



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

June 18, 2012
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2578 – Conservation and Economic Growth Act

(Rep. Denham, R-CA, and 4 cosponsors)

The Administration opposes H.R. 2578, which is an omnibus lands bill incorporating fourteen separate House bills. The Administration has worked to protect and manage the responsible use of America's natural resources and to support and ensure that the Nation's spectacular landscapes, unique natural life, and cultural resources and icons endure for future generations. The Administration is working, through balanced and community-based decision-making, to maximize the benefits of the outdoors for all Americans. The Department of the Interior advises that hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation alone contribute an estimated \$730 billion to the economy each year. Enactment of H.R. 2578 in its current form would not advance, and in many cases would set back, these priorities.

Overall, H.R. 2578 contains a number of provisions that would undermine the responsible balance of interests and considerations in the stewardship of the Nation's lands and natural resources. Further, various provisions would disregard and shortchange public input on a range of community interests, including natural resource protections, and preclude agencies from considering less environmentally detrimental alternatives. Most significantly, H.R. 2578 would: (1) undermine recent months of productive talks on a revised proposal to satisfy Alaska Native land claims and consider the natural resource and other values of timberland in Alaska's Tongass National Forest; (2) reverse course on the science-based National Park Service plan, developed after a lengthy public engagement process, that provides an appropriate balance of off-road vehicle access and protection of sensitive seashore areas in North Carolina; (3) weaken important National Environmental Policy Act and public involvement provisions for actions affecting resources such as grazing on lands managed by the Department of the Interior; and (4) thwart successful efforts by agencies to collaborate on border security while protecting our natural and cultural resources on Federal lands along U.S. borders by waiving thirty-seven environmental and administrative laws. All of these provisions present a false choice between natural resources protection and the economy or national security.

The Administration recognizes that portions of this multi-title legislation are noncontroversial; a few are unworkable as drafted, but many could be amended to address concerns, including those outlined in Executive branch testimonies delivered in congressional hearings over the past number of months. Thus, the Administration urges the Congress to address these identified policy, programmatic, and management concerns, and looks forward to working with the Congress on them.

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