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Bureau of Land Management: FY2022 Appropriations

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in the Department of the Interior (DOI), manages 244 million acres of federal land, nearly all in the West. Under its multiple-use mission, BLM manages lands for diverse purposes, including livestock grazing, energy development, recreation, and conservation. The agency also administers onshore federal energy and mineral resources generally.

For FY2022, President Biden requested \$1,620.5 million for BLM, which was \$310.9 million (24%) more than the FY2021 enacted appropriation of \$1,309.6 million (P.L. 116-260, Division G). On July 6, 2021, the House Appropriations Committee reported H.R. 4372 (H.Rept. 117-83) containing \$1,594.6 million; this was \$284.9 million (22%) over the FY2021 enacted level and \$25.9 million (2%) less than requested by the President for FY2022. On July 29, 2021, the House passed H.R. 4502, an omnibus appropriations measure with funding in Division E for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Amendments agreed to by the House did not appear to alter funding levels for BLM accounts and programs reported by the House Appropriations Committee; thus, those funding levels are reflected here as passed by the House.

BLM discretionary appropriations generally are provided in Title I of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations laws. Mandatory (permanent) appropriations also are provided to BLM under various statutes within the jurisdiction of authorizing committees. BLM mandatory appropriations were estimated at \$297.0 million for FY2021 and \$320.8 million for FY2022.

For FY2022, issues for Congress include determining the amount of funding to provide BLM accounts and activities and the terms and conditions of such funding, as well as whether to enact related Biden Administration proposals.

Appropriations Accounts

Table 1 shows amounts enacted for FY2021, requested by the Biden Administration for FY2022, and passed by the House for FY2022.

Management of Lands and Resources. The largest account—Management of Lands and Resources—funds diverse programs including energy and minerals, wild horses and burros, rangelands, wildlife and fisheries, facility maintenance, resource protection, law enforcement, and recreation.

For FY2022, both the Biden Administration and the House supported increases over FY2021 enacted appropriations for this account, of \$271.8 million (23%) and \$249.9 million (21%), respectively. (See **Table 1**.) Program comparisons herein do not reflect an FY2021 general

rescission of \$13.0 million for this account, because the agency allocation among activities and programs is not available in published budget documents.

The Biden Administration expressed that increases for FY2022 were intended to support several goals. These goals included enhancing restoration and conservation of BLM lands, fostering conservation of 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030, addressing climate change, improving equitable access to the outdoors, and strengthening the economy, in part by creating jobs. (*The Interior Budget in Brief, Fiscal Year 2022*, p. BH-7.)

Both the FY2022 Administration's request and the House-passed bill seek to increase funding for most programs over FY2021 enacted levels. For wild horse and burro management, the Administration requested \$152.6 million and the House approved \$162.1 million; the FY2021 enacted level was \$115.7 million. The number of wild horses and burros on BLM lands is 86,189, more than triple the appropriate management level (AML)—the level that the range can support, as determined by BLM—of 26,785. An additional 50,030 animals are being managed by BLM off-range. The FY2022 increase would be for the Administration's plan to achieve AML and includes \$11.0 million for fertility control research and administration, according to the House Appropriations Committee.

For wildlife and aquatic habitat management, the Administration requested \$237.0 million and the House approved \$232.7 million; the FY2021 enacted level was \$188.5 million. Increases were included for enhancing landscape function and connectivity, partly to address climate change, and improving water quality and quantity.

For energy and minerals management, the Administration requested \$248.9 million and the House approved \$241.2 million; the FY2021 enacted level was \$198.6 million. Increases were included for remediation in the Naval Petroleum Reserve, Alaska, of "Alaska legacy wells" left by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Geological Survey; remediation in several states of "orphaned" oil and gas wells, which have no liable party and insufficient bond coverage for plugging and reclamation; restoration of mineral material sites; and development of renewable energy, including establishment of renewable energy coordination offices.

For resource protection and maintenance, the Administration requested \$189.4 million and the House approved \$177.8 million; the FY2021 enacted level was \$133.2 million. Increases were included to augment inventory, monitoring, and analysis of landscape status and trends as ecological systems adapt to changes; to revise

resource management plans to allow for permitting and siting of renewable energy and infrastructure projects; and to foster monitoring and analysis of water resources and uses.

The Administration and the House-passed bill would increase funding for other programs, including rangelands; recreation; and the National Landscape Conservation System, which contains wilderness areas, national monuments, national conservation areas, and other BLM areas.

Not all programs would receive increased funding under the FY2022 Biden Administration's request and the House-passed bill. For instance, funding for deferred maintenance (DM) of BLM assets would remain relatively flat (at nearly \$35 million). However, under the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152), beginning in FY2021, BLM (and other agencies) receive mandatory appropriations for DM through the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund. BLM's mandatory appropriation is about \$95.0 million annually (assuming maximum revenue in the fund). For FY2022, the Administration and the House proposed allocations of this funding among BLM projects. BLM estimated its DM at \$4.1 billion in FY2020—nearly four times the FY2019 estimate (\$1.1 billion).

The Administration's FY2022 request and H.R. 4502 contained provisions related to programs in this account. For instance, one provision would prohibit funding for the destruction of healthy wild horses and burros or for sales of animals that result in processing into commercial products. Another provision would extend by one year, to October 1, 2023, the authority in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA; 16 U.S.C. §§ 6801 et seq.) for BLM (and other agencies) to charge, collect, and use fees for recreation on agency lands. For FY2022, BLM estimated \$28.0 million in recreation fee collections.

Land Acquisition. BLM typically receives appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to acquire lands. Under the GAOA, BLM land acquisition (and other LWCF programs) receive mandatory

appropriations (beginning in FY2021). For FY2022, the Administration and the House proposed allocating \$66.2 million of mandatory funding to BLM land acquisition, including \$28.7 million for eight specified projects and \$20.5 million for acquisitions that foster access to BLM lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation. The mandatory appropriation for FY2021 was \$66.1 million. The FY2021 appropriations law also rescinded \$5.4 million in unobligated prior-year discretionary appropriations.

Oregon and California Grant Lands. This account funds management of more than 2 million acres of forested lands in Western Oregon, primarily for timber production. For FY2022, both the Biden Administration and the House supported increases for this account, as shown in **Table 1**. Increases were included to address climate change, restore fire-damaged lands, and foster the Administration's Civilian Climate Corps initiative.

Range Improvements. The Range Improvements account funds rehabilitation, protection, and improvement of BLM rangelands. The FY2022 requested and House-passed amount was \$10.0 million, the same as the FY2021 enacted total. Under law, 50% of grazing fees collected on BLM lands or \$10.0 million—whichever is greater—are credited to a Range Improvement Fund. Through the Range Improvements account, BLM typically receives an annual appropriation of \$10.0 million for the fund.

Service Charges, Deposits, and Forfeitures. This account allows BLM to use monies paid to the agency for particular activities, such as costs of processing rights-of-way and energy and mineral authorizations. Appropriations for the account typically are offset entirely by collections, as for FY2022 requested and House-passed funding levels. The FY2021 appropriation of -\$20.0 million reflected a rescission of unobligated funds from earlier years.

Miscellaneous Trust Funds. This account appropriates contributions made to BLM from individuals, businesses, user groups, and states. The FY2022 requested and House-passed level of \$26.0 million was equal to the FY2021 enacted appropriation.

Table 1. BLM Discretionary Appropriations by Account (dollars in millions)

Account	FY2021 Enacted	FY2022 Requested	FY2022 House Passed
Management of Lands and Resources	\$1,184.3	\$1,456.0	\$1,434.1
Land Acquisition	-5.4	0	0
Oregon and California Grant Lands	114.8	128.5	124.5
Range Improvements	10.0	10.0	10.0
Service Charges, Deposits, and Forfeitures ^a	-20.0	0	0
Miscellaneous Trust Funds	26.0	26.0	26.0
Total BLM	\$1,309.6	\$1,620.5	\$1,594.6

Source: CRS, with information from the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

Notes: Components may not sum to totals due to rounding. *The Interior Budget in Brief* for FY2022 shows higher FY2021 enacted and FY2022 requested totals largely due to differences in rescissions and offsetting collections.

a. The amounts of \$0 for Service Charges, Deposits, and Forfeitures are a result of an appropriation matched by offsetting fees.

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