



Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

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June 16, 2021

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related
Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related
Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Joyce, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Merkley, Chairwoman Pingree, Ranking Member Murkowski, and Ranking Member Joyce:

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops advocates for appropriations on wide set of issues including housing, immigration, agriculture and the rights of the unborn each year. The allocation of federal funding should also reflect a commitment to responsible stewardship of God's creation. In his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis reminded us that the environment is a precious and fragile gift and that governments have an "inalienable responsibility" to preserve and care for creation (Cf. *Laudato si'*, no. 38). As Congress considers the fiscal year 2022 appropriations, we urge you to provide adequate funding for the federal agencies charged with caring for our nation's natural resources.

FY 2021 appropriations awarded \$9.38 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and \$13.83 billion for the Department of the Interior (DOI), whose programs are integral to the safeguarding and care of our nation's natural resources. Those appropriations levels should be increased for FY 2022.

Since natural and social ecologies are deeply connected, "a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach" (*Laudato si'*, no. 49). By providing robust funding for the EPA and DOI, you will position these agencies to address the environmental and social crises we currently face.

Care for our common home is an indispensable part of building up the common good in our country. Thank you for your leadership in furthering environmental stewardship and the care for our common home.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development