



July 22, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Cole and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union, the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our views regarding today's FY26 appropriations markup for Interior, Environment, and related agencies. NTU thanks the Committee for its commitment to fiscal responsibility by proposing to spend less in the upcoming fiscal year than the current one. Enactment at the proposed levels would represent a meaningful step toward restoring fiscal sanity in Washington.

As you know, it has become an unfortunate fact that spending only increases year after year. That is how we've reached close to \$2 trillion in annual deficits and nearly \$37 trillion in debt, both of which are projected to worsen in the years ahead. While our fiscal situation cannot be fixed overnight, NTU is pleased that the proposed legislation reduces discretionary spending by 6% compared to FY25. While not nearly enough to balance the budget, a \$2.5 billion spending cut would break the upward trend of discretionary spending for these particular government departments and agencies.

To be clear: any reduction to discretionary spending is a positive for taxpayers. However, we encourage you to continue to find ways to save more dollars, and, preferably, return to pre-COVID era spending levels. We strongly believe that a return to FY19 spending, coupled with additional DOGE clawbacks and economic growth fueled by pro-growth tax policies can greatly improve our fiscal situation. It would also help buy time to address the core drivers of spending: entitlements.

In addition to the spending reductions, the proposed legislation includes numerous policies that will enhance American energy dominance. This includes holding onshore and offshore oil and gas lease sales on federal lands and waters, particularly in resource rich areas located within the Gulf of America. It also ends a methane fee that would greatly harm American energy producers and manufacturers. These changes, among others in the bill, will make it easier to produce energy and produce more revenue for the government through royalties.

This legislation would also protect America's energy grid by ensuring the government doesn't regulate baseload power out of business. Specifically, it prohibits funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan 2.0, and government-wide use of social-cost of carbon in regulatory rulemakings. These changes will help keep traditional power plants online, and keep affordable and reliable electricity flowing to American homes, businesses, and factories.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. In short, we appreciate this legislation's attention to our fiscal situation and we strongly encourage you to reduce discretionary spending even further. Reductions

included in this bill and throughout the broader appropriations process can turn around our nation's disturbing fiscal outlook.

Sincerely,

Thomas Aiello
Senior Director of Government Affairs