

CANCELLING FUNDING FOR CRUCIAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Failed: 48-50

SUMMARY:

The Senate rejected a motion to advance a bill that would have rescinded funding for several important programs including ones that support sustainable use of agricultural lands and protection of national forest lands. (*June 20, 2018, Roll Call No. 134*)

BACKGROUND:

Federal funding for environmental programs is vital to efforts in our nation to protect our lands and wildlife and to pass on a clean, healthy and vibrant environment to our children. Work by federal natural resource agencies to manage our public lands, protect imperiled species, and support initiatives to help private landowners sustainably manage their land and water resources all depend on adequate funding of these programs.

Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) moved to discharge the Senate Appropriations and Budget Committees from further consideration of H.R. 3, the Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act, a proposal by the Trump administration to rescind \$14.8 billion from useful programs across the government including several important conservation accounts in the Department of Agriculture (USDA). H.R. 3 would have cut funding for certain programs in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service including \$157 million from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that helps agricultural producers plan and implement Conservation Practices to conserve wildlife habitat; \$157 million from the Watershed Program that helps restore watersheds from flooding and otherwise protect floodplains; and \$147 million from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Programs that helps purchase easements to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural use. The bill also would have cut \$16 million from the U.S. Forest Service Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is used to acquire key forest lands for our national forests.

OUTCOME:

On June 20, 2018, the motion to discharge H.R. 3 failed, 48-50. “No” was the pro-conservation vote.