

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies with recommendations on how to prioritize programmatic spending for fiscal year 2012.

As Congress works to improve our nation's economic health by balancing the federal budget, we must nevertheless continue to support the successful federal programs that fill critical economic, environmental, and health needs for millions of Americans. Investing in these proven programs can not only provide economic benefits and create jobs today but also provide the forward-looking technological and environmental improvements that will ensure our future economic prosperity.

Below I have identified program areas within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Interior that are critical to environmental quality, to human health, and to our local, regional, and national economies. They are:

Environmental Protection Agency

Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds: The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) create jobs, repair crumbling infrastructure and protect public health. These programs invest in short- and long-term improvements in states and communities across the nation, providing significant environmental, economic and public health benefits.

Reply To:

509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2004
(202) 224-4524
www.cardin.senate.gov

Reply To:

Tower 1 Suite 1710
100 S. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 962-4436

Each day, the condition of our water infrastructure results in significant losses and damages from broken water and sewer mains, sewage overflows, and other symptoms of water infrastructure that is reaching the end of its useful life cycle. The American Society of Civil Engineers' latest infrastructure report card gave the nation's water infrastructure a D-, the lowest of any category. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates \$298.1 billion in wastewater needs and \$334.8 billion in drinking water needs over the next 20 years.

The President's budget cuts the State Revolving Funds by \$950 million. Given the increasingly dire state of our nation's water infrastructure, this decrease is ill-advised. I support appropriating funding of \$2.5 billion for the Clean Water SRF and \$1.5 billion for the Safe Drinking Water SRF, for a total FY12 funding level of \$4 billion.

Green Infrastructure: To protect our rivers and our communities, we must consider infrastructure that integrates our built and natural assets, using "green" infrastructure as an effective way to reduce polluted stormwater runoff, sewer overflows and flooding. Likewise, water efficiency improvements help communities accomplish more with less, using the best available technology to utilize water in smarter and more innovative ways. While dedicated funding for these sorts of cost-effective and innovative approaches may not always be necessary, it currently serves to jumpstart the integration of these techniques into our water management systems, a change that is much needed and long overdue. Until state ranking systems are able to evaluate the benefits of these approaches on par with more traditional projects, this green funding remains a critical step in transforming our water infrastructure to more sustainably achieve clean and reliable water. I encourage the Subcommittee to include the following legislative language in the FY12 funding bill:

Provided further, That, to the extent there are sufficient eligible project applications, not less than 20 percent of the funds appropriated herein for the Revolving Funds shall be for projects to address green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency improvements or other environmentally innovative activities.

Geographic Programs: I support the President's budget request for the Geographic Programs accounts, including \$67 million requested for the crucial work of the Chesapeake Bay program. The EPA Chesapeake Bay restoration program provides critical support to Bay watershed States as they implement their plans to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in an unprecedented effort to restore this economically important ecosystem. Similarly, programs in the Great Lakes and America's other great water systems across the country benefit from the water quality, conservation, and infrastructure support provided through these program accounts.

National Estuary Program: Estuaries, where our nation's rivers meet the oceans, are of critical importance to the success of our coastal environments. EPA currently provides funding for the protection and restoration of 28 estuaries nationwide.

These programs are successfully leveraging federal dollars to perform crucial water quality research and to meet habitat restoration goals; for example, the Maryland Coastal Bays Program alone is leveraging its federal support 17 to 1. Based on the notable success of the National Estuary Program and its demonstrated impacts on estuaries around the country and the local economies that depend on them, I support funding this program at no less than FY10 levels.

Research: Extramural water research grant programs are essential to our nation's continued water quality, safety and availability. Leveraging federal funds to facilitate high-priority water quality and availability research by private not-for-profit organizations whose members are regulated under the Clean Water Act or Safe Drinking Water Act is both fiscally responsible and critical to our nation's local water supplies. This important research by not-for-profit organizations helps save the national clean water community over a billion dollars. I therefore support an FY12 funding level of \$6,000,000 in competitive funding for clean water and safe drinking water research.

Superfund: When the Superfund to clean and restore contaminated industrial sites was established under CERCLA, it was funded by a "polluter pays" tax on chemical companies and other industrial entities responsible for the contamination. That commonsense tax expired in 1995 and has never been renewed by Congress. Since the fund was depleted, public money has been appropriated to allow the cleanup efforts to continue, meaning that the general public, including the communities that are most harmed by the contamination, is now shouldering the clean-up expense instead of the source sector that is responsible for the contamination in the first place. (In Maryland, for example, this means that the Ordnance Products site in Cecil County is now being addressed with taxpayer funds. On-site groundwater and soil are contaminated with chlorinated volatile organic compounds and perchlorate, a chemical used in explosives manufacturing. Residential water supply wells located near the site are also impacted by site-related compounds.) The President's superfund cleanup budget represents a decrease from FY10 levels. I support funding the superfund efforts at least at FY10 levels.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Migratory Birds: There are more than three hundred and fifty species of neotropical migratory birds that breed in North America in the summer and spend their winters in tropical climates. These bird populations are important to the ecological life of our nation; they also provide critical assistance to our agricultural operations by consuming billions of harmful insect pests each year. Because of environmental factors such as pesticide pollution, deforestation, sprawl, and invasive species, at least twenty-nine species of migratory birds are experiencing significant population declines. The Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a program with a proven track record of reversing habitat loss and advancing conservation strategies for neotropical birds. I support funding at FY10 levels again in FY12.

Forest Service

The maintenance of healthy forests is critical to protecting the health of water resources and critical wildlife habitat. Forests play an increasingly important role as our urban and suburban areas continue to expand. I urge the subcommittee to maintain funding for the State and Private Forestry Programs at the Fiscal Year 2010 level of \$355 million.

National Park Service

General Administration: As the custodian of America's historical and natural treasures, the National Park Service is the keeper of the American experience that millions of visitors enjoy every year. The National Park Service manages, preserves and protects priceless national resources at a fraction of the financial resources it would take for the Service to address fully the backlog of its maintenance and operation needs. Similarly, the NPS does not have sufficient funds to make important acquisitions when the opportunities arise. No place is this more true than in Maryland.

The National Park Service has had opportunities in recent years to acquire key properties within the authorized boundaries of the C&O Canal National Historical Park, Antietam National Battlefield, and the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail. There are also enormous maintenance and repair backlogs at many of Maryland's national parks, including 69 maintenance and repair projects on the C&O Canal National Historical Park alone.

I urge the Subcommittee to support, at a minimum, the President's \$2.296 billion request for the general administration of the National Park Service for fiscal year 2012. I also urge your support for the President's specific requests for construction (\$376 million) and acquisition (\$360 million).

Land and Water Conservation Fund: Conservation of ecologically and historically significant landscape is incredibly important to the history, culture, and ecology of our country. Providing the Department of Interior with adequate resources to do this important work is vital to these ongoing efforts.

In threatened and sensitive watersheds like the Chesapeake Bay, the Land Water Conservation Fund is especially important to protecting the natural resources that have astounding natural and economic value to the region. I urge the subcommittee to support the President's request for \$900 million in fiscal year 2012 for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Fund has protected some of America's most treasured places.

June 10, 2011

Page Five

In Maryland alone, the LWCF has provided \$198 million over the past four decades, protecting such places as the C&O Canal National Historic Park, Antietam National Battlefield, and Assateague Island National Seashore. A portion of the FY12 funds will support the President's proposed Fish and Wildlife Service FY2012 acquisition at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The \$1.5 million funding request will allow for the purchase of 153 acres through a fee simple acquisition and an additional 980 acres in conservation easements. Full funding of the LWCF will allow these critical acquisitions to continue, protecting America's treasures for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities and recommend programmatic funding ideas to the Subcommittee. Please feel free to have your staff contact Royce Brooks (202-224-4524 or royce_brooks@cardin.senate.gov) on my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

BLC:mb

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

July 28, 2011

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

The National Memorial Day Concert and the National July 4th Celebration at the Capitol have been landmark national celebrations for more than thirty years. These summer events have become American traditions, with the National Memorial Day Concert being the country's only national memorial service. Funding for these concerts has traditionally been ensured through report language in the operational budget of the National Park Service. However, in recent years, the funding was shifted from the NPS operational budget to the Statutory Aid account. When the Statutory Aid account did not receive FY11 funding, these important national events were left at risk.

The FY12 Interior appropriations bill currently being considered in the House of Representatives includes both a restoration of full funding for these concerts, and language returning the events to the NPS operational budget. Specifically, the House language states:

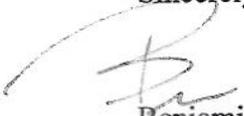
NPS Operations Account:

U.S. Capitol Concerts –

The Committee continues to support funding for the National Capitol Area Performing Arts Program and directs the Park Service to maintain funding for the summer concert series staged on the U.S. Capitol grounds at the fiscal year 2010 enacted level.

Given the significance of these concerts to the celebration of our nation and its heroes, I request that the Senate adopt the House language with respect to the 2012 funding for these time-honored events.

Sincerely,


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Reply To:

509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2004
(202) 224-4524
www.cardin.senate.gov

Reply To:

Tower 1 Suite 1710
100 S. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 962-4436