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Testimony for the Record
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To the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Regarding the Environmental Protection Agency FY 2019 Budget

April 24, 2018

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations for the Environmental Protection Agency. ESA is the nation's largest society of professional ecologists, representing over 9,000 members across the country. We write to urge you to support **robust funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for FY 2019, specifically at least \$715 million for Science and Technology within EPA.**

The EPA is vital to protecting both the environment and human health, and the agency's Science and Technology programs are critically important to its ability to successfully address environmental problems. Without adequate funding, the EPA cannot fulfill its core mission and responsibilities. Strong investments in the EPA are thus essential to ensuring the health of our nation's citizens and environment.

EPA Science and Technology Programs Reduce Environmental Risks Facing Americans

Since its formation in 1970, the EPA has reduced environmental risk to Americans, enforced laws safeguarding human health and the environment, and helped the nation serve as a leader in protecting the environment.

Science and Technology funding supports programs and research that contribute to clean air, clean water, sustainable communities, homeland security, and human health. Through the Office of Research and Development (ORD), the EPA conducts cutting-edge research programs, including important ecological research and monitoring, that provide the scientific foundation for the agency's decision-making and other programs. These research and monitoring programs also provide essential data and information on which state and local governments depend, with environmental monitoring data collected and maintained by the EPA helping to ensure healthy communities across the country. EPA research projects focus on issues of national significance and help to solve complex environmental problems – often with public health implications – with new scientific understanding and technologies. From detecting and addressing harmful algal blooms to helping communities rehabilitate contaminated sites, EPA research funded by Science and Technology appropriations delivers solution-oriented results with broad and lasting impact.

Proposed Cuts Would Have Consequences for Human and Environmental Health

ESA is very concerned with the administration's proposed cuts to the EPA in FY 2019. The proposed reductions, reflective of those suggested in the president's FY 2018 budget, would have far-reaching and damaging effects on public and environmental health and economic growth that depends on healthy communities. The president's budget proposal requests only \$6.1 billion for the agency, a reduction of 24 percent from enacted FY 2017 funding of \$8.1 billion, which would leave the EPA with its lowest inflation-adjusted budget since the 1970s. This significant cut would be achieved by continuing to eliminate agency jobs, cutting an additional 2,574 agency jobs by FY 2019 and leaving the agency with its smallest workforce since the 1980s. Furthermore, the proposal would completely eliminate fifty agency programs that benefit the American people, including categorical grant programs, regional environmental programs, water programs, climate and climate science research programs, voluntary partnership programs, and special initiatives that focus on everything from lead risk reduction to waste minimization to small minority business assistance. The proposed budget would essentially eliminate, by way of drastic cuts, several other important geographic programs, including the Great Lakes Restoration and Chesapeake Bay programs.

The administration's budget also proposes to reduce funding for EPA Science and Technology considerably to only \$449 million, a 36 percent cut from FY 2017 funding. Sound science is the foundation of everything the agency does. EPA research programs support clean air, healthy neighborhoods, safer chemicals, and clean water, and it helps develop solutions to environmental problems. EPA science meets the highest standards for peer review, transparency, ethics, and integrity, and it is essential to maintain strong support for science and research at the EPA. Cuts, particularly cuts of the magnitude proposed in the president's budget, would dangerously hinder the EPA's ability to fulfill its mission and responsibility to the American people and would have serious impacts on the local, state, and national levels.

ESA is extremely troubled by the proposed budget for the EPA and the devastating impacts the funding cuts would have on the agency's ability to fulfill its mission and conduct the scientific research necessary to inform its operations and decisions. We appreciate your past support for the EPA and your preservation of the agency's budget for FY 2018. We urge you to once again reject cuts to EPA programs and research as you proceed with FY 2019 appropriations.

Strong Investments in the EPA Protect Our Citizens and Our Ecosystems

The EPA is an essential agency that plays a key role in addressing ecological problems and other environmental issues that affect public health. We appreciate your past support for this critical agency, and we urge you, in the interest of ensuring the health of our nation's citizens and ecosystems, to continue this support and provide **robust funding for the EPA in FY 2019, in particular \$715 million for EPA Science and Technology.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.