

## Summary of Wastebook 2012 projects - Over \$18 billion total

	Name	Summary
1	The most unproductive and unpopular Congress in modern history does nothing while America struggles - (Congress) \$132 million	Congress is "on pace to make history [for] the least productive legislative year" since 1947, with just 61 bills passed and made law in 2012 to date. "Even taking into account bills the House and Senate are expected to pass in the upcoming lame-duck session, the current Congress could easily have the lowest level of legislative activity since statistics began being tabulated," according to one observer. (\$132 million is 10 percent of the budget for member, leadership, and committee offices.
2	Professional sports loophole - (Taxes) \$91 million	The NFL, NHL, and PGA all classify themselves as non-profit organizations. Taxpayers may be losing at least \$89.9 million subsidizing these tax loopholes for professional sports leagues that generate billions of dollars annually in profits.
3	OH SNAP! Junk food, luxury drinks, soap operas, and billions of dollars in improper food stamp payments - (Department of Agriculture) \$4.5 billion	Lax controls and mismanagement in the food stamp program resulted in billions of dollars being spent not on healthy meals for hungry kids but instead wasted on questionable or illegal expenditures, including Starbucks, alcohol, diapers, and guns.
4	Oklahoma keeps unused airport open to collect federal checks - (OK) \$450,000	The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) voted this year to keep the scarcely used Lake Murray State Park Airport open simply to receive \$150,000 in federal funds it can then transfer to other airports. The airport has just one landing per month -- it is essentially unused.
5	Moroccan pottery classes - (U.S. Agency for International Development) \$27 million	A USAID development program in Morocco has failed, the IG found. Part of the program included pottery classes in which the instructor used materials not available locally, and the translator for the classes was not fluent in English.
6	Out-of-this-world Martian food tasting - (HI) \$947,000	NASA is studying what food astronauts could eat on Mars, by simulating a Mars outpost at a barren location in Hawaii.

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<b>7</b>	When robot squirrels attack – (CA) \$325,000	An NSF grant was used to create a robot squirrel to study how squirrels and rattlesnakes interact. Previous research on this relationship already exists.
<b>8</b>	USDA’s caviar dreams – (ID) \$300,000	USDA gave a grant to a caviar producer in Idaho for marketing.
<b>9</b>	Bailed out tourist boat sinking private business – (AK) \$3.3 million	Dept. of Transportation gave an Alaskan tribe millions to start a ferry that competes with existing private ferries, who are now struggling severely.
<b>10</b>	Phantom, unused grant accounts draw fees – (Department of Health and Human Services) \$2 million	HHS pays millions of dollars annually in maintenance fees for grant accounts that are expired or empty, but that the agency forgot to close.
<b>11</b>	A penny made is two pennies wasted – (Department of the Treasury) \$70 million	Cutting penny production could save at least \$70 million annually. Manufacturing a penny now costs 2.4 cents each.
<b>12</b>	Call me for free, maybe – (Federal Communications Commission) \$1.5 billion	Enrollment in the Lifeline program has skyrocketed as people sign up to get free cell phones for which they qualify if they are on federal tested programs (or based on income).
<b>13</b>	Powerful routers installed in tiny rural libraries and schools – (WV) \$24 million	State officials used a federal stimulus grant to purchase massive, overpowered routers that are too big and unnecessary for rural schools, libraries, and government offices.
<b>14</b>	Relive prom week with National Science Foundation video game – (CA) \$516,000	Using an NSF grant, researchers created a computer game simulating a high school "Prom Night" and the week leading up to the night.
<b>15</b>	Black liquor loophole – (Taxes) \$268 million	Paper and pulp companies are still taking advantage of a loophole allowing them to cash in their black liquor byproduct as an alternative fuel under a tax credit intended for vehicular fuel alternatives.
<b>16</b>	California towns sell federal grants to neighbors – (CA) \$206,426	Beverly Hills sold part of its Community Development Block Grant funds to a neighboring town for 70 cents on the dollar to get around federal requirements.
<b>17</b>	Russian weapons institutes recruiting new scientists with U.S. funds – (Department of Energy) \$15.0 million	A Cold War-era nonproliferation program may be helping recruit new scientists in Russia and is duplicative of other federal programs.

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<b>18</b>	NASA Entertainment, Inc. – (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) \$1.6 million	NASA has developed a number of video games, though the agency has struggled with a tight budget in recent years.
<b>19</b>	Smokey Bear balloons – (Department of Agriculture) \$49,447	USDA pays to have a Smokey Bear hot-air balloon at festivals in the Southwest. Money could be used for a DC10 tanker to fight wildfires.
<b>20</b>	Speed reading faces – (WA) \$30,000	NSF funds used to study whether people can determine a person's sexual orientation with just a glance.
<b>21</b>	More than \$1 billion overpaid annually for products and services – (Government-wide) \$1 billion	Federal agencies could save billions every year if they did a better job pooling their procurements to leverage their buying power.
<b>22</b>	Book club funding goes to ghost tours, fishing lessons, and movie screenings – (National Endowment for the Arts) \$1 million	National Endowment for the Arts funding for book clubs goes to pay for movie screenings, theatrical productions, fishing lessons, and concerts.
<b>23</b>	Pet shampoo company fetches more than half a million dollars – (NE) \$505,000	HUD money goes to a pet shampoo company for machinery to make pet toothpaste and shampoo.
<b>24</b>	Corporate welfare for the world's largest snack food maker – (NY) \$1.3 million	A business park in New York received federal funds to make a road for a Pepsico yogurt factory.
<b>25</b>	Government-funded study finds golfers need to envision a bigger hole – (IN) \$350,000	NSF funds go to a study of how golfers can putt better if they envision the hole is bigger.
<b>26</b>	Fighting obesity with giant graffiti carrots – (ME) \$13,000	Anti-obesity funds pay for a giant graffiti mural focused on sustainability.
<b>27</b>	Another bridge to nowhere – (OH) \$520,000	A covered bridge in Ohio that is not used by cars or tied to any walking or bike trail will be rehabilitated with federal funds.
<b>28</b>	Paying for veterans' health care twice – (Medicare; Veterans Administration) \$1 billion	The federal government pays for health care twice for veterans who have Medicare Advantage but still seek care from the VA, which cannot seek reimbursement from Medicare.

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<b>29</b>	Free bus rides for Super Bowl attendees – (IN) \$142,419	A Dept. of Transportation grant paid for free bus rides during the 2012 Super Bowl in Indianapolis. Average prices for Super Bowl tickets are around \$3,000.
<b>30</b>	Movie theater field trip to see <i>Red Tails</i> – (TX) \$57,000	Federal education funds were misused in Texas to send fifth-grade boys to a movie theater to see "Red Tails" (girls were left behind).
<b>31</b>	Self-reflection video game using Henry David Thoreau's 1845 writings – (CA) \$40,000	National Endowment for the Humanities funding pays for video game simulating Thoreau's experience at Walden Pond.
<b>32</b>	Flushing down taxpayer dollars – (MI) \$10,000	Dept. of Transportation dollars are used in Michigan to buy 400 talking urinal cakes to fight drunk driving.
<b>33</b>	No laughing matter, cartoon school receives real taxpayer money – (VT) \$255,000	A cartooning school in Vermont received HUD funds to build a new center, though it has very few students and is unaccredited.
<b>34</b>	U.S. Iraqi police training program burns through hundreds of millions, crashes in flames – (Department of State) \$400.2 million	State Dept's Iraq police training program has failed miserably, according the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. No objectives were created, and classes did not help Iraqis at all. State will hand over to the Iraqis several building projects that ended up being unnecessary.
<b>35</b>	Science research dollars go to musical about biodiversity and climate change – (NY) \$445,444	NSF funds spent on a musical about biodiversity and climate change. Reviews of the play said it was boring and needed improvement.
<b>36</b>	The streetcar named No Desire – (MO) \$35.6 million	Federal transportation money will help build a trolley in St. Louis that has been called the "Streetcar Named No Desire" by one local. It duplicates existing light rail and public transportation, some say.
<b>37</b>	Congress splits new line of ships between two completely different designs, increasing costs and undermining Navy's capabilities – (Department of Defense) \$148 million	Congress allowed the development of the littoral combat ship to be split between two designs and manufacturers, increasing costs.

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<b>38</b>	Anti-trash poster contest for college students – (NY) \$67,926	EPA funds go to an anti-trash poster contest for college students. Winners received paid trip to New York City.
<b>39</b>	Bus stops or small houses? City spends nearly \$78,000 each on bus shelters – (OR) \$388,000	The city of Grants Pass, Oregon, will spend \$388,000 in federal funds to build just five bus shelters in its small bus system.
<b>40</b>	YouTube video contest on fruits and veggies – (Department of Health and Human Services) \$106,000	HHS spent almost \$100,000 to put on a YouTube video contest to promote eating fruits and vegetables.
<b>41</b>	Faulty FEMA calculations lead to building replacement instead of repair – (IA) \$75.4 million	Regional FEMA officials miscalculated renovation cost of two University of Iowa buildings by including unallowable costs, leading to unnecessary replacement of the buildings.
<b>42</b>	“Game Time!” toy exhibit – (NY) \$150,000	IMLS gives the Strong National Museum of Play a grant to develop an exhibit on America's games and puzzles.
<b>43</b>	Sidewalks to nowhere anger local citizens – (FL; MI) \$1.1 million	Dept. of Transportation funds are used for "sidewalks to nowhere" in Florida and Michigan that have local citizens angered. In Florida, the sidewalk was a "safe route to school" that was still unsafe. In Michigan, federal requirements forced a county to make sidewalk ramps at an intersection without sidewalks.
<b>44</b>	Space agency uses dysfunctional technology from the past – (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) \$771,000	NASA pays for a knowledge management database that is never used.
<b>45</b>	Alaska’s tourist train – (AK) \$38.8 million	The Alaska Railroad receives federal mass transit funding through an earmark, though most of its patrons are tourists and cruise ship passengers.
<b>46</b>	Vineyards’ cups overfloweth – (Department of Agriculture) \$1.5 million	USDA spends over \$1 million to help vineyards.
<b>47</b>	Tax cheat? Medicaid says no problem – (Medicaid; Internal Revenue Service) At least \$330 million	Medicaid providers who have unpaid taxes are still able to receive their full Medicaid reimbursements.

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<b>48</b>	Courthouse design, construction takes a decade and is no longer a priority – (CA) \$322 million	GSA is seeking to build a courthouse in LA, a project that GAO has questioned repeatedly for years.
<b>49</b>	The Pentagon's latest weapon: beef jerky -- (Department of Defense) \$700,000	DOD is researching a new way to make beef jerky with processed meat. Several other jerky companies have received federal funds this year.
<b>50</b>	Grant for struggling schools wasted on “tinkering” and finger-pointing – (WA) \$7.3 million	Dept. of Education dollars for School Improvement Grants in Washington hardly helped students, a study found, and funds were used for changes that could be made without additional funding.
<b>51</b>	Identity thieves bilking the IRS out of billions – (Internal Revenue Service) \$3.9 billion	IRS lacks proper controls to prevent identity thieves from filing false returns and receiving billions in tax refunds every year.
<b>52</b>	Return of the Jedi – (MA) \$11,700	IMLS funds used by a local library to put on a Star Wars party for teenagers.
<b>53</b>	NASA spends millions on visitor center to replace old one just miles away – (MS) \$12.4 million	NASA contributed millions to move its Stennis Space Center visitor center miles down the road to a new science center, when its existing center received just 40,000 visitors a year and was renovated in 2003.
<b>54</b>	Circus classes – (MO) \$20,000	A National Endowment for the Arts grant is paying for circus classes for youth, including juggling and hula hoops.
<b>55</b>	Tune in to reruns and feel better – (NY) \$666,905	An NIH-funded study found people's moods are improved by watching television reruns, or even writing about them, but cautions too much TV can harm health.
<b>56</b>	Old-fashioned x-rays for prisoners – (Department of Justice) \$1.3 million	Bureau of Prisons still makes hard copies of x-rays and mails them when prisoners change institutions, costing an unnecessary \$1.3 million.
<b>57</b>	Online lawyer training gets science funding – (PA) \$500,000	NSF grant funds new online training platform for lawyers.
<b>58</b>	Missile defense agency begins building interceptors before research is complete, costs skyrocket – (Department of Defense) At least \$1 billion	Because it relied heavily on a strategy of concurrency -- producing a weapon before testing is completed -- the Missile Defense Agency will spend at least a billion dollars more than expected to develop one component of the missile defense system.

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<b>59</b>	Arcade-style floormats for gym class – (CA) \$90,750	A California school district used a federal grant to buy fancy gym equipment: several light-up floormats for over \$20,000 each.
<b>60</b>	Department of Energy offered cash reward to create app that already exists – (Department of Energy) \$100,000	The Department of Energy funded a contest to develop an energy-tracking mobile phone app, even though they already exist on the market.
<b>61</b>	How not to flip a house: renovate with federal funds and sell far below market value – (NY) \$18,410	HUD funds used to renovate a home for more than the house was worth, through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
<b>62</b>	A gateway arch on an Oregon Main Street – (OR) \$15,000	A small Oregon town used a \$15,000 USDA grant to install an arch at the start of its downtown district, hoping it will help revitalization.
<b>63</b>	Largest Job Corps contractor pays the highest bidder – (Department of Labor) \$4.6 million	Management and Training Corporation -- the largest Job Corps contractor -- improperly selected the highest bidder for several projects, misusing federal funds.
<b>64</b>	Athletes’ overseas vacations – (Department of State) \$5.5 million	SportsUnited -- the State Department’s sport diplomacy program -- sends American and foreign professional athletes on trips around the world.
<b>65</b>	Video game controller design – (UT) \$1.5 million	An NSF grant funds creation of a new video game controller that the developers hope to sell to Sony or Microsoft.
<b>66</b>	Crime pays! Prisoners receive college tax credits – (Internal Revenue Service) \$3.2 billion	Prisoners and millions of other people are taking advantage of the \$2,500 American Opportunity Tax Credit, even though most do not qualify for it.
<b>67</b>	“Make Chai, Not War”: State Department sends American comedy tour to India – (Department of State) \$100,000	State Department pays for an Indian-American comedy group to travel through India doing comedy show.
<b>68</b>	Medicaid audit program costs more than it brings in – (Medicaid) \$30 million	A program to audit Medicaid payments is actually costing taxpayers more than it recovers, because federal officials decided to use incomplete data for audits.
<b>69</b>	County courthouse cameras violate constitutional rights – (AL) \$500,000	Alabama courthouse uses federal funds to buy cameras so powerful they potentially violated constitutional rights to privacy.
<b>70</b>	Fruit fly beauty is fleeting – (MI; MA) \$939,771	NIH-funded study examines how male fruit flies are attracted to younger female flies.

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<b>71</b>	Gone with the wind: Loans to Rhode Island businesses – (RI) \$3.4 million	The city of Providence, Rhode Island, uses HUD funds to make risky loans, and now 25 percent are delinquent.
<b>72</b>	Electric vehicle tax credit increases the deficit without decreasing emissions – (Taxes) \$74 million	A federal electric vehicle tax credit is not leading to a decrease in gasoline and greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Congressional Budget Office.
<b>73</b>	Smuttynose brewery gulps down taxpayer dollars for sewage connections – (NH) \$750,970	A New Hampshire brewery received HUD funds to install sewer connections and buy brewing equipment.
<b>74</b>	So you think you can dance? Dancing robot serves as an iPhone DJ – (GA) \$547,430	Using an NSF grant, researchers create a mini-robot that can dance to music from a smartphone. They are looking to sell the robot for about \$200 each.
<b>75</b>	Healthy Food Financing Initiative pursues ineffective strategy – (Department of the Treasury; Department of Health and Human Services) \$32 million	Treasury and HHS are financing an initiative to get food in corner markets, although such strategies have been shown to be ineffective to increase healthy eating.
<b>76</b>	Exploring the nature of happiness with a philosophy booth – (NM) \$24,995	A National Endowment for the Humanities grant will fund a college class about happiness, during which students will set up a "philosophy booth" on campus.
<b>77</b>	Antarctica science dollars go to anything but research – (Antarctica) \$20.5 million	NSF funding for the US Antarctic Research Program goes primarily to support services, only 20 cents of every dollar go to research. Improvements could be made, expert panel says.
<b>78</b>	Potato chip pork – (NY) \$49,990	USDA gives grant to famed New York potato chip manufacturer to make a website and print brochures.
<b>79</b>	Duplicate magazine preservation – (OK; RI) \$270,000	Tulsa University and Brown University will use federal funds to digitize old magazines, most of which are already available for free online.
<b>80</b>	Flat tire: Agriculture Department awards grant to billion-dollar tire company – (OH) \$6.9 million	USDA awarded a grant to Cooper Tire to develop a next-generation tire, though private sector research is already underway.
<b>81</b>	Highways funds go to bronze sculptures rather than rusty bridges – (IA) \$145,000	An Iowa town uses transportation enhancement dollars to make a sculpture garden dedicated to First Lady Hoover.

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<b>82</b>	Games for Change festival – (NY) \$50,000	National Endowment for the Arts funding sponsored the Games for Change festival, dedicated to changing the world with video games. Featured video games included one to teach yoga and another about self-reflection.
<b>83</b>	Mobile app industry gets a free download – (UT) \$1 million	Ogden City, Utah, received \$1 million from the Department of Commerce to teach people how to develop mobile phone apps.
<b>84</b>	Los Angeles Harbor touring yacht gets new engines – (CA) \$489,000	The Port of Los Angeles used federal Department of Energy dollars to retrofit its yacht with new engines.
<b>85</b>	A novel idea taxpayers will not want to read about – (CA) \$35,000	IMLS dollars pay for a \$35,000 book vending machine at a California train station, though the library is a short walk away.
<b>86</b>	The 2012 Alabama Watermelon Queen Tour – (AL) \$25,000	A USDA specialty crop program pays for the Alabama Watermelon Queen to tour the state promoting the fruit.
<b>87</b>	Should grandma and grandpa play <i>World of Warcraft</i> ? – (NC) \$1.2 million	Researchers study whether the elderly could play World of Warcraft to increase their cognitive function. They used NSF funding.
<b>88</b>	Abandoned New Orleans homes still on federal rolls seven years after Katrina – (LA) \$21.6 million	Since Hurricane Katrina, a HUD-funded program has been maintaining thousands of blighted or abandoned homes the city has not wanted to sell. Now the program is out of money and thousands of homes are still unsold.
<b>89</b>	Healthy food: Celebrity chefs and high-tech vending machines – (FL) \$612,808	Anti-obesity funds are used to buy 56 expensive, healthy-food vending machines for middle- and high schools.
<b>90</b>	Vodka, bourbon, brandy for taxpayers – (NY) \$99,000	USDA gives grant to New York distillery, and competitor says he will not be able to compete.
<b>91</b>	How to build a farm in a galaxy far, far away – (TX) \$300,000	An organization dedicated to getting to another star within 100 years received \$300,000 from NASA and DOD this year.
<b>92</b>	Thirty-thousand Legos to build an 18-foot long model street – (OH) \$3,700	An West Virginia museum will use federal transportation dollars to build a lego exhibit of the town's main street.
<b>93</b>	Contracts for trophies and typewriters – (General Services Administration) \$24 million	GSA has been maintaining contracts for obsolete products that no one buys, an administrative function that costs \$24 million a year.

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<b>94</b>	Studies of concubinage, <i>M*A*S*H</i> , and Mother Goose – (National Endowment for the Humanities) \$504,000	A variety of silly projects -- including studies of concubinage in medieval England and <i>M*A*S*H</i> -- received funding from the National Endowment for Humanities.
<b>95</b>	Heavy drinking in thirties linked with immaturity – (MO) \$548,731	An NIH-funded study found people who drink heavily in their 30s feel immature.
<b>96</b>	Guns ablazin': USDA studies Idaho firearm industry – (ID) \$24,877	An Idaho firearms organization received a grant from USDA to study the state's gun industry. Part of the funding was used to put on a gun show.
<b>97</b>	Crazy for cupcakes! – (Small Business Administration) \$2.0 million	Taxpayers are on the hook for \$1.8 million in loans to cupcake boutiques from the Small Business Administration.
<b>98</b>	Over one billion served: federally funded smartphone research – (NY) \$1.3 million	Researchers using NSF funds will hand out hundreds of smartphones in effort to make them perform better, a task that should be funded by the private sector.
<b>99</b>	Construction of an agricultural and motorsports museum featuring a tribute to dirt track racing and a large toy train display – (IA) \$300,000	An Iowa county will use USDA funds to build an agricultural and motorsports museum.
<b>100</b>	D'oh! Postal Service overprints Simpsons and other commemorative stamps – (Postal Service) \$2 million	The Postal Service overproduces commemorative stamps every year, a \$2 million waste in printing and distribution costs. In 2009, it printed 1 billion commemorative Simpsons stamps, and sold only 318 million.