

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
Positions	8	8	8	0
Funds	1,970	2,359	2,422	63

Program Description

The primary mission of the International Boundary Commission (IBC) is to maintain an “effective” (cleared and well-marked) boundary between the United States and Canada as prescribed by the 1925 Treaty of Washington. In recent years, the IBC has modified its mission in ways that permit it to support more effectively the Department of State’s Strategic goal of Achieving Peace and Security. To achieve its mission the IBC has established a maintenance schedule for the entire U.S.-Canadian boundary (5,525 miles) as the primary performance measure of the effectiveness of the IBC. The February 2004 “Report on the Present State of the Maintenance of the United States and Canada Boundary and Recommendations for the Future” details the state of the boundary and the steps necessary for the IBC to meet the performance goal.

The Treaty of 1925 requires the maintenance of an “effective” boundary line between the United States and Canada. The Treaty specifies that, to be “effective”, the boundary line must be accurately delineated and marked with stable identifying monuments. This is accomplished on land by clearing a 20-foot wide line-of-sight (i.e., “vista”) from one boundary monument to the next along the entire 5,525 U.S.-Canadian mile boundary. The IBC maintains more than 5,500 land boundary monuments and more than 2,800 reference monuments which are used to locate the water boundary. In addition, the IBC regulates construction crossing the boundary and provides boundary-specific positional and cartographic data to the public and private sectors. The IBC appropriation provides funds to implement U.S. obligations under the Treaty, thereby maintaining and preserving an effective boundary line between the two countries that ensures the sovereignty of each nation over its territory by clearly establishing where one’s rights and responsibilities end and the other’s begin, thus virtually eliminating the potential for serious and costly boundary disputes.

Although the boundary was cleared, surveyed and marked years ago, a cyclical program of maintenance is required to sustain an effective boundary line. The necessity of continuous maintenance is due to the deterioration and destruction of boundary monuments and to brush and timber overgrowth obstructing the 20-foot wide vista. Generally, the boundary is on a 15-year maintenance cycle. The discontinuation of herbicide use in the late seventies has had a tremendous impact in high growth areas. Cost associated with clearing these areas has almost doubled. Increased security issues along the boundary in recent years has caused the IBC to alter project priorities and maintenance cycles in some areas and to accelerate the maintenance cycle in other high traffic areas.

The IBC is continuing to resurvey the entire boundary and convert all North American Datum 27 (NAD27) map coordinates that currently define the boundary to NAD 83 positions.

Justification of Request

The FY 2011 request of \$2.4 million will fund the IBC operations and 8 boundary maintenance projects:

- Reclearing and Monumentation 141st Meridian (64 miles) (Alaska-Yukon) : \$550,000

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- Vista clearing Southwest section Highlands (50 miles) (Maine-Quebec) : \$149,000
- St. Francis River Vista clearing and Boundary marking (Maine-New Brunswick) : \$38,000
- Monument maintenance and clearing Lake Superior to the Rainy River (Minnesota-Ontario) : \$70,000
- Vista Clearing 49th Parallel- Pembina Hills Turtle Mts. (47 miles) (Minnesota-Manitoba) : \$106,000
- Clear 3 miles Glacier Park (Montana-Alberta) : \$25,000
- Clean Paint and clear Ranges Passamoquoddy Bay (Maine-New Brunswick) : \$32,000
- Mark Navigable Waterways : \$136,000

Funding will also provide for Mapping and GIS maintenance. A well-marked and maintained boundary enables federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to accomplish their duties more effectively. It ensures that persons arriving at the boundary anywhere along its length will know which country they are in and therefore, what laws they are under. An ambiguous boundary line would needlessly complicate and disrupt the business of government and private industry as well as the lives of the people living and working along it.

Funds by Program Activity (\$ in thousands)

Activities	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
International Boundary Commission	1,970	2,359	2,422	63
Equipment Lifecycle Program	200	50	150	100
Field Campaigns	724	1,314	1,106	(208)
IBC - Operations	946	995	1,016	21
Mapping / Survey Projects	100	0	150	150
Total	1,970	2,359	2,422	63

Funds by Object Class (\$ in thousands)

	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
1100 Personnel Compensation	554	582	616	34
1200 Personnel Benefits	166	177	186	9
2100 Travel & Trans of Persons	90	96	104	8
2300 Rents, Comm & Utilities	81	85	85	0
2500 Other Services	774	1,114	1,126	12
2600 Supplies and Materials	55	55	55	0
3100 Personal Property	250	250	250	0
Total	1,970	2,359	2,422	63