



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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PRESIDENT'S BUDGET TIGHTENS BELT

But supports key Idaho priorities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, commented on the rollout of the President's budget for fiscal year 2007.

“The President's budget reflects our nation's clear priorities for this year: win the war on terror, reduce budget deficits by reining in spending, create jobs and grow the economy, and boost America's energy independence,” said Craig. **“A number of Idaho projects were included within this framework.**

“While this budget will help bring discretionary spending under control, Congress must also work to limit entitlement spending, before the growth in those programs overwhelms our ability to effectively reform them. The current price tag for entitlement programs dwarfs the discretionary side of the budget, and it's only getting worse. We must get serious about reform.

“That being said, I am very pleased that President Bush has proposed a 55 percent increase in nuclear research and development. Nuclear power will play an increasingly important role in the United States as we look for ways to produce clean, affordable energy without relying on foreign suppliers. As the nation's lead laboratory for nuclear energy research, INL will most definitely benefit from that boost.”

The budget also includes \$23 million for the Next Generation Nuclear Plant (NGNP) and \$512 million for ongoing cleanup at the lab. **“In a very competitive funding environment, the INL did very well,”** Craig said.

In addition to the nuclear research portion, the budget provides funding and support for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, also known as the Craig-Wyden program. Craig said, **“The Craig-Wyden program, which gives stakeholders a real say in how nearby national forests are managed, is also helping our timber-dependent communities to transition to a broader economic base and prepare for the future. Its purpose is to spur the economic activity these communities will need to survive and flourish, and I'm very pleased President Bush included it in the budget.**

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“However, I do have preliminary concerns about the offsets proposed by the administration and look forward to receiving additional details. Public lands are an asset that need to be managed and conserved.

“Another major concern is the proposal to increase power rates in the Pacific Northwest by 10 percent or more. In a time when energy costs are rising, the regional economy doesn’t need the negative impact of an ill-conceived rate increase.