

**American Bird Conservancy * American Forests * Clean Water Action
Defenders of Wildlife * Endangered Species Coalition * Green For All
Interfaith Power & Light * League of Conservation Voters * Natural Resources Defense Council
Sierra Club * The Trust for Public Land * The Wilderness Society**

June 7, 2018

Representative:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we write to urge opposition to H.R. 3, the rescission package. This bill would cut funding from useful programs across the federal government including several important environmental and clean energy accounts.

Trimming the amounts in these programs budgets will have a negligible impact on the federal deficit, especially compared to the recently passed trillion-dollar corporate tax cut, but these cuts will have a large impact on people who rely on these programs to protect their health and environment. The Administration's proposal either dismisses the need for these programs, or erroneously states that these funds cannot be used, are allocated to eliminated programs, or are unobligated funds that are in excess of what is needed to carry out each program. In fact, much of those funds are identified for future use and those balances continue to support critical projects nationwide

Examples of harmful cuts include \$4.3 billion from the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) program and \$685 million from the Title XVII Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program. In the last decade, the DOE's Loan Program Office has provided around \$22.5 billion in loans to 25 projects through Title XVII. Another \$8 billion has been invested in 5 loans to 17 additional projects through the office's ATVM program. The Loan Program Office has nearly \$41 billion in remaining loan making capacity which would be an incredible down payment to the needed investments in clean energy.

The DOE Loan Program Office has a clear mission that contributes to our national clean energy objectives through guaranteeing loans to innovative energy and technology projects. The significant clean energy progress we've made has been supported through this program with recipients pioneering first of their kind clean energy projects creating employment and cutting carbon pollution. So far projects have created 12,900 construction jobs and are expected to create an additional 1,500 permanent jobs, will produce almost 29 million megawatt-hours of clean electricity annually—or enough to power 2.65 million homes a year and helped avoid almost 16.7 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) annually.

The ATVM program has also been a successful, if currently underutilized, program. Ford, Tesla and Nissan all received supportive loans from the program to build or retool American factories to produce fuel efficient technologies that help reduce vehicle emissions and those investments now support tens of thousands of jobs. Recently, the program has not made loans and while this is problematic, the response should be determining how to improve the program to increase participation, not cancel it outright.

The bill includes a \$13 million cut to the Rural Utility Service's High Energy Cost Grants program. This program helps rural communities, where the average residential cost for home energy exceeds 275 percent of the national average, access renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to help reduce their electricity bills.

Additional cuts would be made to the USDA's Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program, reducing the program by \$37 million. This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage in rural communities.

The bill also includes \$50 million in cuts to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Watershed and Flood Operations program – a program that helps restore watersheds across the nation and protect communities from flooding – a growing problem due to climate change.

The proposal includes rescissions to USDA Farm Bill conservation funding that would greatly impact critical Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs by cutting \$335.1 million in funding from three easement programs that were merged into the larger Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) in the 2014 Farm Bill. Further, the bill would cut \$144 million from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and \$12.9 million from the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), which was merged into the EQIP program during the 2014 Farm Bill.

Finally, the bill includes a \$16 million cut to the United States Forest Service Land and Water Conservation Fund land acquisition program. This cut erroneously suggests that these funds are unobligated, but in reality, there are projects actively seeking the use of these funds to create additional public access for outdoor recreation and protect important natural resources, and numerous other projects that would benefit from this funding. The Land and Water Conservation Fund supports much needed conservation, recreation access and local economic development outcomes. Rescinding these funds will undermine high-priority community-based needs.

While the administration has offered this package as an example of fiscal responsibility, it is irresponsible to rescind funds in contravention of agreed upon levels passed through Congress. Our federal programs need certainty in their funding levels, and Americans' need to know that Congress and the Administration will follow through on their commitments. Once again, we urge you to oppose this bill and stand up for funding these important programs.

Sincerely,

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