

The Environmental Protection Agency is cut by 23 percent in the President's budget, which equates to a severe 54 percent cut to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The impact to the state would be a loss \$11.1 million in the 2019 federal fiscal year. These grants provide continuing environmental program funding for all areas of work at the MPCA. Programs proposed for elimination at EPA include the Nonpoint Source Implementation Program which targets local watershed studies and implementation projects to reduce or eliminate sources of water quality pollution from diffuse sources; Pollution Prevention Program which targets source reductions; and Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program that targets permitting and compliance activities for regulated USTs.

Included in the cuts to the EPA, the President's budget reduces the Brownfield programs by 33 percent, limiting redevelopment and restoration of land to commercial uses.

The president's budget also cuts the EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative by 90 percent. The program supports restoring and protecting watersheds in eight states surrounding the Great Lakes that provide drinking water for over 40 million Americans and drives a \$62 billion annual economy of fishing, boating and recreational activities. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency receive Restoration Initiative funding for the following activities:

Annual grants for prevention and management of Aquatic Invasive Species in the Great Lakes Basin (\$800,000).

Habitat restoration and remedial action plan implementation activities in the St. Louis River Area of Concern Project (\$4.5 million grant), and

Lake management activities to protect water quality in Lake Superior Basin through efforts to reduce impairments and toxic chemicals (\$896,000).

In addition, the Coastal Zone Management program through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is cut by 20 percent. The program funds \$972,000 annually for protecting streams and rivers in the Great Lakes area.

Agriculture: Agriculture is a cornerstone of Minnesota's economy, providing more than 400,000 jobs and \$121 billion in economic activity. The President's FY2019 budget proposes a 16 percent reduction in USDA discretionary spending and showcases a lack of understanding about what is important to rural America and the agriculture economy. The budget seeks to weaken the safety net of crop insurance during a time of low commodity prices putting our rural economies at risk. Crop insurance provides farmers with the security they need to increase yields, improve efficiencies, and stay competitive in world markets. The President's budget calls for steep cuts to premium subsidies and excludes producers with an Adjusted Gross Income of more than \$500,000.

These budget and policy changes will harm Minnesota's agricultural economy. We are hopeful that the next Farm Bill will focus on fostering a robust farm and rural economy, maintaining a strong nutrition title, and prioritizing conservation and water quality programs.

On behalf of Governor Dayton, the executive branch of the State of Minnesota, and the millions of Minnesotans served by the state, please voice your opposition to these cuts in the President's budget, as well as any other draconian cuts to programs that Minnesotans rely on. Moving forward, we are available to work with you and others to ensure that the 2019 federal budget is a fair approach for the services upon which Minnesotans depend. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these remarks.

FINDLAY NAMED TOP MICROPOLITAN COMMUNITY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Findlay, Ohio for being named the 2018 Top Micropolitan Community in the United States. Awarded by Site Selection magazine, Findlay has now received this recognition as the top city for business for four straight years.

To qualify, a micropolitan city must have a population ranging from 10,000 to 50,000. Site Selection judged 575 of these cities on business growth and sustainable success. In total, Findlay listed 21 projects that met Site Selection's criteria leading to its fourth straight first-place finish.

It is a team effort top to bottom that has led the way to Findlay's consistent success. I commend Mayor Lydia Mihalik, the Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development office, the Hancock County Commissioners, and the entire community for everything they've done to top the charts once again.

Mr. Speaker, the 'Findlay Formula' has an established track record that meant to cultivate growth and prosperity for the community. With their business-friendly environment, I have no doubt that Findlay will be at the top again next year.

Congratulations once again to Findlay for being named the country's No. 1 Micropolitan Community.

CENTENNIAL OF UPPER ARLINGTON, OHIO

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District to recognize the centennial of Upper Arlington, Ohio. Since King and Ben Thompson formed the Upper Arlington Company and purchased the original 840 acres, Upper Arlington has been a hub of activity in Central Ohio, reminding us of much of our nation's history and entrepreneurial spirit.

In 1913, the Thompson brothers saw the value of the Country Club District—as it was originally named—and believed it to be the ideal location for a residential community. The brothers were not alone in their assessment, and their efforts were temporarily halted in 1916 when the National Guard employed the area as a training camp, Camp Willis. Despite this, they persisted, and the village was incorporated in March of 1918.

Following its incorporation and based on its strategic location east of Columbus, the area grew rapidly in its earliest years. In the 1920s, Upper Arlington reaffirmed its commitment to the entrepreneurial spirit, and the Mallway business district was developed. Professional office spaces and retail businesses sprung up along Upper Arlington Avenue.

Today, Upper Arlington remains a wonderful place to work, live, and raise a family. I am grateful for the leadership of Mayor Kip Greenhill, the Members of the City Council,

and all of the neighbors and friends who have maintained Upper Arlington's strong commitment to community.

I am honored to represent this city, where the core values of our nation are exemplified. This is a place with a Cherished Past and a Golden Future, and I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the centennial of Upper Arlington, Ohio.

IN HONOR OF SPRING GARDEN WINNING AHSAA CLASS 1A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TITLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Spring Garden High School Varsity Girls for winning the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Class 1A basketball state title.

The Panthers beat the Phillips Bears 52–38 on March 1, 2018 at the Legacy Arena at the BJCC in Birmingham, Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the students and faculty of Spring Garden High School, the coaches, the players and all the Panthers fans on this exciting achievement! Go Panthers.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE USS "HOUSTON"

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring your attention to a memorial ceremony for the men who served aboard the USS *Houston* (CA-30) held this month in Sam Houston Park in my hometown of Houston. Descendants of the sailors and Marines of the "Flagship" of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet that was sunk by Imperial Japanese Naval forces on March 1, 1942 which honored their bravery and determination.

Seventy-six years ago, the American heavy cruiser USS *Houston* (CA-30) and Australian light cruiser HMAS *Perth*, outnumbered and outgunned by an Imperial Japanese Navy Battle Fleet, fought to the last in the Sunda Strait between Sumatra and Java. Both went down with their captains aboard and their guns still firing. Nearly 1,000 Allied servicemen perished. It marked the end of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and the naval forces of the American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) Command.

As the crews abandoned the sinking ships, Japanese sailors machine-gunned the decks and the men in the oil-soaked sea. Only 368 sailors and Marines, including four Chinese stewards and mess attendants from the *Houston*, made it to shore where they were taken as POWs of Japan. Some were held in a POW camp on Java, eight officers were sent to Japan to corporate POW camps, and others to the infamous Changi Prison in Singapore. Most, 220 of the survivors were shipped to Burma to be slave laborers constructing the Thai-Burma Death Railway.

For the next three and one-half years, the surviving men of the *Houston* and *Perth* suffered together through humiliation, degradation, physical and mental torture, starvation and horrible tropical diseases. Only 291 men from the *Houston's* complement of 1008, and 214 of the *Perth's* complement of 681, returned home after the War. This shared history speaks to the American spirit and grit as well as to our enduring alliance with Australia.

Back in Houston, Texas, news of the destruction of the warship hit the city hard. The result was a mass recruiting drive for volunteers to replace the lost crew. On Memorial Day 1942, a crowd of nearly 200,000 witnessed 1,000 "Houston Volunteers" inducted into the Navy. An accompanying bond drive raised over \$85 million, enough to pay for a new cruiser and an aircraft carrier, the USS *San Jacinto*.

According to a 1949 Houston Chronicle article commemorating the event, word of the ship's fate "aroused a fever pitch of patriotism" in the city. "Her loss made the war something more of a personal conflict to more than half a million people," the article reads. "Official news of her destruction . . . slapped the city squarely between the eyes, and set off a series of events that stands unequalled in the nation."

So this week, we pause to remember the brave men of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) who inspired their country and who gave so much to fight tyranny in the Pacific. They who "Still Stand Watch Over Sunda Strait" represent our enduring commitment to liberty. And I thank the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society and the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations for ensuring that the sacrifice and lessons of this greatest generation is remembered and honored.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF LANCASTER, OHIO

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Lancaster, Ohio.

From its founding in 1918 in the parlor of the New Martens Hotel, countless members of our Lancaster community have been called by the Club's motto "Service above Self," to spread goodwill to their neighbors. The impact of this organization throughout the 15th District is immeasurable; like a pebble dropped in a pond, the ripples are far-reaching.

Over the past century, the Lancaster Rotary Club has been involved in numerous initiatives and projects benefitting not only their community, but the furthest corners of the globe. From supporting local students with a scholarship fund that honors the late Dr. Jacob Sims, to fundraising for PolioPlus and supporting the development of Operation Smile, the Lancaster Rotary Club has made the Fairfield

County community and the world a better place.

Today, the Lancaster Rotary Club works to foster cultural understanding and bring people together. Each year, the Rotary hosts and helps to subsidize foreign exchange students who attend Lancaster area high schools, and promotes Group Study Exchanges between international Rotary Districts. I am extremely grateful to all those involved for their continued efforts.

Again, I wish to congratulate President David Uhl and the entire Lancaster Rotary Club upon this historic milestone, and convey my most sincere appreciation for their ability to place "Service above Self."

AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE LETTER TO PRESIDENT TRUMP REGARDING TURKEY'S CONTINUED AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the American Hellenic Institute regarding Turkey's continued dangerous actions in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that threaten regional security and U.S. interests. As one of the co-chairs of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, I have advocated for the rights of Greece and Cyprus against the intimidating actions of Turkey. Since Turkey's Presidential referendum vote, Erdogan's government continues to ignore and violate long-standing international law and treaties—a threat to regional security and an impediment to regional interests, stability, and prosperity.

As we have done times before, we must continue to condemn these acts of aggression and renew our call for President Erdogan's government to demonstrate to the international community that it is committed to all international laws and agreements. Additionally, the United States and our strategic regional allies must be better prepared to respond quickly and forcefully to transgression of international law from any nation including NATO ally Turkey through targeted sanctions and foreign aid restrictions.

President DONALD J. TRUMP,
President of the United States,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I write to urge the U.S. government to condemn strongly the acts of Turkish provocation and aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that have dire implications to U.S. security interests.

During this month alone, Turkey's antagonistic behavior—or "gunboat diplomacy"—in the Aegean Sea against NATO partner Greece, and bellicose threats to EU member Republic of Cyprus' sovereign right to explore for natural gas with its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), were taken to new dangerous heights. In fact, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened Greece,

Cyprus, and international oil and gas companies, warning them not to "step out of line." Furthermore, Turkey's acts of provocation have also been directed at the United States. With regard to the Aegean Sea, a Turkish coastguard vessel collided with a stationary Greek coastguard vessel near the Greek island of Imia, on February 12, 2018. Video footage of the incident has since been released and shows damage to the Greek vessel's stern. In addition, Turkey continues to violate Greece's airspace. According to press reports, 33 Turkish aircraft have violated Greece's airspace during the first twelve days of February 2018. Combined with what transpired on the seas, these are very serious incidents that risk placing lives in harm's way and violate international law.

With regard to Cyprus and implications to the potential for energy security, Turkish warships harassed the surveying vessel of Italian oil company Eni and threatened on February 23, 2018 to sink it in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. According to press reports, Eni's ship was forced to make maneuvers to avoid a collision after the Italian captain's request to the Turkish vessel to change course went unanswered.

The Republic of Cyprus has the sovereign right under international law to explore and exploit its natural resources within its exclusive economic zone. The United States has stated repeatedly it supports Cyprus' sovereign right to explore energy in its offshore areas, most recently by a State Department Spokesperson earlier this month. "The United States recognizes the right of the Republic of Cyprus to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone," the spokesperson said, adding, "the island's oil and gas resources, like all of its resources, should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. Furthermore, Turkish aggression in Cyprus' EEZ presents an endangerment to U.S. companies, such as ExxonMobil and Noble Energy, who have been, or will be, working to explore for hydrocarbons in the eastern Mediterranean.

Moreover, Turkey continues to demonstrate it is not a true and dependable U.S. and NATO ally. President Erdogan threatened United States military forces with an "Ottoman slap" if they continued to partner with Syrian Kurds. Turkey's military campaign against the Kurds in Syria places U.S. troops in Manbij at risk of peril at the hands of a NATO partner. Further, Turkey's \$2.5 billion purchase of four divisions of S-400 surface-to-air missiles from Russia has raised concern among NATO partners and potentially subjects Turkey to U.S. sanctions based upon the recently-enacted Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), according to a U.S. administration official.

Mr. President, Turkey is a significant force of instability and a failed U.S. ally. Historically, this has been the case; however, Turkey demonstrated this yet again in the short span of three weeks this month. Turkey's aggressive and provocative actions directed at the United States and U.S. allies, Greece and Cyprus, are overt, egregious and dangerous. I urge the administration to act to uphold the rule of law and to call on Turkey, the provocateur of these tensions, to cease and desist with its aggressive actions that are a threat to peace and stability and are not in the best interests of the United States.

Sincerely,

NICK LARIGAKIS,
President.