

January 9, 2022

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Oppose H. Res. 5, Rules Package**

Dear Representative,

The five undersigned groups urge you to vote NO on H. Res. 5, the Rules Package for the 118th Session of the House of Representatives. This Rules Package goes far beyond just organizing the first session of the 118th House of Representatives: it lays the groundwork for draconian cuts to spending on critical environmental and public health programs, it makes it easier to give away the nation's public lands at significant cost to the American public, and it guts the bipartisan Office of Congressional Ethics at a time when it is sorely needed.

This Rules Package attempts to enforce strict budget cuts before government funding negotiations have even begun by capping spending at Fiscal Year 2022 levels, a more than \$130 billion cut, or 8 percent, from the recently passed Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus appropriations bill. These recent increases saw critical restorations in agency staffing and critically needed funding for programs that address the legacy of toxic pollution after four years of budget cuts from the previous administration and a decade of draconian spending caps from the last time the debt limit was weaponized. This Rules Package completely ignores the vital role of federal spending in promoting public health, fighting environmental injustice, and tackling the climate crisis, and instead sets the 118th Congress on a dangerous path towards harmful budget cuts, government shutdowns, and potentially defaulting on our national debt.

The Rules Package will also make it easier to give away our nation's public lands by removing the requirement that the costs of these transfers be offset, regardless of the value of these lands to the public and taxpayers. This Rules Package cannot claim fiscal responsibility while giving away our public lands to fossil fuel developers at significant cost to the American public.

At a time of significant concern about the influence of polluters and other special interests in politics, and just two years after an insurrection some House members supported, this package would kneecap the bipartisan Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE). By imposing arbitrary term limits to eject Democratic ethics board members and effectively prohibiting OCE from hiring new staff, the package would make it much harder to hold unethical officials accountable.

While our organizations prioritize taking stances on legislation, the rules organizing the 118th House of Representatives are such an egregious attack on the environment, public health, and our democracy that we are compelled to engage and urge you to oppose H. Res. 5.

Sincerely,

League of Conservation Voters  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Public Citizen

Sierra Club  
The Wilderness Society