



President Trump's Budget Request Includes Severe Cuts to the Department of the Interior, and We Need Refuge Friends to Speak Out in Support of America's Wildlife

Dear Friends,

As you are probably aware, on March 16, President Trump released his “skinny” budget request for Fiscal Year 2018. In what has been described as a “hard power budget,” the President has requested a \$54 billion increase in Defense spending at the detriment of other discretionary spending programs – including the Department of the Interior and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

While the President's budget includes few specifics, it does explicitly call for a massive 12 percent cut to the Department of the Interior, which translates to a \$58 million dollar reduction for the National Wildlife Refuge System's budget – and that's if cuts were uniformly distributed. In reality, the Refuge System could take a much larger hit. A cut this reckless and aggressive would devastate the Refuge System, eliminating essential wildlife management programs and reducing or eliminating access for birders, hunters, anglers, and all who visit refuges to enjoy America's wildlife. [Click here](#) to learn more about the President's FY18 Budget Blueprint.

But President Trump's requests to reduce the budgets of discretionary programs didn't stop with the FY2018 proposal – he also requested that Congress provide an additional \$30 billion to the Department of Defense and Homeland Security for FY 2017 – the budget we're currently in – and to reduce discretionary funding to do it. **That means programs like the Refuge System could have to absorb a 10 percent cut between now and the end of October and then an additional 12 percent cut or more in FY 2018. This is what is currently on the table with Congress.**

Your lawmakers need to understand that as the Refuge System's most dedicated supporters, you won't take these extreme budget cuts lying down. As a not for profit organization, it is not only your right to lobby for your organization's mission, according to the IRS, it is your responsibility!



What Can You Do?

1. Call your members of Congress and ask them to ignore these draconian budget requests entirely, and instead fund the Refuge System at appropriate amounts. You can be instantly connected with your members' offices by calling the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121.
2. Talk to your local refuge staff to express your continued support for the Refuge System and to discuss the on-the-ground effects of such drastically reduced budgets. What programs would be scaled back, or even cut? How would this budget cut affect public access? What would happen to volunteer programs? How would staff be affected? What would this mean for refuge law enforcement? They may not have all the answers, but they can give you an idea about what they would have to do if they were asked to implement a 10, 15 or even a 20 percent cut to current programs.
3. Come to Washington, D.C. to tell your congressional delegation in person what you think. The Refuge Association will help you set up meetings and provide you with fact sheets and the latest information on what these cuts mean at a national level. To talk about a potential trip, please contact the Refuge Association's Government Affairs Associate, Taylor Tench, at ttench@refugeassociation.org or 772-532-9940.

As Friends, you represent the first line of defense not just for your local refuge, but for the entire National Wildlife Refuge System. Your voices are heard here in Washington, and your lawmakers do and will continue to listen.

Be sure to follow the National Wildlife Refuge Association on our [social media channels](#) and subscribe to our [Action Alerts](#) to stay up to date on how you can advocate for the Refuge System.

Thank you for all that you do to support and defend our National Wildlife Refuge System!



Sincerely,
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National Wildlife Refuge Association

DONATE TODAY

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