

NATIONAL  
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DEDICATED TO THE EXPLORATION, STUDY, AND CONSERVATION OF  
CAVES

## **Congress Approves \$4 Million for WNS**

December 17, 2011

Vermont U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy's office informed us today that the final Interior Appropriations Bill that is part of the fiscal package going to the President includes \$4 million for WNS research and related activities. The provisions are part of the 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Bill, HR 2055, approved by both the House and Senate.

This relates to the current federal fiscal year - 2012, which began Oct. 1, 2011 and runs through Sept. 30, 2012. It's not new money, but prioritized within the appropriation, which overall is reduced by \$400 million from last year's spending level, and \$2.3 billion below the President's request. It's also important that the WNS funding and directive language is spread among several agencies, not just US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sen. Leahy is also sending a letter to USFWS Director Ashe asking for updated WNS mortality figures. We have been asking for these for over a year now. As many have pointed out, we've been using the phrase "over a million bats killed" for nearly two and half years now. Thanks to Sen. Leahy and his staff for their sustained and focused attention to WNS.

Here are some excerpts from Leahy's message:

*You may have spotted this already in the FY12 final spending package that was announced today, but I wanted to make sure you saw that we have three mentions of White Nose Syndrome in the Interior Appropriations bill - Interior Wildlife & Fisheries, Interior ESA, and the Forest Service! While the \$4 million is far below the \$10.8m we had requested it is still great progress to have some funding in there when we are seeing so many other Interior programs slashed. Also getting mentions in more areas of the bill is another huge success.*

*Department of Interior:*

*Bureau of Land Management Wildlife and Fisheries. - The Bureau should prioritize*

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*research related to White Nose Syndrome in bats and the inventory and monitoring of bat resources on Bureau-administered lands.*

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species.- The conferees direct the Service to fund white nose syndrome research and response activities at no less than \$4,000,000 from within Recovery. Funds should be used to: (1) increase research capacity to fund basic and applied research to stop the spread of the disease; (2) provide funding for States to implement response activities; and (3) increase FWS capacity for surveillance, monitoring and coordination activities. The conferees expect these activities to be coordinated with other Federal partners.*

*Forest Service:*

*The Forest Service should prioritize research related to White Nose Syndrome as well as inventory and monitoring of bat resources on Forest Service lands.*

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