

July 22, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Please oppose H.R. 8997, which raises household energy costs and fails to address the climate crisis.

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, the 30 undersigned groups urge you to oppose H.R. 8997, the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies (Energy & Water) Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), as well as any amendments to the bill that would further undermine climate action, clean energy, clean water, and environmental justice.

The Energy and Water appropriations bill is our opportunity to invest in technologies that drive down energy costs for consumers, cement the United States' leadership in clean energy innovation, and achieve cleaner, safer, and more biodiverse waterways. At a moment when we are feeling the impacts of climate change - from heat waves impacting [roughly 10% of the population](#) to the [earliest Category 5 hurricane observed in the Atlantic on record](#) - the House-proposed Energy and Water appropriations legislation falls significantly short. Rather than deploying clean energy and addressing the challenges facing key watersheds, this bill would exacerbate these issues through significant funding cuts and the inclusion of several poison pill policy riders.

H.R. 8997 is an affront to our communities who are being devastated by the impacts of a changing climate. Among the cuts proposed is a devastating 43% cut to the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), which plays a pivotal role in accelerating research, development, and demonstration of technologies and solutions that boost American economic competitiveness, clean energy independence, families' energy savings, and job creation. Furthering the attempts to stymie home-grown clean energy, the proposed legislation also cuts \$8 billion from the Department of Energy's Loan Program Office (LPO), which already has resulted in more than \$50 billion in total project investments and the creation of over 47,000 jobs while delivering a return on investment for US taxpayers. The harmful spending caps imposed last summer have hit agencies and programs hard, compounding a decade of atrophy wrought under previous budgetary restrictions. This attempt to cut their toplines even further would have long-lasting consequences that would harm communities for decades to come.

In addition to the woefully low funding levels proposed in this legislation, H.R. 8997 includes numerous poison pill policy riders reducing families' energy savings, prohibiting efficiency standards, and locking in and building out fossil fuel infrastructure, including accelerating the expansion of LNG exports. One rider would bar the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from making any changes to any fast-track nationwide permit authorizing fill projects in waterways, no matter how unlawful or environmentally destructive the

activity allowed is; this would include even the notoriously damaging Nationwide Permit 12. Several others would undermine progress to recover imperiled species and fulfill the federal government's trust and treaty obligations to Tribes, including language to reinstate and lock in unlawful Trump-era biological opinions for water management projects in California and to limit funding for salmon restoration efforts in the Columbia River Basin. Poison pill riders such as these and the many exclusionary and discriminatory riders in this bill were removed from the final FY24 Energy & Water Appropriations bill just a few months ago; by going down this path again, we fear Congress is wasting valuable time that could be better spent producing bipartisan legislation that has a realistic chance of becoming law.

Again, we urge you to REJECT H.R. 8997, the Energy and Water appropriations bill for FY25, which would reverse progress on climate action, stall clean energy innovation, jeopardize our waters and the species that depend on them, and harm communities already disproportionately impacted by pollution and the climate crisis.

Sincerely,

Alabama Rivers Alliance
Alliance for the Great Lakes
Cahaba River Society
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
CCAN Action Fund
Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Freshwater Future
Friends of the River
Golden State Salmon Association
League of Conservation Voters
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
NW Energy Coalition
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
Tuolumne River Trust
U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development

Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Conservation Action
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Winnemem Wintu Tribe