

Opening Statement of Ranking Member James P. Moran

House Appropriations Committee Mark up

FY 2012 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill

July 12, 2011

"Thank you Mr. Chairman.

"Two months ago I stood before this committee and noted that because of the 302(b) allocations, funding conversations on important programs with subcommittee chairman would involve them saying we made a good point and they wished they could help but they were constrained by their subcommittee allocation. Unfortunately, that was all too true.

"Chairman Simpson and I have discussed this situation on several occasions. Given the allocation the subcommittee was saddled with, the funding decisions in this bill are not surprising but nevertheless very disappointing.

"I want to note at the outset the work that Chairman Simpson did in chairing 22 hearings and listening to numerous agency and public witnesses. I commend him for that. I also recognize the difficulties Chairman Simpson faced in crafting the bill and I appreciate his efforts to protect funding for Indian programs. I only wish that protection could have extended to other portions of this bill.

"As bad as the funding in the bill is, what is most disappointing Mr. Chairman is the scope and extent to which the majority has filled this bill with legislative riders and funding limitations.

"This bill is short on funds and long on riders.

"It is not so much a spending bill as a wish list for special interests. Oil companies, cattle grazers, and miners, as well as those who pollute our air and foul our water, all have their special provisions tucked away in this bill. It is a dump truck of provisions for special interests.

"In addition, this bill picks up where H.R. 1 left off. It includes numerous and deep cuts in conservation and environmental protection programs while the extractive or consumptive uses of our public lands are shielded from cuts and given a pass from complying with this nation's landmark environmental laws.

"We continually hear from the majority that the pain of budget cuts has to be shared by all but in this bill they have definitely chosen winners and losers.

"The bill continues the majority's assault on the Environmental Protection Agency with deep cuts proposed in many EPA programs. EPA funding under the bill would reduce agency employees to 1992 levels and provides \$442 million dollars less than was provided to the EPA in 1999. When the majority says it wants to rein in the EPA, what they really want to rein in is the protection of our air and water.

"I am extremely disappointed by the majority's decision to prohibit funds for Endangered Species Act listings and critical habitat designations. The majority has gone to great lengths to complain about the Endangered Species Act but then they turn around and defund or underfund programs needed to recover endangered species or prevent their listing.

"There are those who want to make this a controversy between humans and the environment. But that is a false assertion because we are all part of the environment and attacks on the environment are attacks on us all. We protect nature, not for nature's sake, but for our own sake.

"We are blessed in this country with great natural beauty and a wealth of natural resources. Our national parks and forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and National Landscape Conservation System units deserve better than what the bill provides. The words of President John F. Kennedy ring as true today as nearly 50 years ago when he said:

"It is our task, in our time and our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours"

"This bill is about more than our natural resources and the environment, and while the cultural activities and institutions are a small portion of the bill they are a vital part of our communities and enhance our quality of life.

"Mr. Chairman, the list of legislative riders and funding limitations in the bill is long: NEPA waivers, limitations on judicial review, the blocking of pollution controls and yes, even exposing that American icon, the Grand Canyon, and the millions of Americans who depend on the Colorado River for their drinking water, to the long and well known hazards of uranium mining. These riders have nothing to do with budget cuts or deficit reduction and everything to do about carrying out an ideological agenda.

"Mr. Chairman, our constituents and more importantly, our environment, deserve better than what this bill is offering. I can only hope that we can start to improve the bill this morning but on that score I am not optimistic.

"Thank you Mr. Chairman"