over other multiple uses on public lands, potentially overriding federal protections for land, air, water, wildlife, antiquities, archaeological and historical sites, and other public values.

Inhofe #497: This amendment would defer “conservation planning and implementation” from the federal government to states and local governments. This framework would lead to an irregular patchwork of inadequate protection for imperiled species across the nation.

Rubio #564: This amendment would erect barriers to agencies issuing important environmental and public health protections by limiting their abilities with congressionally-imposed regulatory budgets and arbitrary ceilings. As new environmental risks to public health emerge, agencies should have whatever resources they need to quickly and effectively protect the public.

Daines #744: This amendment seeks to undermine the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which is crucial to ensure well-informed and collaborative federal decisions. NEPA establishes a consistent roadmap for the development of federal resources. However, by manipulating the NEPA process, this amendment would destroy the predictable and consistent roadmap, causing delays, litigation, and further expenses.

Lee #746: This amendment seeks to establish arbitrary deadlines on the environmental review and public input process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which is crucial to ensure well-informed and collaborative federal decisions. Arbitrary deadlines promote rushed government decisions that waste taxpayer dollars and put communities at risk of environmental, economic, and health tragedies.

Lee #747: This amendment proposes to sell federal lands to reduce the Federal deficit. This radical notion of selling off our nation’s common natural heritage is “penny wise and pound foolish” because our federal public lands return billions of dollars each year to American taxpayers through revenues derived from those lands, and the economic activities that occur on them.

Lee #859: This amendment would undermine the Clean Water Act by unnecessarily limiting its historical jurisdiction to just waters navigable-in fact or continuously flowing bodies of water. This dramatic change in the Clean Water Act runs counter to congressional intent, Supreme Court precedent, and science. Waters, even ephemeral and intermittent ones, can contribute pollution to waters downstream, threatening the drinking water for Americans and park visitors.

Lee #861: This amendment would undermine citizens’ ability to enforce the Endangered Species Act – one of our nation’s bedrock environmental protection laws – by restricting citizens’ ability to recover litigation costs when they prevail in court. Under this amendment, a prevailing citizen’s request for reimbursement under the Endangered Species Act would be subject to the restrictions of the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA). In subjecting ESA cases to EAJA’s below-market cap on

reimbursement, this amendment would make it more difficult for citizens from across the political spectrum to obtain counsel and challenge illegal government actions.

Murkowski #838: This amendment would allow for the authorization of the sale, transfer or exchange to state and local governments National Battlefields, a National Military Park (Gettysburg), National Historical Parks, National Recreation Areas, National Seashores, National Lakeshores, National Memorials, and National Trails among other National Park System units. If authorized, it would allow the give away or sale of some of our most sacred lands where Americans fought and died. It would result in the loss of recreational access to all Americans and harm wildlife habitat Americans want to preserve for future generations.

Paul #935: This amendment changes funding levels based on the presumption that the Clean Water Rule is rejected (Lee #859) and the scope of the Clean Water Act is limited beyond the traditional interpretation of the waters protected by the Clean Water Act. In addition to undermining the historic scope of the Clean Water Act, this amendment would undermine the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers' Clean Water Rule, negatively impacting water quality across the country.

Scott #1016: This amendment will open vast areas off of the Atlantic coast including those close to several national park units to energy development without funding for oversight agencies and safety measures in place. This amendment puts coastal communities, fishing interests, recreational and environmental health at risk.

We SUPPORT the following amendments:

Wyden-Crapo #434: This bipartisan amendment is an important step to solving the wildfire suppression funding problem by stabilizing the budget, ensuring that wildfires and first responders have the necessary resources, and restoring agencies' abilities to manage public lands efficiently.

Heinrich #571: This amendment aims to prevent the sell-off of our public lands for deficit reduction. Our public lands are wildly popular with Americans who visit them and want to protect them for future generations. Selling off our public lands would mean a loss of nationally-significant historic and cultural sites, wildlife habitat, recreation areas, memorials and some of the most spectacular landscapes admired by people across the world.

Cantwell #800: This amendment seeks to ban the use of hazardous oil tank cars and strengthen the crude by rail tank car rulemaking being promulgated by the Department of Transportation.

Coons #892: This amendment creates a deficit neutral reserve fund acknowledging that climate change impacts the safety and reliability of the critical infrastructure systems of the United States. These impacts cause tangible economic costs that are likely to increase over time, but can be mitigated by planning and actions taken now. It is estimated that every dollar spent on mitigation saves \$4 in disaster relief. Taking action now to prepare is fiscally responsible and will reduce the costs on our nation's infrastructure down the line.

Klobuchar #911: National Parks and other public lands provide lasting memories, educational experiences, and inspiration to so many Americans. They also contribute \$646 billion and 6.1 million jobs to our national and local economies annually. This amendment would support an accurate report of the economic benefits of federal public lands.

Coons #990: The amendment creates a deficit neutral reserve fund supporting measures to increase the resilience of new and existing U.S. infrastructure to climate change. Initiatives to increase resilience will reduce the long-term economic costs from impacts of a changing climate and associated events, which include sea-level rise, flooding, erosion, subsidence, loss of sea ice, and changes in the distribution of permafrost.

Cantwell-Portman #1002: This bipartisan amendment is an important step in restoring our national parks for their next 100 years of service. Over the last century, the park system has grown and aged, but funding has not kept pace to provide the level of service necessary for visitors to have unforgettable experiences. The result is a mounting list of needs and reduced park visitor experiences, just as the parks are expecting a significant increase in visitors for the 2016 centennial. This amendment is an important step in setting aside mandatory funding to support projects and programs that protect, preserve or restore our national parks.

Heinrich #1024: This amendment aims to prevent the sell-off our public lands for deficit reduction. Our public lands are wildly popular, as numerous polls have shown. Selling off our public lands would mean a loss of recreational access for all Americans, including hunters, anglers and outdoor recreation enthusiasts, increased burden on state and local tax payers for management costs, reduction of other state services, and increased development on some of America's most loved landscapes.

NPCA considers these significant votes to protect America's priceless heritage and natural resources found in our national parks, and may use it in our biennial "**Friend of the National Parks**" scorecard for the 114th Congress.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Kristen Brengel
Senior Director, Legislation & Policy