



## Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

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June 23, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2804 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Merkley, Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Murkowski, and Ranking Member Pingree,

As Congress considers the fiscal year 2024 appropriations, we write to ask that special consideration be given to the environment. In his encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis affirms every government's "inalienable responsibility to preserve its country's environment and natural resources" (no. 38). One important way that you can fulfill this responsibility is to provide adequate funding to those federal agencies charged with care for the environment.

FY 2023 appropriations awarded \$10.1 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency and \$17.2 billion for the Department of the Interior. Funding levels should be increased for FY 2024, and at minimum they should be maintained. These two agencies are instrumental in conserving and caring for our nation's most precious natural resources, promoting public health, and securing environmental justice. In FY 2024, federal appropriations for the EPA must take special care to promote environmental justice, upgrade water infrastructure and replace lead pipes, as well as maintain cleanup standards for harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). DOI appropriations must continue to invest in tribal programs, reclamation of abandoned mines and wells, mitigation of wildfires, climate adaptation, resilience, and development of clean energy in public lands.

**A just framework for future budgets cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor and other vulnerable persons. It requires shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> USCCB, CCUSA, and CRS Letter to Congress on the Debt limit, May 17, 2023.

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/usccb-ccusa-and-crs-letter-congress-debt-limit-may-17-2023>

The EPA and the DOI rely on robust funding to administer many important initiatives that reflect the integral ecology called for by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*, which recognizes the human and social dimensions of the environmental crisis (Cf. no. 137). Thank you for your commitment to caring for our common home and advancing the common good.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Borys Gudziak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Borys Gudziak  
Archbishop of Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia  
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development