



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

MAY 23 2017

**Memorandum**

**To:** All Department of the Interior Employees  
**From:** Secretary *Forrest Zinke*  
**Subject:** Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposal

Today, the President released the full details of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget proposal—charting a course to a balanced budget by 2027 and making necessary investments to improve the safety, security, and infrastructure of our Nation. This budget achieves \$3.6 trillion in savings, which is the largest proposed reduction by any President in history.

Today, I am also announcing Department of the Interior's (Department) full budget proposal for FY 2018. I recognize you may have questions about the potential impacts this budget might have on the Department's programs and services, and specifically how the budget might affect the work you are doing.

This budget funds our highest priorities across the board while still finding areas where we can make investments to improve the safety, security, and infrastructure of our Nation. Tough decisions were made, but the President and I are confident this budget is what is best for the taxpayer and for the future of our Nation.

As I said in my first message to you, I believe you and I are here for the same reasons. We all have a responsibility to the American people to be good stewards of our land and resources, and to uphold our trust responsibilities. We love our Country. We love our public lands. We want to give back to the Nation that gives us all so much.

I want to reaffirm my commitment to you and to the Department's important mission. This budget request will enable us to fully carry out our mission and meet our vast responsibilities. It advances the President's goals of energy security and a stronger national infrastructure. It sustains ongoing resource stewardship and Indian trust responsibilities—proposing reductions where there is overlap or duplication and prioritizing core mission activities and programs with the broadest public benefit.

This budget emphasizes taking care of what we have, including addressing our deferred maintenance backlog. It ensures fire suppression is responsibly funded at the 10-year average, which protects all Department programs from deep cuts in the event of a severe fire season. In recognition of the importance of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program to communities, we have included funding for the program at a level in line with the overall reduction to Department programs.

Today's budget release is the first step in an often lengthy process. Next month, I will testify before Congress to defend our budget proposal. These discussions will ultimately result in enactment of an appropriation for FY 2018, which begins October 1.

The President has challenged agencies to think boldly to create a Government that works smarter for the American people and better aligns the workforce to meet the needs of today and the future rather than the requirements of the past. At the Department, we are moving prudently to achieve these Government-wide management goals. We have replaced the Federal hiring freeze with a process to allow for priority hiring, filling field positions first, and limiting hires in the Washington, DC, and Denver, Colorado, areas. This allows us to continue to fill important positions as work is underway to develop a comprehensive and thoughtful Agency plan for reorganization as required in the President's Executive Order.

As the broader organizational plan takes shape, my objective is to ensure Department employees on the front lines have the right tools, right resources, and flexibility to make the decisions to allow them to do their job. We will also look at ways to simplify and reduce our physical footprint by consolidating space and resources, and will examine how we can work more effectively across our bureaus.

I urge your patience through this process. I am committed to keeping you informed about the budget and our organizational plan in the months ahead so that you are regularly hearing information directly from me. I appreciate your hard work and dedication and look forward to working with you to continue to deliver our important mission to our great Country.

Thank you.