

Chairman Dicks may hesitate to blow his own horn, so I will say it. This is the best Interior appropriations bill we have seen.

Where do I begin praising it--\$453 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, more than a third up from last year, doubles the State matching grants. LWCF is an issue I have worked on since I first came to Congress. This robust funding for Federal agencies and States to preserve open space is critically important.

The bill's \$385 million for climate change mitigation, a large increase over the last year, including \$17 million for establishing a national greenhouse gas registry that my colleagues Representative Baldwin, Representative Inslee and I have advocated.

It includes a good increase for our national parks to preserve these national treasures for the enjoyment of future generations.

It includes a real increase for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The arts and humanities play a crucial role in our society in enhancing creativity, quality of life and, yes, improving local economies. I could go on--EPA, land management, Native Americans and more.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.