

**EXAMINING THE DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR'S SPENDING
PRIORITIES AND THE
PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR
2018 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

OVERSIGHT HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON EXAMINING THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR'S SPENDING
PRIORITIES AND THE PRESIDENT'S
FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

**Thursday, June 22, 2017
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC**

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Rob Bishop [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Bishop, Young, Gohmert, Lamborn, Wittman, McClintock, Pearce, Gosar, Labrador, Tipton, LaMalfa, Westerman, Graves, Hice, Radewagen, Bergman, Cheney, Johnson, González-Colón; Grijalva, Bordallo, Costa, Sablan, Tsongas, Huffman, Lowenthal, Beyer, Torres, Gallego, Hanabusa, Barragán, Soto, Panetta, McEachin, and Clay.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, the Committee will come to order. The Committee on Natural Resources is here. We are happy to hear testimony from the Secretary of the Interior that examines the Department of the Interior's spending priorities, as well as the budget proposals.

Under Committee Rule 4(f), any oral statements at hearings are limited to the Chairman, the Ranking Minority Member, and the Vice Chair. This will allow us to hear from our witness sooner, and help Members to keep on some kind of schedule, because we are on a tight schedule, especially Mr. Zinke.

Therefore, I am going to ask unanimous consent that all other Members' opening statements be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Committee Clerk or the Subcommittee Clerk by 5:00 p.m. today.

Without objection, so ordered.

Let me start.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROB BISHOP, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

The CHAIRMAN. Let me recognize myself for my original opening statement.

Mr. Zinke, I want to welcome you back here to the Committee. It is good to have you back here in this particular room. I want to personally thank you at the very beginning for being here.

I also want to thank you for visiting my home state, and for doing that. You and your Department have brought transparency, more transparency over the past few months than I think has happened in the entire 111-year history of the Antiquities Act. What you did was a first-of-its-kind, inclusive process that actually tried to assess local support for monuments. And I want to thank you

for conducting that review, you did it with aplomb, even if you made fun of what I was wearing. I was not going to a golf course, I was legitimate.

You also, I think, are bringing a breath of fresh air to the Department. You clearly understand why the Department was created and what its core statutory functions are, and how they have strayed over the few years. Mismanagement, as I view it, of Federal lands did not start recently. It has gone on for several decades, long before the Obama administration was there. But I have to admit the layers of arbitrary rules and regulations over the past 8 years, especially the last 2 years, seem to compound the challenges that we have with the Department of the Interior.

So, what I hope to do is be able to have a new relationship that is here that will work in concert with you to give you whatever kinds of tools are necessary to produce the kinds of reforms that you have been talking about in public.

Over the past few months, you have taken numerous actions to re-establish core agency functions and begin addressing regulatory excesses. I am very proud of you for doing that. You have facilitated a diverse and abundant energy development strategy, and made clear your priorities for things like the USGS funding increase, offshore development, the 5-year planning process, which, I think, shows a commitment to make America stronger through energy security. I appreciate you doing that.

I am also appreciative, especially for this Committee, of your prioritization of resource needs to address the Park Service's massive deferred maintenance backlog. Once again, that is something that must take place.

A component of that strategy does include the transferring and exchanging of surplus lands. I want to be clear about this, that this does not mean a wholesale transfer of Federal lands. There are voices out there who are spreading misinformation, if not downright lies, that our goal is to try to sell off all the iconic areas and landmarks, when actually nobody is talking about that.

What we are talking about, and clearly understanding, is we have to resolve the checkerboard issues of land management, isolated and hard-to-manage isolated parcels of land, and selected transfers that would maximize local communities. That is merely what we were talking about. That is the goal and the effort of where we were going.

I am also encouraged to hear your public statements, specifically concerning federally recognized Indian tribes. These Native American issues are important. Many people in the past have given lip service to tribal self-determination, but their actions have consistently fallen very short of the rhetoric that is there.

So, the idea that you have established and desire to improve tribal control over tribal lands, rather than blockading economic opportunities in Indian Country is refreshing, and I appreciate that.

I also want to thank you for the broader reforms that you have talked about, and I want to let you know that this Committee is ready to try to do whatever legislation you feel is necessary to help you succeed in those kind of broader reforms that you wish to do.

We all realize that there is a \$20 trillion deficit that all of us have inherited. What you need to do is, with the funds that are available, try to leverage the natural resources and the responsibilities that go with that, develop the energy potential.

We realize the amount of revenue that has come in has deteriorated over the years, but also access to public land has deteriorated over the years, as well as the level of service. I am grateful that the Department realizes that and is going to take positive efforts to try to improve on all three of those areas. I hope that what we can do is to build a future together with your Department to serve the communities that your Department actually serves.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bishop follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROB BISHOP, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

Today, we are pleased to have Secretary Zinke here to testify on the Administration's budget and broader policy priorities for the Department of the Interior.

Welcome back to the Committee, Mr. Secretary.

I'd first like to take a quick moment to personally thank you for being here and for recently visiting my home state of Utah. Your Department has brought more transparency and accountability to National Monument designations in the past few months than the rest of the Antiquities Act's 111-year history by creating a first-of-its-kind, open, and inclusive process to gather public comments and assess local support for National Monuments. Thank you for conducting this review.

After 8 years, it is a breath of fresh air to have someone leading the Department who understands the reason why it was created in the first place—and just how far its core statutory functions have strayed since that time.

Although mismanagement of our Federal lands and Washington's neglect of local, state and tribal communities began long before the Obama administration, the layers of arbitrary rules and regulations promulgated over the past 8 years have certainly compounded these challenges.

Congress and the executive branch working in concert is the only way for us to overcome years of mismanagement at the Interior Department and its sub-agencies. As such, I am excited to have you in this role, and an Administration committed to reform, so that we can finally partner with the executive branch to actually solve problems and help improve the Department's accountability to taxpayers.

In just the first few months of the Secretary's tenure, the Department has taken numerous actions to re-establish core agency functions and begin addressing regulatory excesses created by the last administration.

The President's 2018 budget reflects a commitment from the Trump administration to increase access to Federal lands, reduce burdensome regulation, and improve conservation without unduly impacting economic development.

I am also pleased with several clear priorities put forward within this request to help facilitate a diverse and abundant energy development strategy. From supporting onshore development through increased USGS funding in mineral assessments, to offshore development, with the re-initiation of the 5-year plan process, you've committed to making America stronger through energy security.

I am also pleased with the Administration's commitment to improve management of existing Federal lands and resources rather than growing the bureaucracy and siphoning money from productive uses to expand Federal land acquisition. This includes prioritizing resources to address the Park Service's massive deferred maintenance backlog.

A component of this strategy must include transferring or exchanging surplus lands in and around local communities. To be clear, this does not mean a wholesale transfer of our Federal lands. There are special interests and voices out there spreading lies who want the public to think these efforts amount to selling iconic parks or landmarks, when nobody here is talking about that. We—members of both political parties—are simply talking about resolving checkerboard land issues, removing isolated and hard to manage parcels, and selectively transferring certain lands to maximize the benefits of those lands to local communities.

I've been very encouraged to hear your public statements about improving self-determination for our First Americans, federally recognized Indian tribes. Under previous administrations there's been a lot of lip service paid to tribal self-determination, but actions have consistently fallen short of the rhetoric. I look

forward to working with you to actually improve tribal control over tribal lands rather than blockading economic opportunities for Indian Country.

The shared priorities of balancing our budget, improving land management and expanding access can't be fully achieved without broader reforms. So, in addition to our discussion on budget priorities, I also look forward to hearing your thoughts on how this Committee can provide the Administration with the tools necessary for it to succeed.

Amidst a nearly \$20 trillion national debt that they inherited, I commend President Trump and Secretary Zinke for putting forward a responsible and strategic budget to leverage the Nation's natural resources and to responsibly explore and develop America's energy potential. This Committee is dedicated to working with you, the Administration and our colleagues in Congress to build a better future for the Department and the communities it serves.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I yield to Mr. Grijalva I do want to make one formal announcement simply that deals with the decorum under the Committee Rules, as well as the Rules of the House.

And I have to ask, since this is a formal Committee hearing, that there not be any disruptions regarding the testimony that is going to be given here today. It is important to respect the decorum and the rules of the Committee and the House, and to allow Members and the public to hear those proceedings.

With that, I am appreciative, and I will yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Grijalva, for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Secretary. Not too long ago you sat up here with us, and I am sure you are full of fond memories of that experience and your time with us. Being in the Majority is still more fulfilling, I could tell you that, but our side has a role, an important role. And we appreciate the opportunity to exercise our oversight responsibility today, our shared oversight responsibility. So, thank you very much for being here.

Much of what comes from the Trump White House is not true, but the President's 2018 budget tells us the truth. My Republican colleagues can run from it or claim this budget is DOA, but this is an honest Republican budget. I don't mean the math is honest, because it is not. This budget double counts non-existent savings from tax cuts as a gimmick to pretend to balance. The math in this budget is disingenuous, at best, and needs to be treated as such.

But the budget is an honest reflection of Republican long-held priorities. If Speaker Ryan brought an Interior appropriations bill to the Floor that included a 10 percent cut, as this proposal does, House Republicans would pass it.

It seems that every time we have a Republican in the White House, we suddenly hear that the richest nation on earth is flat broke, cannot afford these programs any more, and all of a sudden the talk is about doing more with less, tightening our belts, and making sacrifices. We don't see in this budget oil, gas, mining making sacrifices, nor polluters funding cleanups in the mess that they create and leave behind.

The budget reflects the bottomless desire for irresponsible drilling and mining on every inch of public land. They even insist on

doing permanent damage to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, even when we know it will not help average Americans at all.

The budget reflects Republican's constant attacks on science and repeated claims that climate change is fake. OMB Director Mulvaney, who was a House Republican until recently, told the truth when he said Republicans think spending on climate change is a waste of money.

The budget reflects their endless campaign to sell off public lands that the American people love. Years of Republican bills and speeches demonizing Federal lands, and Federal employees, prove that House Republicans support a budget that would close national parks and force layoffs of Federal land managers, as well.

Some of my Republican colleagues claim they support the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but for years they have allowed false claims about the program to go unchallenged. They have voted to undermine the fund, and they even allowed it to expire on their watch. Of course, they support a budget that slashes LWCF funding by 85 percent.

This budget reflects the Republican belief that this generation of politicians gets to decide which species go extinct, and their conviction that extinction is better than reasonable limits on drilling or mining.

The budget guts the Fish and Wildlife Service and makes a functioning Endangered Species Act impossible, and that is the goal.

There is no confusion about where Democrats stand. We support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We support the funding levels needed to operate a world-class system of national parks, forests, refuges, and public lands. We believe our climate is changing and that money spent on research, stopping pollution, and mitigation are the most important investments we can make. We support Federal spending to improve the health of our oceans and fisheries. We support funding for programs that pull endangered species back from the brink. And, we support investments to make permanent improvements in the quality of life in Indian Country.

The President's misguided and irresponsible budget does none of these things. The Trump budget is just standard Republican talking points in budget form. The Trump budget is the Republican vision for this country, spelled out in dollars and cents.

Democrats have resisted these destructive proposals before, and we will do so again.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grijalva follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, RANKING MEMBER,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Much of what comes from the Trump White House is not true, but the President's 2018 budget tells the truth. My Republican colleagues can run from it, or claim this budget is "DOA," but this is an honest Republican budget.

I don't mean the math is honest, because it's not. This budget double-counts non-existent savings from tax cuts as a gimmick to pretend to balance. The math in this budget is a lie.

But this budget is an honest reflection of House Republicans' long-held priorities. If Speaker Ryan brought an Interior appropriations bill to the Floor that included a 10 percent cut, as this proposal does, House Republicans would vote for it.

This budget reflects their bottomless desire for irresponsible drilling and mining on every inch of public land. They even insist on doing permanent damage to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, even when we know it won't help average Americans at all.

This budget reflects Republican's constant attacks on science and repeated claims that climate change is fake. OMB Director Mulvaney—who *was* a House Republican until recently—told the truth when he said Republicans think spending on climate change is a waste of money.

This budget reflects their endless campaign to sell off public lands that the American people love. Years of Republican bills and speeches *demonizing* Federal lands—and Federal employees—prove that House Republicans support a budget that would close national parks and force layoffs of Federal land managers.

Some of my Republican colleagues claim they support the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but for years they have allowed false claims about the program to go unchallenged, they have voted to undermine the Fund, and they even allowed it to expire on their watch. Of course, they support a budget that slashes LWCF funding by 85 percent.

This budget reflects the Republican belief that *this* generation of politicians gets to decide which species go extinct, and their conviction that extinction is better than reasonable limits on drilling or mining. A budget that guts the Fish and Wildlife Service, and makes a functioning Endangered Species Act impossible, is what they want.

There is no confusion about where Democrats stand. We support full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We support the funding levels needed to operate a world-class system of national parks, forests, refuges, and public lands. We believe our climate is changing and that money spent on research, stopping pollution, and mitigation are the most important investments we can make. We support Federal spending to improve the health of our oceans and fisheries. We support funding for programs that pull endangered species back from the brink. And we support investments to make permanent improvements in the quality of life in Indian Country.

The President's misguided and irresponsible budget does none of these things. The Trump budget is just standard Republican talking points in budget form. The Trump budget is the Republican vision for this country, spelled out in dollars and cents.

Democrats have resisted these destructive proposals before, and we will do so again.

Mr. GRIJALVA. With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Otherwise, everything is OK, right?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, good. The Vice Chairman has waived his right to give an opening statement, so we will go directly to Mr. Zinke, if you would.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. It is the Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and you are accompanied by Olivia Barton Ferriter—did I say that correctly—who is also the Deputy Assistant for Budget and Finance within Interior, as well as Denise Flanagan from the Director of the Office of Budget in the Interior Department.

We welcome all three of you here. I remind our witnesses, obviously, you all know how the 5-minute rule works. Also, the microphones are not self-activated, so make sure you turn it on before you speak there.

With that, welcome back, Secretary. It is all yours.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. RYAN ZINKE, SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, WASHINGTON, DC**

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you. I am glad to see the tenor has not changed between the Ranking Member and the Chairman. But thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and it is indeed a deep honor to be on this side of the podium.

I do request permission to submit my entire statement for the record.

So, the budget. This is what a balanced budget looks like. It is a starting point. And it is good to have discussions on what a balanced budget would look like. Many Members identify areas of concern in it, and I completely understand that. But you cannot ignore every year Congress goes through and looks at raising the debt, and you cannot ignore a budget that is in arrears.

So, while this budget focuses on savings for many of you, I will also address the revenue picture. But this is what a budget, a balanced budget, would look like. And there are tough decisions, and it is good to have honest dialogue about them.

Second, I fully understand the Department of the Interior touches the lives of more Americans than any other department. In fact, nearly every American lives within an hour drive of our public lands, enjoys our parks, our wildlife refuges, and our public lands. Interior is not a partisan issue. Our public lands are an American issue.

The President's budget itself proposes \$11.7 billion, and saves the taxpayers about \$1.6 billion. We make strategic investments to ensure that our Nation's energy and national security are met, and we address core issues, and public access.

The President's budget prioritizes an all-of-the-above energy strategy that includes oil, gas, coal, and renewable energies. The President does not favor one energy source over another. It is an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We also have a prudent focus on boosting revenue through legislative proposals to raise \$5.8 billion.

Let me talk about revenues. In 2008, the Department of the Interior, on offshore alone, made about \$18 billion a year. Last year, we made \$2.6 billion. We had a drop of \$15.5 billion a year on revenue. Some of it was the gas and oil prices, but not all of it. When you add timber, when you add onshore, the picture gets worse.

So, when we talk about \$11.5 billion behind on infrastructure in our parks, which represents 73 percent of infrastructure in the Department, on scale, we would have made up our entire backlog plus \$3 billion of additional investment to fund programs, schools, and honor our Indian trust in 1 year. That is the scale of what occurred.

There are two sides of every balance sheet: there are the revenues and the expenses. As a Secretary, I immediately signed a Secretarial Order to look at revenues across the board. I re-established the Committee on Revenues. And revenues, we are looking at every enterprise that operates on public land, whether it is wind, gas, oil, coal, across the board, because I want to make sure that the American public's interest is met. If you are going to operate on public land, then the stakeholder is us, the public. I

want to make sure that our rules and regulations are not arbitrary, trust but verify, and the American public interest is served.

When it comes to infrastructure, we plan to take care of what we have first. So, yes, the LWCF program, which I have always supported, what has dropped is additional land acquisition. It does not prevent such things as conservation easement programs, but more land has dropped from the budget as it sits today. It is a starting point.

And I have always supported LWCF, but over the course of time LWCF is funded through offshore assets. So, when offshore assets, oil and gas, go to the bottom, so does the fund. But having said that, over the course of time there is \$20 billion of unappropriated funds in LWCF. Was that the intent?

Even though every year money comes in, whether this gets appropriated or not is a congressional issue. Same as, and it is worse, over in Reclamation. There is about \$20 billion in Reclamation that has not been tasked either. Those funds were for one thing, to build our water, our rural, and projects, so there is an appropriation issue, as well, that we will address.

The budget calls for a \$35 million increase, for a total of \$766 million for national parks infrastructure. And if you want to look at our infrastructure of the national parks, I invite you to look at Arlington. It is a national disgrace. And it just didn't happen in the last 8 years. But our Park Service, our assets, deferred maintenance has been a problem. But if you want to look, go to Arlington. The shutters are falling off, the garden grounds are unacceptable. The building itself is in ruin. And that is hallowed ground, and it is not very far from here.

We fully fund fire suppression. This Committee has talked about it year after year after year of why we have to spend billions of dollars every year fighting forest fires. The Forest Service, which is not part of the Department of the Interior, has 71 million acres of dead and dying timber. It will not happen on BLM land. So, we have purposely funded fire suppression to get the dead and dying timber off our public lands so we don't have to fight the forest fires.

We found savings in Federal land acquisitions. I talked about eliminating some programs and allowing states and local communities in private partnership to take a bigger play. At the end of the day, we made tough decisions.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes, for the first time in a long time, we put \$397 million in Payment in Lieu of Taxes. Last year, there was zero. So, we put it in the discretionary side as a marker. I don't know what is going to happen on the SRS side, but on PILT, that is \$397 million plus-up from last budget. Although it doesn't fully fund it, it is a plus-up from last budget.

So, yes, this is a starting point. But I want everyone to realize this is a starting point of a balanced budget. And there are fundamental differences on what programs should get funded, and this is why we are here. I look forward to working with you, I look forward to working on both sides. I know you, personally.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zinke follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RYAN ZINKE, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the 2018 President's Budget for the Department of the Interior, which provides \$11.7 billion for Interior's programs, with an additional \$123.9 million of discretionary Department of Defense appropriations requested to be transferred to the Department of the Interior to support enactment of the 2010 Compact Review Agreement with Palau.

Because of the timing between enactment of the Fiscal Year 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Act and submission of the Fiscal Year 2018 President's Budget, my statement compares requested funding to the Fiscal Year 2017 Annualized Continuing Resolution unless otherwise noted.

2018 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The 2018 budget for the Department of the Interior features targeted investments to further the Administration's America First national energy goals. At the same time, this budget reflects the President's commitment to fiscal responsibility—proposing sensible and rational reductions and making hard choices to reach a balanced budget by 2027.

Across Interior's diverse mission, this budget emphasizes the Department's crucial role in promoting economic growth. America's lands hold tremendous job-creating assets. Visitors to our parks spend more than \$18.4 billion in local gateway communities, supporting approximately 318,000 jobs and contributing \$34.9 billion into the national economy according to the 2016 *National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report*.

In 2016, the Department's energy, mineral, grazing, and forestry activities resulted in \$8.8 billion in revenue to the American people, including direct revenue payments to states, tribes, and local communities. These same activities supported \$136 billion in economic output. The Budget for the Bureau of Reclamation invests over \$1 billion in safe, reliable, and efficient management of water resources throughout the western United States. In addition, direct grants and payments to states, tribes, and local communities provided an estimated \$10 billion in economic output.

The Department's 2018 budget reflects the Administration's commitment to strengthen America's economic and energy security, focus on the Nation's infrastructure, be responsible stewards of magnificent lands, encourage public access for outdoor recreation, and strengthen tribal sovereignty and support self-determination.

AMERICA'S ENERGY

The Department is the steward and manager of America's natural resources, including oil, gas, coal, hydropower, minerals, and renewable energy sources. The Department has a critical role to play in the future energy security of our Nation as well as our overall economic well-being. American energy resources create jobs and generate significant revenue both to the U.S. Treasury and states. This budget proposes \$791.2 million in current and permanent funding for energy related programs across the Department, an increase of \$16.3 million from 2017. The 2018 budget supports an "all-of-the-above" energy development strategy, increasing funding for onshore and offshore oil and gas, strengthening coal management activities, and sustaining the current pace of renewable energy development.

The budget reflects the importance of offshore energy production to America's economic and energy security. The 2018 budget shores up offshore oil and gas programs with appropriated funding to continue a strong offshore program. The request for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management features a \$10.2 million increase to update the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, consistent with the President's Executive Order *Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy* to expand offshore oil and gas exploration and production. The 2018 budget for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement includes a \$1.2 million increase to focus on workforce training, permitting, and information technologies to better permit exploration, development, and production operations.

Onshore, the budget requests a \$16.0 million increase for the Bureau of Land Management's oil and gas management program, providing a total of \$75.9 million in appropriated funds focused on improving oil and gas permit application processing, streamlining leasing, and modernizing practices. The budget also includes \$19.0 million for the BLM coal management program, an \$8.0 million increase to reduce administrative processing times, simplify the lease application process, and improve the timeliness to complete lease sale fair market value determinations.

The 2018 budget includes \$78.1 million for Renewable Energy programs both on and offshore. Although a reduction from prior years, this funding level will sustain the current pace of development at a level consistent with anticipated project interest.

To ensure the public continues to receive the full value of natural resources production on Federal lands, in April, I signed a charter establishing a Royalty Policy Committee of 28 local, tribal, state, and other stakeholders to advise me on the fair market value of and revenue collection from Federal and Indian mineral and energy leases, including renewable energy sources.

THE NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Interior plays an important role in maintaining and improving the Nation's infrastructure. Interior's national role includes managing significant real property assets as well as conducting reviews and processing permits to support national infrastructure development as part of a balanced multiple land use strategy.

Interior's 2018 budget maintains the 2017 level of \$98.8 million for Fish and Wildlife Service planning and consultation activities. This level maintains the FWS capability to meet its legal consultation requirements and avoid logjams that could delay infrastructure projects and associated economic benefits. The BLM budget also directs base funding to address siting for energy transmission projects, and proposes an increase in the oil and gas management program to facilitate rights-of-way associated with energy development projects.

Interior manages an infrastructure asset portfolio with a replacement value exceeding \$300 billion, ranging from elementary and secondary schools serving Indian children, to highways and bridges serving the daily commuting needs of the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Interior owns approximately 43,000 buildings, 100,000 miles of road, and 80,000 structures—including iconic landmarks, as well as dams, bridges, laboratories, employee housing, and irrigation and power infrastructure. Taking care of this significant asset portfolio is a persistent challenge. Interior's deferred maintenance backlog has grown to over \$15 billion in 2016. Construction and maintenance funding across the Department totals \$1.4 billion in 2018, not including the Bureau of Reclamation.

From my first day on the job, one of my top priorities has been to prioritize efforts to address the National Park Service maintenance backlog. Our National Parks have 73 percent of Interior's deferred maintenance backlog while hosting 324 million visitors last year. The 2018 budget for NPS includes \$236.3 million for construction and deferred maintenance projects, an increase of \$21.0 million from 2017. Total estimated funding for NPS maintenance and construction needs including estimated recreation fee revenue is \$765.7 million, an increase of \$34.7 million from Fiscal Year 2017. This increase will support targeted and measurable upgrades to a number of the NPS' highest priority assets, including the first phase of repairs to the Arlington Memorial Bridge project.

AMERICA'S LANDS

In my first days in office, I issued two Secretarial Orders to expand access to public lands and increase hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities nationwide. The 2018 budget includes \$4.4 billion for the Department's land management operations in the NPS, FWS, and the BLM. While a reduction of \$354.3 million from 2017, this figure includes funding for operational programs as well as management and maintenance of the national parks, national wildlife refuges, and BLM's network of national conservation lands. Within land management operations, the budget prioritizes funding to protect and conserve America's public lands and natural resources, provide access to public lands for the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts, and ensure visitor safety.

To support land management priorities, funding for lower priority activities, such as Federal land acquisition projects, is reduced. The 2018 budget emphasizes taking care of our current assets, rather than adding more by purchasing new land. Accordingly, the budget for land acquisition programs is \$54.0 million, \$129.1 million below 2017. A small amount of funding is maintained in each bureau for emergencies or acquisition of inholdings needed to improve management of established areas or to increase public access.

To better manage and balance these responsibilities, the Department relies on its front-line land managers, field scientists, and partners to monitor, assess, and collect information about the status of resource conditions. Interior's U.S. Geological Survey is the Nation's leading source of expertise in earth and natural sciences and works closely with other Departmental bureaus and state, local, tribal and other Federal partners to help resource managers adapt to changing conditions on the

ground. The 2018 budget includes \$922.2 million for USGS programs, to focus on core science activities including land and water resources, energy and minerals, mapping, ecosystems, invasive species, natural hazards, and environmental health.

The 2018 request budgets responsibly for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program. The budget includes \$397 million for these payments as part of the discretionary request, to ensure continued support to the communities neighboring the Department's and other Federal lands without assuming enactment of separate legislation. The 2018 level for PILT is reduced 12 percent below the 2017 CR level, consistent with the total reduction in the Interior budget.

A key component of the Department's land stewardship is management of wildland fire. The 2018 budget provides \$389.4 million for wildfire suppression—the full 10-year average of suppression expenditures. This level of funding is projected to be sufficient to meet fire suppression needs in an average fire season without the risk of needing emergency transfers from other departmental accounts.

AMERICA'S WATERS

The 2018 budget also continues efforts to address the challenges of water availability and drought conditions.

The Department, primarily through the Bureau of Reclamation, works with states, tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to pursue a sustainable water supply for the West by providing Federal leadership and assistance on the efficient use of water. The 2018 budget continues these efforts to address the challenges of water availability.

Interior's \$1.1 billion budget request for Reclamation invests in our water and power infrastructure, facilitating the delivery of water to 31 million people across the West. It is the Nation's largest renewable energy resource, and the Bureau of Reclamation plays an important role as the second largest producer of hydropower in the United States.

This budget also continues to strengthen our Tribal Nations by implementing Indian water rights settlements, and focuses on the protection and restoration of aquatic and riparian environments to ensure we can continue to provide a reliable water supply and power to the West.

AMERICA'S TRUST RESPONSIBILITIES

Interior maintains strong and important relationships with Native and insular communities, helping to promote efficient and effective governance and to support nation-building and self-determination. The Department provides services directly, or through contracts, grants or compacts, to 567 federally recognized tribes with a service population of nearly 2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. The budget prioritizes support for programs serving the broadest service population and proposes reductions in initiatives that are more narrowly focused. The President's budget maintains the Administration's strong support for the principle of tribal self-determination, and efforts to strengthen tribal communities across Indian Country. The budget includes full funding for Contract Support Costs and Tribal Grant Support Costs that tribes incur from managing Federal Indian programs.

The 2018 budget request includes \$786.4 million to continue support for core Indian education programs, including formula funding and operation and maintenance funding for elementary and secondary schools, and support for post-secondary programs. The 2018 budget continues to meet Federal responsibilities outlined in enacted land and water rights claim settlements with Indian tribes, and includes \$160.8 million for authorized settlements and technical and legal support involving tribal water rights, to maintain the Department's ability to complete these settlement requirements within the statutory time frames.

In recognition of the importance of the Nation's relationship with Palau and the Pacific national security strategy, the budget requests \$123.9 million of discretionary Department of Defense appropriations to be transferred to the Department of the Interior to support enactment of the 2010 Compact Review Agreement with Palau.

MANAGEMENT AND REFORM

As part of the President's March 2017, Executive Order on a Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the executive branch, the Administration launched a government-wide effort to create a leaner, more efficient, and more responsive government. The Order directs agencies to begin planning to operate at the funding levels in the 2018 budget and develop a broader Agency Reform Plan to address long-term workforce reductions. Interior is moving prudently with implementation and has put in place hiring controls to enable limited hiring, prioritizing filling field positions rather than

office positions, and limiting hires in the Washington, DC, and Denver, Colorado, areas. This process enables the Department to continue to fill important positions as work is underway to develop a comprehensive and thoughtful agency plan.

The 2018 budget reduces lower priority programs \$1.6 billion below 2017 and supports 59,968 full time equivalents. This represents an estimated reduction of roughly 4,000 full time equivalent staff from 2017. To accomplish this, the Department will rely on a combination of attrition, reassignments, and separation incentives. Actual attrition rates and acceptance of separation incentives will determine the need for further action to reduce staffing.

Reducing the Department's physical footprint and seeking ways to consolidate space and resources will continue to be management objectives going forward. Efforts will build on several multi-year actions to reduce Interior's nationwide facilities footprint and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its information technology infrastructure and financial reporting capabilities. Ensuring the Department's cybersecurity strength continues to be a priority. The 2018 budget maintains \$10.0 million in the appropriated working capital fund to continue the Department's remediation of its cybersecurity systems and processes.

BUREAU HIGHLIGHTS

Bureau of Land Management—The 2018 request for the BLM is \$1.1 billion, a decrease of \$162.7 million below the 2017 CR level and \$180.5 million below the 2017 enacted level. The budget proposes \$963.2 million for Management of Lands and Resources and \$89.8 million for Oregon and California Grant Lands, BLM's two primary operational appropriation accounts.

The BLM request features increases in oil, gas and coal management programs reflecting national energy security priorities. The budget proposes \$75.9 million for Oil and Gas Management to support permitting and rights-of-way processing, streamline leasing, and modernize practices. The budget also includes \$19.0 million to strengthen BLM's Coal Management program, an increase of \$8.0 million from 2017.

To maintain the BLM's land stewardship responsibilities, the budget includes \$67.8 million for Rangeland Management and \$70.7 million for the Wild Horse and Burro Management program. As part of a broader effort to consider all necessary options to manage the unsustainable growth of this program, the budget proposes to eliminate current appropriations language restricting the BLM's ability to use the tools provided in the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act and enable BLM to manage on-range herds more effectively and humanely. The budget also proposes \$47.2 million for Recreation Resources Management and \$27.7 million to continue support for the National Conservation Land areas.

The budget includes \$89.8 million for the Oregon and California Grant Lands programs. At this level, the budget prioritizes offering the allowable sale quantity in new resource management plans.

Mineral development on Federal lands is important to the national economy. However, a long-standing challenge is to provide a fair return to taxpayers for the use of these natural resources without discouraging development. To meet this challenge, the Department will conduct a study starting in 2017 to evaluate the production and development of hardrock minerals from Federal lands. The review will include an analysis of revenue recovered by other entities, including other countries, which permit mining on their land. The Department will also consult with other appropriate agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture. The findings will be considered as part of ongoing efforts to improve agency management and streamline permitting related to natural resources produced from Federal lands.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management—The 2018 President's budget for BOEM is \$171.0 million, slightly above the 2017 CR level, including \$114.2 million in current appropriations and \$56.8 million in offsetting collections from rental receipts and cost recoveries. The budget maintains a level program by increasing appropriated funding by \$35.5 million to address a commensurate shortfall in estimated offsetting rental receipts and cost recoveries. The 2018 budget features a \$10.2 million increase to support the development of a new Five-Year Plan for the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement—The 2018 President's budget request for BSEE is \$204.9 million, slightly above the 2017 CR level, including \$112.0 million in current appropriations and \$92.9 million in offsetting collections from rental receipts, cost recoveries, and inspection fees. The budget maintains a strong offshore safety and environmental enforcement program by increasing appropriations and estimated inspection fee revenue to address anticipated shortfalls in offsetting rental receipts and other cost recoveries. The 2018 budget includes a

\$1.2 million increase for technical training to expand staff development efforts for BSEE's inspector, engineer, and geoscientist workforce, and \$12.7 million for oil spill research, a reduction of \$2.2 million from 2017.

Bureau of Reclamation—The 2018 budget request for the Bureau of Reclamation is \$1.1 billion in discretionary appropriations. This figure reflects a decrease of 13.1 percent from the 2017 CR level. Of the total, \$960 million is for the Water and Related Resources account, Reclamation's largest account; \$59 million is for the Policy and Administration account; \$37 million is for the California Bay Delta Restoration account; and \$41.4 million is for the Central Valley Project Restoration Fund.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement—The 2018 budget request for OSMRE is \$129.4 million in current appropriations, \$110.7 million below the 2017 CR level. The majority of this reduction reflects the elimination of \$89.9 million for Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Development Grants. Although beneficial, funding for this pilot program overlaps with existing mandatory Abandoned Mine Lands grants which continue without any proposed changes. The budget includes \$60.2 million for state and tribal regulatory grants, a level consistent with anticipated state and tribal program obligations.

U.S. Geological Survey—The 2018 budget request for the USGS is \$922.2 million, \$137.8 million below the 2017 CR level. The budget includes \$70.9 million for satellite operations, which supports continued development of the Landsat 9 ground systems, supporting a launch date in early Fiscal Year 2021 to replace the Landsat 7 satellite, which is reaching the end of its usable life.

The request emphasizes energy and mineral development, supporting essential hazards monitoring, and providing scientific information to support decision making by resource managers and policy makers. The budget maintains support for nationwide networks of more than 8,000 streamgages and nearly 3,000 earthquake sensors. The request provides \$17.3 million for nationwide efforts to counter invasive species and wildlife diseases such as white-nose syndrome and highly pathogenic avian influenza, and the budget maintains \$17.3 million for 40 cooperative research units that support state-specific needs, particularly related to fish and game species. It continues acquisition of modern elevation data for Alaska and the 3-year cycle of topographic map updates for the contiguous United States.

The 2018 request proposes to realign the 2018 budget structure to create a new Land Resources activity to reflect focused science related to on-the-ground land management and adaptive management challenges. As part of this request, the budget proposes \$17.4 million for the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers, reflecting the proposed consolidation of eight regional centers to four.

Fish and Wildlife Service—The 2018 President's budget requests \$1.3 billion for FWS programs, a decrease of \$202.9 million from the 2017 CR level. The budget includes \$1.2 billion for FWS operations, a decrease of \$85.3 million below 2017. Within Resource Management, the budget prioritizes funding to maintain operations and maintenance for the National Wildlife Refuge System (\$470.1 million) and the National Fish Hatchery System (\$51.9 million). Funding will continue operations for all refuge areas and hatchery sites.

The budget includes \$225.2 million for Ecological Services programs with an emphasis on species recovery and planning consultation activities. Consistent with efforts to focus adaptive management related science within the USGS, the request proposes to eliminate funding for Science Support at \$17.0 million and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives at \$13.0 million.

The budget is \$118.6 million for FWS conservation grants including \$52.8 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, \$33.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, \$19.3 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, \$9.0 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, and \$3.9 million for Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation. Consistent with decreases in other land acquisition programs across the Department, the request proposes to eliminate funding for Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund land acquisition grants.

National Park Service—The 2018 President's budget request for NPS is \$2.6 billion, \$296.6 million below the 2017 CR level.

The budget proposes \$2.2 billion for NPS operations. Within this account, funding is prioritized for the care and maintenance of existing resources. The budget includes \$99.3 million for repair and rehabilitation projects, which addresses the deferred maintenance backlog, as well as \$112.7 million for cyclic maintenance projects, which ensures maintenance is conducted in a timely fashion to avoid increasing the deferred maintenance backlog.

The budget proposes \$226.5 million for Construction projects, an increase of \$34.0 million to help address deferred maintenance and allow for targeted and measurable upgrades to a number of the NPS's highest priority assets. Within this request is \$18.2 million for phase one construction requirements for the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Also included in the request is \$15.0 million in appropriated funds for the Centennial Challenge program to provide the Federal match to leverage partner donations for signature projects and programs. An additional \$15.0 million from fee revenue is also anticipated for 2018 to support Centennial projects.

The request provides \$37.0 million for National Recreation and Preservation programs to support local community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. The budget assumes savings of \$18.8 million from the proposed elimination of payments to National Heritage Areas. The 2018 budget includes \$51.1 million for the Historic Preservation Fund core grants-in-aid programs. The budget proposes to shift support for Land and Water Conservation Fund State Grants from appropriated to mandatory funding comparable to an estimated \$90 million the program will receive from oil and gas activities from certain Gulf of Mexico offshore leases.

Indian Affairs—The 2018 President's budget request for Indian Affairs is \$2.5 billion, \$303.3 million below the 2017 CR level. Funding for Operation of Indian Programs totals \$2.1 billion, a decrease of \$181.1 million below 2017. In 2018, priority is given to programs serving the broadest audience rather than initiatives or pilots. Within this total is \$786.4 million for Bureau of Indian Education programs where funding focuses on direct school operations and full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs. The main operating account also includes \$349.3 million for Public Safety and Justice programs and \$277.5 million for Trust Services programs, which includes the elimination of the Tribal Climate Resilience program.

The budget fully funds Contract Support Costs at \$241.6 million, \$35.4 million below 2017, which will cover all anticipated requirements at the requested program funding level. The budget requests \$143.3 million for Construction programs. The 2018 budget prioritizes dams, irrigation projects, and irrigation systems which deliver water to aid economic development as well as protect lives, resources, and property. The budget prioritizes funding within education construction for operations and maintenance of existing facilities. The budget also includes \$14.0 million to provide payments to ongoing Indian Land and Water settlements and \$6.7 million for the Indian Guaranteed Loan Program.

Departmental Offices

Office of the Secretary—The 2018 budget request for Departmental Operations is \$123.9 million, \$596.5 million below the 2017 CR. The majority of this reduction is \$451.1 million associated with the shift of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program which was appropriated within Departmental Operations in 2017. In 2018, the budget proposes to fund PILT as discretionary funding within Department-wide Programs. The budget also reflects the proposed transfer of \$140.3 million associated with the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to a new appropriation within Department-wide Programs. The proposed transfer of ONRR funding will increase transparency in the budget for the Department's energy revenue programs. The 2018 request for remaining Office of Secretary programs reflects a reduction of \$4.0 million from central program management activities across the Office of the Secretary organization. Of this, \$2.6 million is associated with reductions to the Office of Valuation Services consistent with the proposed Department-wide decrease for new land acquisition.

Office of Insular Affairs—The 2018 OIA budget request is \$84.3 million, \$19.0 million below the 2017 CR. In addition, the majority of OIA's budget proposal reflects a request to fully fund the renegotiated Compact with Palau by transferring \$123.9 million from the Department of Defense, rather than \$13.1 million in extended incremental annual payments. The Compact is an important element of the Pacific national security strategy.

Office of the Solicitor—The 2018 budget proposes \$65.7 million for the Office of the Solicitor, the same as the 2017 CR level, to provide legal counsel, administer the Department's ethics program, and help resolve legal issues among bureaus and offices as they fulfill their duties.

Office of Inspector General—The 2018 budget proposes \$50.0 million for the Office of Inspector General, the same as the 2017 CR level, to continue support for audit and investigations across the Department.

Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians—The 2018 budget requests \$119.4 million for OST, \$19.4 million below the 2017 CR level. The budget proposes a \$3.7 million reduction below 2017 in Field Operations reflecting prioritization of services to continue operations at the beneficiary call center. A reduction of \$3.1

million is proposed within Historical Trust Accounting in expectation of reduced requirements. Smaller additional reductions are taken across the organization.

Department-wide Programs

Payments in Lieu of Taxes—The 2018 budget proposes \$396.9 million in discretionary funding for PILT, a decrease of \$54.3 million from the comparable 2017 CR level of \$451.1 million appropriated in Departmental Operations in 2016. This is a reduction of 12 percent, commensurate with the Department of the Interior's overall reduction from 2017 CR budget levels.

Office of Natural Resources Revenue—The 2018 budget request includes \$137.8 million for ONRR's receipts management programs, a decrease of \$2.5 million below the comparable 2017 CR level of \$140.3 million. The 2018 budget request proposes to transfer ONRR's receipts management program from the Office of the Secretary's Departmental Operations account to a separate appropriation within Department-wide Programs to increase transparency of the program. The request includes \$3.5 million for anticipated contract cost increases for the Minerals Revenue Management Support System.

Central Hazardous Materials Fund—The 2018 budget requests \$2.0 million for the Central Hazardous Materials Fund, \$8.0 million below the 2017 CR. The budget request funds program management and legal staff. The program will fund the highest priority remediation projects based on the availability of recoveries and focus resources on remediation projects with potentially responsible parties.

Wildland Fire Management—The 2018 budget request for the Wildland Fire Management Program is \$873.5 million. The total request represents a decrease of \$118.3 million from the 2017 CR level for the Wildland Fire Management and FLAME accounts. At this level the request provides \$389.4 million for Suppression Operations to fully fund the 10-year average. To streamline financial management processes and improve the efficiency in allocating suppression funding, the Department proposes to fund all suppression activities in the Wildland Fire Management account and eliminate the separate FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund account once all current balances in the FLAME account are drawn down. The request also includes \$322.2 million for Preparedness activities, essentially level with 2017, and \$149.5 million for Fuels Management, \$20.2 million below 2017.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration—The 2018 request for NRDA is \$4.6 million, a decrease of \$3.2 million below the 2017 CR level. The budget includes funding needed for ongoing damage assessments and restoration activities.

Working Capital Fund—The 2018 budget proposes \$59.5 million for the appropriated portion of the Department's Working Capital Fund, a decrease of \$7.5 million from the 2017 CR level. The reduction is from funds requested for the Financial and Business Management System which is proposed at \$46.3 million. The request maintains \$10.0 million for Department-wide Cybersecurity needs.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Bureau of Reclamation Title Transfer—The Administration is developing a proposal to better facilitate title transfer of Reclamation facilities to non-Federal entities when such transfers are beneficial to all parties. This proposal will allow local water managers to make their own decisions to improve water management at the local level, while allowing Reclamation to focus management efforts on projects with a greater Federal nexus.

Cancel Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Account Balances—The budget proposes legislation to cancel \$230.0 million in unobligated balances from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act program over a 3-year period. This would redirect a portion of the program balances to the Treasury for broader taxpayer use. The SNPLMA program is not proposed for elimination and viable conservation efforts will continue to be supported.

Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act Payments—The Administration proposes to repeal revenue sharing payments to four coastal states—Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—and their local governments, which are currently set to expand substantially starting in 2018. This proposal will ensure the sale of public resources from Federal waters owned by all Americans, benefits all Americans. Mandatory funding for LWCF State Grants would continue, but this legislative proposal would replace GOMESA's complicated allocation formula with a fixed annual appropriation of a comparable dollar amount, starting at \$90.0 million in 2018 and increasing to \$125.0 million in 2022 and remaining at \$125.0 million each year thereafter.

Land and Water Conservation Fund—The LWCF receipts authorization expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2018 and the Administration will review options for reauthorization, including consideration of a range of conservation-related investments that could be funded through the LWCF.

Oil and Gas Leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—The Administration will propose legislation to allow oil and gas leasing in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge also known as the “1002 area.” The budget assumes lease sales would begin in 2022 or 2023, allowing adequate time for the completion of appropriate environmental reviews and an updated assessment of the state of the oil and gas market and lease bidding potential prior to scheduling specific lease sales. An additional lease sale or sales would be held in 2026 or 2027. Lease sales in the ANWR are estimated to generate \$3.5 billion in bonus bids to be split between the U.S. Treasury and the state of Alaska. The proposal is estimated to generate a net of \$1.8 billion in new revenue to the Treasury over 10 years.

Reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act—The budget assumes permanent reauthorization of FLTFA’s land sale authority, allowing Interior to dispose of lands with low conservation value and use the proceeds to acquire lands with higher conservation values, consistent with the original FLTFA mandate.

Recreation Fee Program—The budget proposes to permanently reauthorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which currently expires in September 2018. As a precaution, appropriations language is also submitted with the budget proposing a 1-year extension through September 2019. The revenues collected by Interior from these recreation fees—nearly \$290 million annually—are an important source of funding for land management operations, maintenance, and improvements to recreation facilities on public lands.

Termination of EPAct Geothermal Payments to Counties—The budget proposes to restore Federal geothermal leasing revenue allocations to the historical formula of 50 percent to the states and 50 percent to the U.S. Treasury by repealing Section 224(b) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

OFFSETTING COLLECTIONS AND FEES

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Offshore Inspection Fees—The budget includes appropriations language to amend the current fee structure for BSEE inspection fees to better align with BSEE’s inspection practices and program costs. The language structures fees charged for the inspection of offshore facilities to distinguish between those “without processing equipment” or “with processing equipment” and incorporate consideration of the number of wells and water depth. These changes to the fee structure are estimated to generate \$65.0 million in 2018.

National Wildlife Refuge Damage Cost Recovery—The budget includes appropriations language to authorize the FWS to retain recoveries from responsible parties to restore or replace damages they cause. This is similar to authorities provided to the NPS for damages to national parks and monuments.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the President’s 2018 budget request for the Department of the Interior.

In closing, this is a responsible budget to help balance the Federal budget by 2027. It maintains core functions important to the American people, including providing the public the unique American experience that comes from visiting our parks, refuges, and public lands. It reflects tough choices to prioritize and focus limited resources where investments have the most impact, but continues to deliver access and services which are critical to Americans. I thank you again for your continued support of the Department’s mission. I look forward to answering questions about this budget. This concludes my written statement.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO THE HON. RYAN ZINKE, SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Questions Submitted by Rep. McClintock

Question 1. There are some 150 conservation corps across the Nation. These corps have a long tradition of stewardship of our public lands and waters. By partnering with corps, land managers leverage their budgets with cost-effective projects that reduce the multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog, remediate wildfires, curb the spread of invasive species, improve access to public lands, build and maintain trails, and ensure good fish and wildlife habitat for enthusiasts, hunters, and anglers.

—Are you aware of any impediments that have limited growth of this program?

Answer. Interior bureaus have a long history of collaborating with a wide variety of volunteer groups, education partners and youth organizations including conservation corps. These partnerships assist land managers in maintaining resources in a cost effective manner while providing participants with developmental jobs skills training and education. Not all of the work done by land management agencies can be done by conservation corps, but we are not aware of any impediments to using these partnerships, to the extent that our resources permit, where it is appropriate to do so.

Question 2. After years of talking and concerted efforts by telecommunications companies and concessioners, too many front country areas of our national parks and too many key road corridors in our parks still offer no cellular or WiFi connectivity. There are safety issues and lost opportunities to boost park experiences with helpful visitor information.

—Does the FY 2018 budget envision additional WiFi connectivity requests for proposals?

—Will this be one of your priorities as Secretary?

Answer. Yes, one of my top priorities is to expand recreational access to public lands and waters, and connectivity is one way to achieve this goal. As I have previously remarked, in parks, we're the old generation; the young generation appreciates connectivity and we should embrace that to make sure the park experience going down a trail is available on your phone. We will look to build public-private partnerships to make our outdoor recreation experience even better.

Question 3. Across the National Park System stays are down. RV overnights in national park campgrounds are down more than 2 million, or almost 50 percent, at a time when the RV market is booming. Recently while speaking to the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association you stated, "As the secretary, I don't want to be in the business of running campgrounds."

—Does the FY 2018 budget include a major push to improve and transfer campground operations?

Answer. This budget is focused on leveraging public-private partnerships in order to improve visitor experiences on public lands and waters, while also helping to reduce the Department's maintenance backlog. The Park Service has a long history of working with our partners and concessioners to create positive experiences for visitors. We look to improve and build upon that cooperation.

Question 4. Mr. Secretary, you have previously stated that one of your top priorities as Secretary was to increase employee morale and ensure that employees on the front lines have the right tools, resources, and flexibility to make the decisions to get their jobs done. According to the 2016 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings compiled by the Partnership for Public Service and based on OPM's annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, employee engagement at DOI has been improving since 2015. However, several of the agency's components continue to rank low in their employee engagement, including the Bureaus of Land Management, Indian Affairs and the Park Service.

—What are you doing to hold leadership across the Department accountable for engaging employees? How can this Committee help?

Answer. As I said at the hearing, we are looking at how to better leverage and align bureau resources in the field, cut duplication, and push assets and personnel where they should be. Accountability from managers, for employee actions and program performance, will be an important component as we move forward. We are reviewing a number of comments on reform that we have received from the public and we expect to include some proposals with the FY 2019 budget request.

Question 5. Within the Department of the Interior, agencies like the National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Fish and Wildlife Service frequently interact with citizens in their day-to-day operations. As part of their 2015 cross-agency priority (CAP) goals, agencies should be working to ensure the delivery of smarter, better and faster service to their citizens.

— *What steps are Department and agency leaders taking to meet their customer service CAP goals?*

— *What is the agency doing to collect feedback from customers to improve its service to citizens?*

— *How is the Department incorporating citizens' experience into its reform plan due to OMB on June 30?*

Answer. I have said before that it is my belief that more meaningful involvement and cooperation with communities closest to our public lands will result in innovative ideas and practices as well as better stewardship of the land and its resources. We are in the process of updating the Department's strategic plan and, as part of this process, are reviewing goals, objectives, and key performance indicators to best reflect our team's priorities and main activities as we look forward to the next 5 years. The Department's Annual Performance Plan and Report for FY 2017–FY 2018 was released on May 26, 2017, www.doi.gov/bpp, and describes in some detail the agency's priority goals.

Question 6. The government reorganization Executive Order and subsequent OMB guidance attempt to align government reform efforts with the Federal budget and performance planning processes. In response, agencies are developing high-level reform and workforce reduction plans outlining proposals to reduce duplication, increase efficiency and maximize employee performance.

— *What are you doing as Secretary to lead reform and reshaping efforts within the Department?*

— *What actions will the Department take to reduce duplication in its operations, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its services and maximize the performance of its staff?*

Answer. As I said at the hearing, we are looking at how to better leverage and align bureau resources in the field, cut duplication, and push assets and personnel where they should be. We are reviewing a number of comments on reform that we have received from the public and we expect to include some proposals with the FY 2019 budget request.

Question 7. Just 14 percent of the DOI workforce falls under age 34, but 48 percent of the workforce is over 50. Filling positions in remote locations and retaining employees are difficult issues for the Department and, in particular, for organizations like the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and Bureau of Land Management.

— *What barriers does the Department face in reaching and utilizing entry-level talent to fill these key positions?*

— *What steps is the Department taking to better attract, recruit, and retain the next generation of public servants to solve the Department's complex challenges?*

Answer. Recent Government Accountability Office studies have reported on the challenges that the Department and its bureaus have faced in recruiting and retaining staff. It is important that we have an effective workforce, particularly in those positions doing the work on the ground. As part of my review of the Department's organization, we are looking at how to better leverage and align bureau resources in the field, cut duplication, and allocate assets and personnel more effectively.

Question 8. Increasing Public Private Partnerships is one of the many ways to help reduce the National Park Service maintenance backlog.

— *Which types of P3s do you believe will be most effective in addressing the backlog while also upholding the guiding principles of the NPS?*

Answer. In July, I hosted a roundtable meeting focused on expanding public-private partnerships on America's public lands in order to make the outdoor recreation experience even better. Public-private partnerships can help address the backlog by upgrading visitor accommodations, including RV hookups and campgrounds, expanding visitor services, including boat ramps and cafeterias, to name a few.

Question 9. Historic leasing is an example of a public-private partnership that could help alleviate the deferred maintenance backlog.

—*What are your recommendations for how to expand this innovative approach?*

Answer. The Department is currently reviewing opportunities to lease underutilized Federal properties, both historic and non-historic, as one approach to addressing the maintenance backlog. Public-private partnerships will help reduce the Department's maintenance backlog, while improving the visitor experience on public lands and waters.

Question 10. What are the goals that the National Park Service hoped to achieve with the Capital investment strategy?

—*Does the focus on the high-priority projects come at the expense of lower-priority projects?*

Answer. The President's budget proposes to balance the Federal Government's budget by 2027, in order to do this priorities must be identified. The 2018 budget prioritizes taking care of the assets we currently own. The majority of ongoing operational requirements cannot be deferred and maintenance needs have been postponed for too long.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Thompson

Question 1. Last year, EPA finalized a rule on Privately Owned Treatment Works (POTWs). Since then, I've weighed in with the agency to express great concern over its impact on treatment facilities in Pennsylvania that appear to be inadvertently caught up in the regulation. Although the rule was intended for unconventional production, I've heard a lot of concern that water derived from conventional production will also be subject to the regulation due to a lack of definitions and the individual basins cited in the rule.

What is EPA doing to correct this problem and ensure that conventionally derived wastewater is not subject to the POTW rule?

Answer. Because this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency and not the Department of the Interior, we would defer to the EPA for a response to this question.

Question 2. I would like to request an update on the status of the remedial action at the Folcroft Landfill, a property which was purchased by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1980 and incorporated into the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge under legislative authority provided by Congress. In 2001, the property was added to the National Priorities List (NPL). Congress initially appropriated \$11 million for the development of the Refuge, and then increased funding to \$19.5 million for expansion, including acquisition of the Folcroft Landfill (P.L. 96-315). The legislative history of the Refuge indicates that Congress intended a portion of the funds to be directed toward investigation and on-going maintenance of the Folcroft Landfill (P.L. 99-191). Guidance from the EPA requires the Agency to consider future land use in the selection of a remedy. What communication has the Department of the Interior had with the EPA regarding the selection of a remedy for the Folcroft Landfill? What remedies are under consideration? Are the remedies under consideration by EPA consistent with the future use of the property outlined in the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge's 2012 Comprehensive Conservation Plan?

Question 3. What is the timeline for implementation of a remedy? What role will the Department of the Interior play in the remediation effort? Can you provide an estimate of the cost of the remediation? What will be the contribution from the Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies that have been identified as potentially responsible parties? Are any of the \$19.5 million appropriated by Congress still available to fund this effort, or will additional appropriations be necessary?

Question 4. What measures must be put in place by the Department of the Interior to maintain the property once remediation efforts have been completed?

Answer to Questions 2–4. During the 1980s and 1990s, the EPA and FWS undertook several investigations of contamination within the Folcroft Landfill and issued several reports of their findings.

EPA entered into an Administrative Settlement with a subset of private potentially responsible parties, known as the Folcroft Landfill Steering Committee (PRP Group), to perform a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS), pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The RI/FS work is being conducted by the PRP Group with EPA oversight and in coordination with the FWS. The Draft RI report, dated May 2017, was

submitted to EPA and FWS for review. Comments are currently being compiled and will be forwarded to the PRP Group for inclusion in the final document. Once the RI is completed, the FS, which discusses and evaluates potential remedies for the Folcroft Landfill, will be performed and a FS Report will be produced for the agencies' review and comment. It is anticipated the draft FS Report will be submitted for review in 2019 or 2020. Once alternatives have been evaluated, EPA will select a preferred remedy for the site in a Proposed Plan, which will be made available for public review and comment. Upon receipt of public input, EPA will publish a selected remedy in a Record of Decision. The FS Report and Proposed Plan should have information regarding estimated costs for the various remedy alternatives.

An integral part of the CERCLA process is the identification of "legally applicable or relevant and appropriate standard(s), requirement(s), criteria, or limitation(s)" (ARARs) pursuant to the Section 121(d). In May 2017, FWS provided EPA and the PRP Group with ARARs for the Folcroft Landfill that include the Refuge's 2012 Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and other relevant documents to be considered with respect to future use of the Refuge. FWS has emphasized that any response action selected for the site must comply with these requirements in order to be compatible with the intended purpose and future use of the Refuge. In addition, the Department issued an Environmental Compliance Memorandum applicable to CERCLA response actions on Department-managed lands; it states that the Department must concur with a remedy that another agency selects for Department-managed land, in order to grant access for implementation of that remedy. This should ensure that FWS and the Refuge have an adequate voice in determining the remedy for the Folcroft Landfill, including ensuring that future land uses are appropriately considered.

Once a remedy has been selected for the Folcroft Landfill, EPA, FWS, the PRP Group, and any other appropriate parties, will negotiate the terms of funding and implementing the remedy. FWS does not immediately have a response for the inquiry regarding the funds appropriated from Congress in 1972 (P.L. 92-327), 1976 (P.L. 94-548), and 1980 (P.L. 96-315), "for acquisition of the Tinicum National Environmental Center, for construction of environmental educational center facilities, and for other development projects on the Center," (P.L. 96-315 July 25, 1980) but a search has commenced for records from that time period to confirm the expenditures for these expressed purposes.

Once a remedy has been implemented, FWS will amend its CCP to include any necessary restrictions on activities (such as actions that could disturb the integrity of the remedy), so that the proper institutional or engineering controls are memorialized.

Questions Submitted by Rep. LaMalfa

Question 1. As we all know, the Endangered Species Act is in need of significant reforms, with the success rate of species' moving from endangered to fully recovered around 1-3 percent. In my district, the Service's own scientists recommended de-listing the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, yet it remains listed today and imposes major costs to flood protection and other projects.

Listing of other species, like the Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog, has resulted in such low-impact events as a trail run being canceled. Federal agencies actually believed humans running on existing trails could negatively impact listed frogs. What is the Fish and Wildlife Service doing to review the listing status for threatened or endangered species which have been recommended for de-listing, like the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle?

Answer. I agree that ESA is in need of reforms and modernization so it can operate in a more effective manner, which is why the Department has testified before this Committee in support of certain bills proposed by your colleagues. The FWS de-lists and down-lists species when their status changes and resources are available. Getting species off the list due to recovery is a priority, and allows us to focus our attention and resources on species that need attention. The pace at which de-listings and down-listings occur is dependent on resources devoted to on-the-ground recovery implementation and the progress toward recovery of individual species, as well as on the complexity of status reviews and rulemakings. A total of \$225.2 million is proposed in the President's FY 2018 budget request to implement the ESA and related programs under FWS's Ecological Services program, of which \$79.6 million is for recovery of species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. At these funding levels, the FWS will continue to address approximately 50 species that have been identified for potential de-listing or down-listing under the ESA based upon

recent 5-year status reviews. FWS plans on making final determinations for six species currently proposed for de-listing in FY 2018.

Question 2. Last year, we saw the Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service issue conflicting requirements for the operation of Shasta Dam, one demanding higher water releases, the other demanding lower releases. These proposals would have dramatically reduced water supplies for homes and farms.

Could centralizing responsibility for ESA-listed species with the Fish & Wildlife Service prevent conflicting directives like these? For example, having the Fish & Wildlife Service subsume the responsibilities of the National Marine Fisheries Service?

Answer. This Administration is examining all options to better align agency resources in the field both within Interior and across the Federal Government in order to reduce administrative duplication and better leverage taxpayer dollars. This review includes consolidating Interior bureaus with other Federal agencies. The Administration is pursuing near- and long-term strategies to achieve a leaner, and more accountable and efficient government.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Hice

Question 1. As you are aware, President Trump has asked for an all-hands-on-deck approach to offshore research and development, and you yourself signed an order on May 1, 2017 directing Interior to look at the entire Gulf of Mexico region for potential drilling sites. However, A.M. Kurta, acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, sent a letter to Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), on April 26, 2017, stating his belief that military training and related exercises in the eastern Gulf necessitate a continuation of Congress' ban on drilling in the area (see Letter on page 104).

• *Eastern Gulf Of Mexico—Shared Use with DoD*

—As a Navy SEAL Commander, you have a strong understanding of the need for military preparedness. How do you reconcile the mission of your Department to promote responsible Federal offshore development with the DoD's mission of military preparedness? Can the two co-exist if the moratorium is lifted?

Answer. Yes, oil and natural gas exploration and development can co-exist safely on the OCS, including in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. This is made evident by the fact that in the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (CPA) there are 822 active leases, 36 percent of all leases in the CPA reside within DoD operations or warning areas. The CPA contains the highest amount of oil and gas production on the OCS. Another example is that out of the 23 total platforms on the Pacific OCS, 11 reside within a DoD equity area. The Department and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management work closely with the DoD to identify those areas that industry may gain access to via the offshore oil and gas leasing process and to develop lease terms and conditions that protect DoD interests.

—In the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, military preparedness operations coincide with potential oil and gas development. This requires constant, open communication and an understanding and respect for the mission of both Departments occupying the land. How will you coordinate with the DoD to ensure mutual, responsible management of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico?

Answer. As with all offshore leasing programs and initiatives, BOEM works closely with DoD under a Memorandum of Agreement that facilitates the coordination of mutual concerns on the Outer Continental Shelf. DoD is consulted early in the leasing program development process and collaboration is maintained all the way through the individual lease sale execution.

• *The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) "National Oil and Gas Leasing Program" (previously known as the 5-Year Plan)*

—You've called a new 5-year plan, now known as a "National Oil and Gas Leasing Program." How will the new plan differ from the previously approved plan?

Answer. The new plan is being developed under the same process prescribed by the OCS Lands Act as all other recent 5-year programs. As we are early in the new program development it is not possible to say if, or how, the new program may differ from the current approved program.

• *Atlantic*

—In order to responsibly manage our Nation's natural resources, we must first account for what we have. Please explain the importance of conducting geological and geophysical research in our offshore areas, and how we can use this information to make informed decisions regarding resource management.

Answer. The main objective of the acquisition and analysis of geological and geophysical data is the development of maps and other information that can guide and inform our work on the OCS. This is done by incorporating the data acquired through G&G surveys and analyzing technical information, which develops a basic knowledge of the geologic history of an area and its effects on hydrocarbon or strategic/critical minerals generation, distribution, and accumulation within the planning area. G&G surveys are not used exclusively for oil and gas exploration. Seismic surveys, which include geologic coring, are also helpful in identifying sand used for restoration of our Nation's beaches and barrier islands following severe weather events and for protecting coasts and wetlands from erosion. Recent examples of BOEM's sand restoration projects include New Jersey, where Long Beach Island has been restored in response to erosion caused by Hurricane Sandy and Louisiana, where 1,100 acres of marsh, dune, and beach habitat at Whiskey Island have been reconstructed. Seismic and geologic coring surveys also provide information that is vital to the siting and development of offshore renewable energy facilities. G&G surveys also help to advance fundamental scientific knowledge and are currently conducted in the Gulf of Mexico and in countries around the world.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Grijalva

Sacred Sites:

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, without thoughtful review, land management decisions relating to mining and energy development have the potential to degrade and desecrate sacred sites, areas, and landscapes. How will your approach to energy development on public lands comply with the Federal Government's legal and moral obligation to protect and preserve sacred places and Native Peoples' religious cultural rights and practices?

Answer. I strongly believe the Department can responsibly develop energy resources while working in coordination with tribes on a government-to-government basis. I am committed to working with tribes to ensure meaningful consultation on land management decisions occurs, not only with the Bureau of Land Management, but also with other cooperating bureaus that would have an impact on tribes.

Tribal Climate Resilience:

Question 2. Are American Indian and Native Alaskan communities facing profound challenges to their culture, economies, and livelihoods because of climate change?

Answer. The Department is working to support tribal governments and trust land managers through the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Tribal Resilience Program (TRP) with training, data, tools and access to technical experts in order to understand the vulnerabilities of these communities and identify risk management strategies. Coastal tribes in particular face risk management challenges ranging from harmful algal blooms, to ocean acidification, degrading ecosystems, changes in food availability, and storm surge and disaster recovery.

Question 3. Would you agree that the Federal Government has an essential and unique role in helping tribal nations prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on their land and natural resources?

Answer. As indicated in the response to the previous question, the Department fills an important role through the TRP, which coordinates with other Federal, tribal, and state partners to invest in information and tools needed to support managers, thus enabling tribal and trust managers to implement strategies for resilient communities and to encourage cooperative solutions.

Question 4. Why does this budget eliminate the Tribal Climate Resilience program?

Answer. The budget request made difficult choices this year. The Department's budget prioritizes self-governance and self-determination, and focuses funding in Indian Country on core service activities, fully funding the costs for tribes to admin-

ister programs for themselves, and maintains essential management functions for tribal resources, among other things.

Question 5. The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Tribal Climate Resilience Program was one of the few programs at BIA with the word 'climate' in its name. As of last week, the word 'climate' has been removed from the title of the BIA program. Did you direct your staff to not use "climate change," in written memos, briefings or other written communication?

Answer. No, Department staff have not been directed in this manner. As an example, climate change continues to be listed as a priority on the Department's official website.

Question 6. Did the President direct your staff to not use "climate change," in written memos, briefings or other written communication?

Answer. No.

Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii:

Question 7. The National Invasive Species Council is located within the Department of the Interior and is responsible for coordinating the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii. Will you commit the Department of the Interior to full participation in implementing the Regional Biosecurity Plan?

Answer. The Department understands the importance of biosecurity in the Pacific region, and we continue to support the intent and scope of the Regional Biosecurity Plan, which supplements ongoing activities at the Department to deal with invasive species. The Department is coordinating with NISC and other relevant Federal agencies to implement the Regional Biosecurity Plan.

Policy and Managerial Decisions:

Question 8. Can you point to a single significant policy or managerial decision you have made as Secretary that has been to the detriment of the coal, oil, and natural gas industries?

Answer. As I said at my confirmation hearing, as Secretary I am committed to managing our Federal lands in a way that best serves those who use it, including for recreation, conservation, and responsible energy development.

Coal Industry Jobs:

Question 9. How many Americans were employed in the U.S. coal industry in 1985?

Question 10. How many Americans were employed in the U.S. coal industry in 2008?

Question 11. What factors do you believe led to the decline in U.S. coal jobs between 1985 and 2008?

Question 12. According to both you and President Trump, the "war on coal" is now over. You have enacted policies and made decisions with the intent of reviving the U.S. coal industry. How many jobs do you expect to return to the U.S. coal industry by November 2020?

Question 13. Are you confident that there will be more jobs in the U.S. coal industry in November 2020 than there were in November 2016?

Answer to Questions 9–13. One of my key priorities at the Department of the Interior is to support the Administration's America First Energy Plan and maintain our Nation's energy dominance by advancing domestic energy production, generating revenue, and creating and sustaining jobs throughout our country. The free market development of our abundant coal resources is an important component of our overall energy mix. An all-of-the-above energy approach that includes coal has positive impacts on our economy and rural communities that depend on coal jobs.

Department of the Interior Employees:

Question 14. As a Member of the House of Representatives and now as the Secretary you have said that the Interior Department needs more scientists in the field and fewer lawyers. However your FY 2018 budget request decreases full-time staff for the Bureau of Land Management by 11.3 percent, the National Park Service by 6.4 percent, and the U.S. Geological Survey by 13.7 percent. Employees of these bureaus include biologists, geologists, chemists, forestry technicians, and other

scientists. Conversely, the Office of the Solicitor—an office comprised almost entirely of lawyers—would add three full-time positions under your proposed budget. How does your budget proposal comport with your statements that the Department needs more scientists and fewer lawyers?

Answer. The goal is to create a more efficient government that effectively delivers programs of the highest importance to the public. I have tasked my team to review all programs across the Department to determine if there is duplication, and if so, how best to consolidate. This review process remains ongoing.

Science-Based Decision Making:

Question 15. Mr. Secretary, when you were still on this Committee, you stated in a 2015 hearing that with respect to the Interior Department's decision-making process, "I think we need to be more science-based and less politics, and that would be helpful." However your budget includes significant cuts to numerous scientific programs that conduct vital scientific work. Do you have any science-based evidence that the threats facing our Nation's land, water, and wildlife from climate change have decreased to the point that these cuts are appropriate?

15a. Do you believe that the cuts within your budget will allow decisions made by the Department of the Interior to be more science-based?

Answer. As I said at the hearing, in order to reach a balanced budget the Department had to make difficult decisions. I believe it will encourage the Department and its bureaus to be innovative when identifying ways to better manage programs and increase revenues. It is also a focused budget that will allow the Department to maintain its assets, offer a world-class experience on public lands, promote economic growth, and continue to provide unbiased, multi-discipline science for use in understanding, mapping, and managing natural resources.

Poaching and Trafficking:

Question 16. Your proposed budget includes significant funding cuts for programs that fight poaching and trafficking. It reduces the Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement and international affairs accounts, and slashes the Multinational Species Conservation Funds by nearly 20 percent. Do you have a plan for how to continue making progress in the fight against wildlife crime under these circumstances?

Answer. The budget proposal maintains sufficient capacity to enforce wildlife laws; curb the poaching of some of the world's most iconic species, such as elephants and rhinos, by curtailing illicit trade; ensure sustainable legal trade; and reduce demand for illegal products.

Damage to National Wildlife Refuge Property:

Question 17. Your budget includes a request for authority for the Fish and Wildlife Service to seek compensation from people who damage National Wildlife Refuge property. Both the Park Service and NOAA have similar authority. Why is it important for the Fish & Wildlife Service to have this authority?

Answer. This authority is important because when Refuge System resources are injured or destroyed, the costs of repair and restoration falls upon the appropriated budget for the affected refuge, often at the expense of other refuge programs. Competing priorities can leave the Service's work undone until the refuge obtains appropriations from Congress to address the injury. This delay may result in more intensive injuries, higher costs, and long-term degradation of publicly-owned Service resources. The public expects that refuge resources, and the broad range of activities they support, will be available for future generations.

National Wildlife Refuge System:

Question 18. Do you believe the proposed funding levels for Refuges are consistent with your vision of increasing access to America's public lands, while also managing and expanding the Refuge System to protect and enhance America's wildlife resources?

Answer. Yes. Through the National Wildlife Refuge System, the Service continues the American tradition, started by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats and to provide recreation opportunities for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. The proposed budget maintains a commitment to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in both rural and urban or suburban settings, as well as to support the vital role of volunteers on our Refuges.

Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs:

Question 19. When you do anticipate we will see the nomination of an Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs? This is a priority for the people of the territories because it represents the equal treatment of their concerns with the Department's other programs and priorities.

Answer. The President nominated Doug Domenech to be Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas on June 29, 2017, and Mr. Domenech's nomination was confirmed by the Senate on September 13, 2017.

Senior Executive Service (SES):

Question 20. According to news reports, around three dozen Senior Executive Service (SES) staff within the Interior Department have received notices that they have been reassigned and transferred into new positions within the Agency. At the earliest possible time that you can disclose information while respecting privacy concerns, please provide answers to the following questions:

20a. How many SES employees have been sent letters informing them that they were being transferred into new positions?

20b. How many of these employees requested those transfers, and with how many employees were the transfers discussed, before the letters were sent?

20c. What are the names and current positions of the employees who have received these letters? What positions are they being transferred into?

20d. Please provide copies of these letters.

20e. Of the individuals who have already received letters, identify those that work in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and are being moved to positions outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

20f. Of the individuals who have already received letters, identify those that work outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area and are being moved to positions inside the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

20g. Of the individuals who have already received letters, identify those that work in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and are being reassigned to positions within the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

20h. Once the complete relocation costs for each employee being relocated is known, including any assistance for selling an employee's home, please provide the complete permanent change of station (PSC) move figures for each employee, their spouse, and dependents to the Committee.

20i. Will you be sending similar letters to more SES employees in the coming months?

20j. In total, how many SES employees do you expect to reassign and transfer?

20k. As is recommended by the Office of Personnel Management, are these reassignments linked to individual Executive Development Plans for each employee? For any employee where the transfer is consistent with information contained in their Executive Development Plan, please provide information on how the transfer is consistent with the Plan to the Committee.

20l. For any employee where the transfer is not consistent with information contained in their Executive Development Plan, please provide the analysis that was conducted or information that was reviewed in order to make the determination to transfer that employee.

20m. Do you subscribe to the belief that there is a "deep state" operating within the Federal Government?

20n. Are Interior Department SES employees a part of the "deep state"?

Answer. The Senior Executive Service is intended to be a corps of versatile, senior Departmental staff. When Congress created the SES corps, the intent was to construct a mobile cadre of Executives. Talent management and succession planning are crucial to the development of an effective SES corps. Managing talent within the SES ranks ensures the agency has qualified pool of executives who have the leadership and managerial expertise to occupy any number of different executive positions based on the needs of the organization. Developing the best leadership talent is essential, not just to support agency strategic planning, but to contribute to a thriving, sustained performance culture in the Federal workforce. The rotation of the SES corps through a variety of leadership positions has been recognized as an effective method of strengthening leadership and executive skills. Indeed, the Obama administration issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13714 on December 25, 2015 on "Strengthening the Senior Executive Service." That E.O. required agencies to

develop plans to increase the number of SES who are rotated to different assignments “to improve talent development, mission delivery, and collaboration.” The E.O. established an annual Government-wide goal, beginning in FY 2017, of rotating at least 15 percent of SES to different departments, agencies, sub-components, functional areas, sectors and non-Federal partners. In its 2016 guidance to implementing the SES rotations requirement, OPM identified executive reassignment and transfers as two options for implementing SES rotations. The SES rotations at Interior were consistent with the Civil Service Reform Act (which created the SES), E.O. 13714, and OPM guidance on managing the SES.

Border Wall:

Question 21. Secretary Zinke: You have indicated support for President Trump’s proposal to construct a wall along the southern border. Construction of such a border wall would split the Tohono O’odham Nation and threaten the tribe’s connection to its ancestral lands. How will President Trump’s border wall respect tribal sovereignty and self-determination?

Answer. I defer to the Department of Homeland Security for decisions on the details of the wall, but I expect the Department of Homeland Security will work closely in consultation with the Tohono O’odham Nation as it moves forward to secure our borders in accordance with the President’s directives.

Question 22. Federal agencies are required to initiate formal consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service if their actions “may affect” a listed species or designated critical habitat. President Trump’s border wall would affect listed species or designated critical habitat. Federal agencies are required to prepare an environmental impact statement on major Federal actions “significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.” President Trump’s border wall constitutes a major action significantly affecting the environment. Have the Departments of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection conducted a new analysis of the proposed wall?

22a. Do they intend to do so before any construction takes place?

Answer. I cannot speak to the actions undertaken or contemplated by another Department outside my purview and I defer to the Department of Homeland Security on this question. More generally, under my leadership, Interior bureaus will fully comply with the President’s directives and existing law as they pertain to securing our borders and protecting the environment.

Question 23. As you have noted, building a wall along the southern border is complex. Where then, would the wall go? On the Texan side of the Rio Grande? Down the middle of the river? Through Big Bend National Park? Through Tribal lands?

Answer. As noted above, I defer to the Department of Homeland Security for decisions on the details of the wall.

Question 24. How exactly will President Trump extract payment from Mexico to pay for the border wall?

Answer. Decisions related to payments necessary to secure our border will be made by the President, in accordance with applicable laws.

Question 25. Should money come from the Interior Department budget if Mexico refuses to pay?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security is the agency with responsibility for securing our borders.

National Heritage Areas:

Question 26. Last year Senator John McCain requested that the National Park Service undertake a “Reconnaissance Study” of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot to determine its suitability to tell the nationally significant story of the past, present, and future of the Colorado River. I support his efforts. We know that the work in the field has been done by the NPS Intermountain Region. Can your office provide me a status report on the “Reconnaissance Study”?

Answer. I understand that the NPS continues to make progress on the reconnaissance survey of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, but has not yet completed it.

Question 27. Secretary Zinke, I understand that your community of Great Falls is considering asking for designation as a National Heritage Area. My community in Arizona has had pretty good results in Yuma with the program. What are your general thoughts about the National Heritage Area program, which seeks to conserve

national and historic resources through a community-based approach, as opposed to a top-down approach?

Answer. National Heritage Areas provide cultural benefits, and are an example of the benefits of partnerships. However, the President's budget proposes to balance the Federal Government's budget by 2027, in order to do this priorities must be identified. The 2018 budget prioritizes taking care of the assets we currently own. The majority of ongoing operational requirements cannot be deferred and maintenance needs have been postponed for too long. The National Heritage Area Program can be supported through partnerships and community engagement.

Department Staffing:

Question 28. I'm concerned about the March Executive Order to reorganize the executive branch and subsequent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo on reducing the Federal workforce (M-17-22) and what that could mean for Interior Department agencies. In the case of the National Park Service, I understand that staff levels have been in decline, there are now more than 1,500 vacant positions, and that Interior has frozen hiring for certain positions as a result of this effort. Secretary Zinke, for your confirmation hearing both your verbal and written testimony indicated one of your priorities is to ensure that park rangers have the resources they need, but this exercise threatens that priority.

28a. What has the Department's position been on this government reform effort in conversations with OMB?

28b. Can you commit to following through on your commitment to support staff by ensuring that the Park Service and other Interior agencies aren't further understaffed as a result of this exercise?

Answer. This review process remains ongoing within the Department. I have tasked my team to review all programs to determine if there is duplication, and if so, how best to consolidate. The goal is to create a more efficient government that effectively delivers programs of the highest importance to the public. We anticipate a larger effort may be folded into the FY 2019 budget process.

Question 29. The March Executive Order on reorganizing the Executive branch and subsequent OMB and DOI guidance concern me a great deal. It appears the exercise could be used as an excuse to further understaff the park service and other land agencies and cut funding for certain programs the administration may not find to be critical. The OMB guidance on reducing the Federal workforce (M-17-22) directs agencies to use the FY 2018 and FY 2019 budget processes to drive workforce reductions. However, while there may well be carefully considered opportunities for reform within Interior agencies, I'd like to remind you that funding levels for staff and specific agency programs are ultimately up to the appropriations committees. To prematurely attempt some of these reorganization efforts that would be subject to the decision of appropriators without our consultation and consent would be a poor use of agency resources. Can you commit to soon updating us in writing on the status of this exercise and commit to be in regular contact with us in regard to it?

Answer. As I indicated in response to the previous question, this review process remains ongoing within the Department, and we anticipate the larger effort may be folded into the FY 2019 budget.

Question 30. What is the current status of the workforce reduction exercise subsequent to the March Executive Order to reorganize the Executive branch and subsequent OMB memo on reducing the Federal workforce (M-17-22)?

30a. Please list by agency the programs you will seek to eliminate or merge for each Interior agency.

30b. Please list the staff positions you intend to eliminate for each Interior agency.

Answer. This review process remains ongoing within the Department, and we hope to have outcomes to the larger effort folded into the FY 2019 budget.

Ethics Waivers:

Question 31. On January 28 of this year, President Trump issued Executive Order 13770 entitled: Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Employees. Among other provisions, E.O. 13770 states that appointees in the Trump administration will not work on matters they used to lobby on, or on matters involving their former employers or clients, for a period of 2 years after they are appointed.

31a. Are you familiar with E.O. 13770, and is it your intent for the Interior Department to comply with it?

31b. Assuming that Mr. Bernhardt is confirmed to be your Deputy Secretary, will you require him to comply with E.O. 13770—meaning he will not be permitted to work on any matters he was involved in as a lobbyist for 2 years?

31c. Have you been involved in any discussions regarding the possibility that Mr. Bernhardt might receive a waiver from complying with the E.O.?

31d. Would you recommend to the President that Mr. Bernhardt receive such a waiver?

31e. Would you make such a waiver public?

31f. How would such a waiver serve the public interest?

31g. Have any such waivers been granted to anyone in the Department and if so, will you make those waivers public?

31h. How is nominating Mr. Bernhardt to serve as your Deputy consistent with “draining the swamp” here in Washington?

31i. Can you assure this Committee that none of the nominees for the remaining Senate-confirmable jobs will turn out to be lobbyists for clients with interests before the Department?

31j. Will you commit to making any waivers of E.O. 13770 granted to any employee of the Department of the Interior available to the public?

Answer. Under my leadership, all Department staff have complied and will comply with all applicable ethics requirements and will seek the guidance of the Department’s Designated Agency Ethics Official when clarification is necessary.

Interior Department Hiring Strategy:

Question 32. Mr. Secretary, you’ve ordered a hiring freeze for any position in Washington, DC and Denver. Interior agencies are also subject to a freeze for any GS-12 and higher position, no matter the location. Your office must approve waivers to fill these positions and has placed a priority on positions involved in oil and gas development. You have repeatedly said that Interior’s energy strategy will be “all of the above,” yet you have singled out positions focused on oil and gas development for priority hiring. While some agencies within Interior are centered on energy development, the NPS and FWS are not, and it goes against their mission. It is concerning that you are putting a priority on oil and gas development to fill jobs within these agencies. Are you trying to change the mission of these two agencies with this new hiring strategy?

Answer. No. With regard to the waiver process, it has been structured so that it should not significantly impact the Department’s ability to address necessary staffing requirements.

Protecting Public Lands:

Question 33. Mr. Secretary, you’ve said repeatedly that the review of national monuments is not about selling public land. Can you guarantee that not 1 acre of Federal land will be given to state or county control during your tenure as Secretary?

33a. *If you do give that land away, can you guarantee none of it will be sold to private interests?*

Answer. As I have previously stated on multiple occasions, I am firmly against the large-scale sale or transfer of Federal lands. I also support taking care of the land we own. In all instances, we will comply with the laws established by Congress for the management of our Federal lands.

National Monuments Review:

Question 34. Mr. Secretary, you’ve said the governor and state congressional delegation have to be consulted before you make recommendations on national monuments. So far you’ve only met with the Republican governors of Utah and Maine. How many governors do you plan to meet with as part of this review?

34a. *Just to look at the states affected by this monument review, have you reached out yet to the Democratic governors of Washington, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Colorado, Connecticut, Rhode Island or Montana?*

Answer. To comply with the President’s Executive Order, and provide a recommendation to the President, we have sought input from stakeholders on all levels, from governors, tribal leaders, and Members of Congress, to locals on the ground and county commissioners and I thank you for the time you took to provide

your written comments as well. We took all this information into consideration before making recommendations to the President.

Question 35. Mr. Secretary, during your hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee you informed Senator Gardner that Canyons of the Ancients wasn't "currently on our priority list."

35a. Will you share with this Committee what is on your priority review list?

35b. If the public comment period is still underway what determines whether a monument is a priority for review?

35c. What does it take for a monument to be left alone or removed from the review list?

35d. How can the public trust this review process if we have just now discovered that there is a second list of monuments that are especially threatened by this review?

35e. Shouldn't the public, elected officials and other stakeholders have been aware of this when the comment period started?

Answer. On May 11, 2017, the Notice of the Opportunity for Public Comment was published in the Federal Register, which included a list of national monuments under review by the Secretary in accordance with the President's Executive Order. The public comment period related to the Bears Ears National Monument closed on May 26, 2017, and the comment period for all other National Monuments closed on July 10, 2017. The Secretary evaluated comments and, in certain instances, visited monuments as he prepared his recommendations for the President. As monuments were reviewed and found to require no modification, the Department removed them from the review and letting press and local stakeholders know the Department's decision to keep all interested parties informed. A draft report was submitted to the President on August 24, 2017, and the final report was released to the public on December 5, 2017 and may be found at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/revised_final_report.pdf. Final action and authority rests with the President.

Access to Public Lands:

Question 36. Mr. Secretary, according to the BLM, the American public does not have adequate access to 23 million acres of BLM-managed land, primarily because of land ownership. The previous administration dedicated \$8 million in 2017 to improving access to these public lands by purchasing adjacent property or securing rights-of-way, but your budget includes no funds for this purpose. Wouldn't you agree that this limits access to BLM land for American hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts?

Answer. This budget supports efforts to expand access to recreational opportunities through targeted investments. Infrastructure related investments at our land management bureaus will address areas like trail maintenance and signage, which are critical to ensuring access to public lands and safety.

The Antiquities Act:

Question 37. Mr. Secretary, I have heard you say on numerous occasions that your top priority as Secretary of Interior is to ensure that the Federal Government is a good neighbor and steward of public resources. Recommending executive action to decrease protections for national monuments would go directly against this fundamental principle. Does the President have the legal authority to shrink or abolish national monuments?

Answer. Being a good neighbor remains one of the Department's top priorities. Our goal throughout this review process has been to listen to our state, local, tribal and Federal partners and make recommendations that reflect the wishes of the neighbors who are most affected by these monuments. Ultimately, however, our role in the review of monuments is to provide a recommendation to the President. Final action and authority rests with him.

National Park Service Services:

Question 38. Since 2011, National Park Service commercial services staff has declined by 10 percent. Meanwhile, the number of commercial leases has increased by 25 percent, and the number of Commercial Use Agreements has nearly tripled. Moreover, the program's workload keeps growing, particularly as the agency begins to award new contracts under the Visitor Experience Improvements Authority established by last year's National Park Service Centennial Act. Your budget proposal

includes an over half a million dollar cut to commercial services. How do you plan to increase P3 partnerships and ensure adequate oversight of public resources while reducing the amount of staff devoted to commercial services?

Answer. The President's budget proposes to balance the Federal Government's budget by 2027, in order to do this priorities must be identified. The 2018 budget prioritizes taking care of the assets we currently own. It also focuses on leveraging public-private partnerships in order to improve visitor experiences on public lands and waters. In addition, as we move forward, I believe that we have to realign our employees to make sure that the focus is at the field level, rather than in layers of bureaucracy. I am committed to providing our front lines in the parks with the appropriate resources to get the job done.

Endangered Species Act:

Question 39. Mr. Secretary, you have said recently that you think the states should play a larger role in species conservation but this budget proposal absolutely savages the funding streams that make this cooperative work possible, including cutting Cooperative Endangered Species Fund grants by \$34 million to one-third of the current level. You can prevent listing species by doing proactive conservation work or you can recover species once they require listing; however, this budget cuts funding for both. Do you believe that these funding levels are adequate to help states be full partners in conserving fish and wildlife?

Answer. The budget requests \$19.3 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The budget requests \$10.5 million for conservation grants to states, \$6.5 million for Habitat Conservation Planning assistance grants, and \$2.3 million for administrative costs. The budget does not provide funding for land acquisition grants in order to focus resources on our current land management priorities. The Department encourages states' participation in developing recovery plans and proactive conservation work. For example, when the yellowcheek darter, a small fish native to forks of the Little Red River in Arkansas, was listed as endangered, the Service formed a recovery team comprised of yellowcheek darter experts from organizations including the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and others. These members are integral to development of the recovery plan and increasing participation in recovery efforts among private landowners. States, through the State Wildlife Grants have focused on proactive conservation projects; at least 19 domestic Candidate fish and wildlife species were conserved by state fish and wildlife agencies using State Wildlife Grant funds.

Question 40. Along these same lines, you have long opposed the historic conservation agreement reached between states and the Obama administration to protect the greater sage-grouse and avoid an ESA listing. Your recent Secretarial Order requiring a review of the plans threatens to turn this conservation success story into a failure, and this budget is not helping. The budget cuts \$11.5M—22 percent—from BLM's sage-grouse conservation efforts.

40a. Do you think these cuts will have a negative impact on greater sage-grouse populations and sagebrush habitat?

40b. Do you think these cuts make it more likely that the bird will require the protections of the ESA?

40c. Do you oppose the inclusion of a rider on your Department's appropriations bill that would prevent you from listing the species even if it is shown that such an action is necessary to prevent extinction?

40d. FY 2017 funding for sage-grouse conservation efforts is already out the door but your recent order has created uncertainty about if and how it will be used. Are BLM field offices authorized to use that funding for sage-grouse conservation efforts under the current conservation plan, or has your office ordered them to stop?

Answer. The Department's 2018 Budget reflects the President's commitment to fiscal responsibility—proposing sensible and rational reductions and making hard choices to reach a balanced budget by 2027. This required the Department to take a thorough look at all of our mission areas to determine where we could potentially increase efficiencies yet continue the implementation of our multiple-use mission. The budget includes over \$75 million in the Bureau's Wildlife Management Program to continue work on the sage landscape and maintain our commitment to sage habitat. BLM will continue restoration and conservation efforts in priority areas, which will benefit more than 350 species. This budget continues conservation work with partners and supports science at FY 2017 levels. Legislative prohibition on listing

the greater sage grouse would provide time to implement plans and work more closely with states to craft solutions.

Question 41. As a Member of Congress, you voted against the protection of threatened and endangered species 100 percent of the time. You are now in charge of implementing the Endangered Species Act, not undermining it, but this budget shows that you may not have fully made that transition yet.

Even though it is widely known that current funding levels are insufficient to make significant progress toward protecting and restoring imperiled fish and wildlife populations, this proposal slashes funding for species listing, recovery, habitat protection, consultation, and work with states and tribes to prevent listings.

Given that we are in the middle of a global extinction crisis driven by irresponsible land use and climate change do you believe that this budget will allow you to meet your statutory obligations under the ESA to prevent extinction and recover threatened and endangered species?

Answer. Yes, a total of \$225.2 million is proposed to implement the Endangered Species Act and related programs under the Service's Ecological Services Program, of which \$79.6 million is for recovery of species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. A focus on recovery has recently resulted in the de-listing and down-listing of several high-profile species, including the West Indian manatee. Included in the Ecological Services request is \$98.8 million to facilitate planning and consultation that will support economic recovery and job creation in the United States. Timely evaluations of proposed infrastructure, energy, and other development projects contribute to job creation and economic growth, while ensuring that impacts to native wildlife and habitat are avoided and minimized to the greatest degree possible. Funding will allow the Service to expedite project reviews and work with project proponents on appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures.

Question 42. Republican Members of this Committee, including you in the past, have argued that the ESA is a failure because more species are not being de-listed. This is in spite of the fact that the ESA has been 99 percent effective in preventing species from going extinct.

In order to be de-listed, though, species must be shown by the best available science to have recovered. Before the process of recovery can even begin, species must first be listed so that they can receive the protections of the Act just to "stop the bleeding." This is the simple, stepwise fashion in which the ESA works.

Unfortunately, this budget proposes to cut the listing program by more than 17 percent. It also proposes to cut the recovery program by more than \$3.5 million.

42a. Do you believe these cuts will allow you to meet your obligations to give species ESA protections when it is show that it is scientifically necessary?

42b. Do you believe this budget will achieve your goal of de-listing more species without running afoul of the requirement to base decisions on the best available science?

42c. Do you believe that at these funding levels FWS will be able to avoid losing lawsuits over failing to take required actions to protect species in a timely manner?

Answer. I still believe that ESA is in need of reforms and modernization so it can operate in a more effective manner. The FWS de-lists and down-lists species when their status changes and resources are available. Getting species off the list due to recovery is a priority, and allows us to focus our attention and resources on species that need attention. The pace at which de-listings and down-listings occur is dependent on resources devoted to on-the-ground recovery implementation and the progress toward recovery of individual species, as well as on the complexity of status reviews and rulemakings. A total of \$225.2 million is proposed in the President's FY 2018 budget request to implement the ESA and related programs under FWS's Ecological Services program, of which \$17.1 million is for listing species and \$79.6 million is for recovery of species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. At these funding levels, the FWS will continue to address the backlog of listing determinations and develop rulemakings for approximately 50 species that have been identified for potential de-listing or down-listing under the ESA based upon recent 5-year status reviews. FWS plans on making final determinations for six species currently proposed for de-listing in FY 2018.

Resource Advisory Committees:

Question 43. Time and time again, you have said you're a champion of public access and transparency. On your first day as Secretary, you signed Order No. 3347 which encourages access, conservation stewardship, and hunting and fishing

activities. This order gave department agencies 30 days to report on Executive Order 13443, and then calls on the expertise of two Resource Advisory Committees to refine recommendations. You have since suspended “all 225 different councils and boards . . . so [you] could ask what do you do, who is on your board, what have you done in the last year”—this includes the two which are involved in Secretarial Order 3347. How is this suspension improving access, transparency and efficiency at the Interior Department?

Answer. As you note, Secretarial Order 3347 is designed to engage stakeholders on a variety of issues concerning management of public lands, including actions to improve habitat, cooperation with state wildlife managers, and access to the outdoors. We intend to work with stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the two referenced groups. The Department’s review of advisory groups is ongoing. The review is intended to ensure the Department receives maximum feedback from these boards and that they are compliant with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Coastal Barrier Resources System:

Question 44. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) administers the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), established by Congress in 1982 to prevent government-subsidized development from occurring in hazard-prone, undeveloped coastal areas. This simple yet ingenious program does not prevent private citizens from using their own money to develop land that is included in the System but it does prohibit the use of Federal funds including flood insurance, transportation and housing grants, and energy infrastructure assistance.

44a. Do you agree that sea level rise, increased coastal flooding, and other hazards due to climate change are a threat to coastal communities?

44b. Do you believe that taxpayers should be on the hook for bailing out individuals, companies, and localities that make risky development decisions?

44c. Will you commit to funding the CBRS program at levels that reflect the urgent need to address the impacts of sea level rise on coastal communities?

Answer. Coastal communities face weather-related challenges not experienced in other parts of the country. The Department will be a good partner in working with these communities to address changing climate conditions using adaptive management. Through the CBRA program, the FWS provides mapping products and data bases that are essential tools for conservation and restoration activities by other Federal and state agencies and the public and this budget provides sufficient resources to support those efforts.

Stream Protection Rule Job Figures:

A February 21, 2017, a blog post on the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) website claimed that the Stream Protection Rule (SPR), which was repealed by President Trump’s signature of a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval, “was estimated to put 7,000 clean coal jobs in 22 states at risk.” This figure appears to come from a widely discredited and outdated draft environmental study, generated by Polu Kai Services (PKS) under contract from OSMRE, and contradicts the job impacts published by the Department and OSMRE. An investigation by the DOI Office of Inspector General found that there was widespread dissatisfaction with PKS’ performance. Furthermore, the OIG investigation found no evidence of any inappropriate behavior by anyone in the Obama administration in relation to the dispute over the job-loss numbers or the decision to allow the PKS contract to expire. This conclusion was also backed up by a multi-year investigation conducted by the House Natural Resources Committee, which was also unable to find evidence of any wrongdoing.

Given this, I request answers to the following questions:

Question 45. Please provide a source for the February 21 claim that the Stream Protection Rule put 7,000 clean coal jobs at risk.

Question 46. Does OSMRE agree with the blog post claiming that the SPR would put 7,000 jobs at risk? If so, what is the evidence that the regulatory impact analysis performed for the final rule is less accurate than the February 21 blog post?

Question 47. If the February 21 blog post was based on the DEIS completed by PKS, are the methods and standards used by PKS to develop the DEIS the same methods and standards Congress and the public should expect for work performed by OSMRE or DOI throughout the Trump administration?

Question 48. Does OSMRE or DOI believe that the PKS DEIS from 2011 adequately reflects the provisions of the final SPR published in 2016?

Question 49. Does OSMRE or DOI disagree with the characterization of PKS' performance included in the OIG study? If so, what did the OIG miss?

Question 50. How does the Department define "clean coal"?

Answer to Questions 45–50. President Trump signed H.J. Res. 38 into law on February 16, 2017, nullifying the SPR. Since then, the Department has renewed its focus to put America on track to achieve the President's vision for energy independence and bring important jobs back to communities across the country. Our Nation's abundant coal supplies are an important and stable component of the energy mix. The President's energy program will have positive impacts on employment in the communities that depend on coal industry jobs.

Office of Natural Resources Revenue Rule:

As part of responding to the dozens of valuation and royalty-collection recommendations from the past decade, on July 1, 2016, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) published a final rule entitled Consolidated Federal Oil & Gas and Federal & Indian Coal Valuation Reform, with an effective date of January 1, 2017. Despite the fact that the rule became effective on January 1, 2017, ONRR published a Federal Register notice on February 27, 2017, announcing that the effective date of the valuation rule would be postponed indefinitely due to legal challenges pending against the rule, using the authority under 5 U.S.C. 705 of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). The legality of this action is highly questionable. It appears that ONRR has used this provision to repeal an active and in-effect regulation in contravention of the notice-and-comment procedures required by the APA.

With the rule in full effect as of January 1, 2017, it became the role of the courts, and not ONRR, to adjudicate the challenges to the valuation rule. The rule cannot be unilaterally subverted by ONRR. In the light of this, I would like answers to the following questions:

Question 51. Did DOI's Office of the Solicitor provide a written opinion or memo regarding the legality of postponing the effective date of a rule after the effective date has already passed? If so, please provide a copy of that opinion or memo.

Question 52. Please provide any examples that the Department has of other rules where 5 U.S.C. 705 has been successfully invoked to delay the implementation date of a rule after the effective date has passed.

Question 53. Did DOI's Office of the Solicitor review the February 22, 2017, memo from ONRR?

Question 54. Please provide the surnaming page of the Federal Register notice that was published on February 27, 2017, showing the identity of those officials within DOI who reviewed and approved the notice.

Answer to Questions 51–54. As ONRR Director Greg Gould noted in his July 12, 2017 response to your previous letters, ONRR's stay of the rule is currently the subject of litigation and cannot be commented on at this time.

Backlog of Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs):

The recent publication of internal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) strategy and communications documents has provided some disappointing insight into the intended focus of the BLM during the current administration. One of the more surprising items in the document is the instruction to, "[a]ddress backlog of Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs)." It is not clear that there is a significant backlog of unprocessed APDs; in fact, the BLM's own data indicate that there is a glut of drilling permits that the oil and gas industry cannot act on fast enough. According to the BLM's FY 2017 Budget Justification, there were 3,785 APDs pending at the end of FY 2015, but also 7,532 approved permits in industry's hands just waiting to be used.

Question 55. Therefore, in order to understand the true nature of the "backlog" of APDs, please provide the number of ADPs that are pending and the number of approved ADPs waiting to be drilled as of the end of the FY 2016.

Answer. The BLM estimates that, as of the end of FY 2016, there were 2,552 pending APDs and 7,950 approved APDs that had not been drilled.

U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative:

In 2011, as part of the Open Government Partnership, the United States announced its intention to become an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

(EITI) compliant country. The EITI Advisory Committee was scheduled to meet on June 7 and 8 to continue the work required of the United States to become EITI compliant. However, on May 25, 2017, the Department of the Interior published a notice postponing the scheduled meeting, saying merely that it would be “rescheduled at a later date.” When combined with reports from earlier this year, this postponement appears to reflect a lack of commitment to EITI by this Administration. The Secretary of the Interior serves as the Administration’s senior official representative for EITI implementation.

Question 56. What is Trump administration’s stance on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative?

Question 57. Can you commit to holding the postponed U.S. EITI Advisory Committee meeting no later than the end of August, 2017?

Answer to Questions 56–57. The Department of the Interior is committed to institutionalizing the principles of open government and accountability. The U.S. Department of State will continue to lead the United States’ commitment to the EITI as a Supporting Country, a role that the United States has played since the beginning of the initiative.

Review of 5-Year Offshore Leasing Program, as Instructed by April 28 E.O.:

The Department of the Interior has begun a review of the 5-year offshore leasing program, as instructed by President Trump’s April 28, 2017, offshore energy Executive Order. Given the likely adverse impacts of this action on the environment, fishing, and tourism industries, I am deeply concerned with President Trump’s decision to lift the leasing ban in regions currently closed to development. Secretary Zinke, please address the following:

Question 58. The Executive Order directs a review of areas currently closed off from drilling, including the Mid- and South Atlantic, the Chukchi Sea, and the Beaufort Sea. Please provide all risk assessments and analysis undertaken to determine how lifting the ban on drilling in these areas would not adversely affect fragile ecosystems or damage fishing, restaurant, or tourism interests.

Answer. On May 1, 2017, I issued Secretarial Order 3350 to further implement the President’s Executive Order entitled: “Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy” (April 28, 2017), in which I directed the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to initiate development of a new 5-year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Section 18 of the OCS Lands Act prescribes the major steps involved in developing a 5-year program, including the ability of the Secretary to review and approve the leasing program. During the initial stage of program development, the Secretary examines all 26 OCS planning areas to consider and balance the potentials for environmental damage, discovery of oil and gas, and adverse impact on the coastal zone in making a decision on the Draft Proposed Program—the first of three proposals required in the Program development process. This process includes conducting risk assessment and analysis on the impacts of oil and gas development and production. Recently, BOEM began seeking a wide array of input during development of this new OCS leasing program, including information on the economic, social, and environmental values of all OCS resources. BOEM will also seek input on the potential impact of oil and gas exploration and development on other resource values of the OCS and the marine, coastal, and human environments. All of these analyses will be made public as they are completed. At this stage of development of a leasing program, no decisions have been made regarding what planning areas may be included in the new leasing program.

Question 59. What additional actions or plans does the Department intend to take to protect coastal communities from the possibility of another catastrophic oil spill, particularly in light of the unique challenges of responding to an oil spill in these environments?

59a. For example, has the Department conducted any analysis with or otherwise coordinated with the Coast Guard to ensure that Area Contingency plans are sufficiently robust to address an oil spill the magnitude of the Deepwater Horizon?

Answer. The Department, through its Bureaus and the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), serves on national and regional interagency oil spill response teams to develop and maintain detailed spill response policies, plans, and procedures, as well as up-to-date Regional Contingency Plans, Area Contingency Plans, and site-specific geographic response plans.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) oversees oil spill planning and preparedness activities for offshore oil and gas exploration, develop-

ment and production facilities in both Federal and state waters. BSEE reviews industry Oil Spill Response Plans to verify that owners and operators of offshore facilities are prepared to respond to a worst case discharge of oil; the U.S. Coast Guard participates in these reviews in certain situations. BSEE, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, validates the soundness of these plans by conducting exercises with operators.

The Department and BSEE's (as well as other bureaus) oil spill preparedness program is a keystone component of the National Response System. As such, the Department regularly participates in meetings and supports activities by Regional Response Teams and Area Committees where offshore oil and gas operations are conducted. These groups are focal points for contingency planning with local, state and Federal partners including the Coast Guard. In addition, the Department formally engages the U.S. Coast Guard on a regular basis at both the regional and headquarters levels to support joint planning initiatives and information sharing.

Question 60. The March 16, 2017 budget blueprint calls for a \$1.5 billion, or 12 percent, reduction to the Department's FY 2018 budget. How would these proposed cuts affect the ability of the Department to draft a new 5-year plan, which presumably would also include oil spill response and mitigation plans, while administering an even greater number of oil and gas leases?

Answer. The Administration's budget makes difficult choices in focusing on and funding our top priorities and sets the course to a balanced budget by 2027, saving taxpayers \$1.6 billion. Among the Department's top priorities is to boost domestic energy production to stimulate the Nation's economy and ensure our security while providing for responsible stewardship of the environment, which includes the development of a new 5-year plan. The budget reflects a careful analysis of the resources needed to advance this priority and to development our bureaus' capacity to carry out its functions carefully, responsibly and efficiently.

Question 61. American fishing, tourism, and recreation industries rely on a healthy ocean ecosystem to generate billions of dollars each year in economic activity. If this review goes forward, please indicate what additional analysis the Department intends to conduct to determine what safeguards will be required to protect these industries.

Answer. At this point, the Department is only establishing a schedule of potential lease sales and framing the geographic scope for which OCS development can occur. The process is guided by the OCS Lands Act which specifies eight factors that are considered in determining the timing and location of leasing, including location with respect to other uses and environmental sensitivity and marine productivity. As required by the law, I will consider each of these factors in deciding which areas will be contained in the next National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Public input is critical to this process. There are at least three points during the program preparation process when comments are solicited, analyzed summarized and used to develop the final program.

Question 62. Given the significant growth of U.S. oil production on both private and public lands over the past 7 years, the United States is now one of the largest producers of crude oil in the world, and the world leader in total liquid hydrocarbon production. In fact, oversupply in oil production has led the United States to begin exporting crude oil for the first time in generations. Further, gas prices in 2016 were the lowest they have been in more than a decade. Given these market conditions, why is a new planning process required now, as opposed to waiting only 3 years to continue on the normal planning schedule?

Answer. Developing a new National Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program that respects environmental and economic sensitivities but still allows us to responsibly develop our resources is critical to reaching President Trump's goal of American energy dominance. Offering more areas for energy exploration and responsible development was a cornerstone of the President's campaign and this action is the first step in making good on that promise for offshore oil and gas. Under the last administration, 94 percent of OCS acreage was off-limits to responsible development, despite interest from many state and local governments and industry leaders. This Administration is dedicated to energy dominance, growing the economy and giving the public a say in how our natural resources are used, and that is exactly what we are doing by opening up the Request for Information and a new OCS leasing program.

Question 63. Under the current leasing program, approximately 70 percent of the economically recoverable offshore resources in the OCS are available to the oil and gas industry for leasing. In the Gulf of Mexico, companies hold leases on approximately 16 million acres, but have developed only approximately 26 percent of that acreage. Please provide all the assessments and analysis the Department has undertaken to determine the need for additional leasing acreage at this time.

Answer. As described in the previous response BOEM has initiated development of a new 5-year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program in which all 26 planning areas are considered. At this stage of development of a leasing program, no decisions have been made regarding the need to make available additional acreage for leasing.

Regarding the statement that industry has only developed 26 percent of the acreage leased in the Gulf of Mexico, this percentage applies only to the number of leases currently producing, substantially understating the percentage of leases on which there is exploration or development activity. As of August 1, 2017, there are 2,912 active leases in the GOM of which 1,318 (45 percent) have had wells drilled or plans approved. Since oil and gas is not uniformly distributed across the OCS, there is always a risk of not finding oil and gas on leased acreage. New leasing in the Gulf of Mexico allows industry to better manage their prospect portfolios and mitigate these risks through access to additional acreage where there is potential for discovering new oil and gas fields on the OCS. It is important to note that prior to acquiring a lease through a BOEM lease sale, the oil and gas industry uses geophysical and other types of data extensively in order to identify promising prospects and bid on the acreage considered to have the best potential.

During lease primary terms, operators have time to gather, process, and interpret additional data. Of course, not all leases contain drillable oil and gas resources and wells can be extremely risky and expensive to drill. Further, the finite number of drilling rigs available for contract limits the number of leases that can be drilled. Therefore, lessees are constantly evaluating and prioritizing the acreage in their lease inventory in order to drill the most promising leases first. This prioritization changes as the exploration process plays out (e.g., geological data comes in from new wells and/or new or reprocessed geophysical data is acquired, etc.). During the period after the lease is acquired, OCS projects compete for the operator's available capital with other prospects held by the operator in onshore and offshore oil and gas basins worldwide. This dynamic process of evaluating, ranking, and funding all worldwide projects of interest to a lessee is an important reason why lessees desire to maintain an inventory of leases so they can allocate and re-allocate capital expenditures as new information becomes available.

Secretarial Order 3349 and Executive Order 13783:

On March 29, 2017, you signed Secretarial Order No. 3349, which was designed to implement the directive in the Executive Order of March 28, 2017 (Executive Order 13783), to "review all existing regulations, orders, guidance documents, policies, and any other similar agency actions . . . that potentially burden the development or use of domestically produced energy resources." The Executive Order and Secretarial Order also rescinded or ordered the rescission of a number of important Obama administration climate and mitigation policies, lifted the moratorium on new coal leases, and ordered the review of four common-sense regulations affecting oil and gas operations on National Park Service lands, fish and wildlife refuges, and other public lands. In order to understand the potentially massive changes in public lands policy and management that will arise from the Executive Order and Secretarial Order, please provide the following documents described in Secretarial Order 3349:

Question 64. The list of all Department Actions related to mitigation policies provided to the Deputy Secretary by each bureau and office, as required to be completed by April 12, 2017, as per Section 5(a)(i) of Secretarial Order 3349;

Question 65. The list of all Department Actions related to climate change policies provided to the Deputy Secretary by each bureau and office, as required to be completed by April 12, 2017, as per Section 5(b)(i) of Secretarial Order 3349;

Question 66. The report from the Director, Bureau of Land Management, on the rule entitled, "Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation," as required to be provided to the Assistant Secretary—Land and Minerals Management by April 19, 2017, per Section 5(c)(ii) of Secretarial Order 3349;

Question 67. The report from the Director, National Park Service, on the rule entitled, "General Provisions and Non-Federal Oil and Gas Rights," as required to

be provided to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks by April 19, 2017, per Section 5(c)(iii) of Secretarial Order 3349;

Question 68. The report from the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, on the rule entitled, "Management of Non-Federal Oil and Gas Rights," as required to be provided to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks by April 19, 2017, per Section 5(c)(iv) of Secretarial Order 3349; and

Question 69. The reports from each bureau and office head provided to the Deputy Secretary that identify all existing Department Actions that "potentially burden . . . the development or utilization of domestically produced energy resources," as required by April 19, 2017, per Section 5(c)(v) of Secretarial Order 3349.

Answer to Questions 64–69. On November 1, 2017, the Department announced the availability of the *Final Report: Review of the Department of the Interior Actions that Potentially Burden Domestic Energy*, prepared pursuant to Executive Order 13783. The Department published the report in its entirety in the Federal Register, and it is available at 82 FR 50532.

DOI Memo Directing Bureau and Acting Directors to Report to the Acting Deputy Secretary:

On April 12, 2017, you sent a memo to the Assistant Secretaries of the Department of the Interior directing them to ensure that all bureau heads and office directors report to the Acting/Deputy Secretary on all "proposed decisions" that have "nationwide, regional, or statewide impacts," and that decisions may not be made until the Acting Deputy Secretary has "reviewed the report and provided clearance." The memo also directs bureau heads and office directors to report to the Acting Deputy Secretary all FY 2017 grants and cooperative agreements of \$100,000 or greater before the final award is issued, in order to "assess how we are aligning our grants and cooperative agreements to Department priorities."

In order for us to better understand how this memo will affect Departmental policy and operations, please provide answers to the following questions:

Question 70. *Has any guidance been provided to bureau heads or office directors regarding what constitutes a decision with "nationwide, regional, or statewide impacts"? If so, please provide that guidance.*

Question 71. *Is the Acting Deputy Secretary maintaining approval or modification authority over the grants, cooperative agreements, and decisions that are provided to him as a result of the April 12 memo?*

Question 72. *Has the Acting Deputy Secretary denied any grants or cooperative agreements, or required or requested changes to the terms of those grants or cooperative agreements, as a result of information provided to him as a result of the April 12 memo? If so, please identify those grants or cooperative agreements, and information regarding why the Acting Deputy Secretary denied or required or requested changes to those, as appropriate.*

Question 73. *Who in the Secretary's office or Deputy Secretary's office, other than the Acting Deputy Secretary, is also reviewing the information provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary as a result of the April 12 memo?*

Question 74. *For all grants and cooperative agreements awarded between April 12 and the date of this letter, please provide the information under items #1 through #11 as provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary under the "Template for Data Call on Fiscal Year 2017 Grants and Cooperative Agreement Awards."*

Question 75. *For all records of decision issued after review by the Acting Deputy Secretary between April 12 and the date of this letter, please provide all information provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary under the "Template for Data Call on Proposed Records of Decision and Other Significant Decision Documents."*

Answer to Questions 70–75. The process was put in place to help me better understand where the approximately \$5.5 billion in grant and cooperative agreement funding is going and how that benefits the Department's mission. I believe we must have a thorough accounting of how the Department distributes the taxpayer's dollar. The process has moved along quickly and once the review has been completed it will be suspended.

DOI Regulations Task Force:

On April 24, 2017, an article in E&E News reported that you had appointed a task force for abolishing regulations, consisting of five political "beachhead" employees and one career staffer, but no Senate-confirmed personnel and no one with clear technical expertise in land management, wildlife management, environmental protection,

or safety regulation. While the task force is required under Executive Order 13777, there is no reference to this task force in your Secretarial Order implementing Executive Order 13783 (S.O. 3349), and no information provided about how this task force will operate, where it fits in the regulatory review process created by S.O. 3349, whether any of its activities or decisions will be transparent and be made known to the public, whether it will accept public comments, or any other logistical detail. In order to better understand this task force and how it will operate, please provide the following information:

Question 76. The names of each member of the task force and their qualifications for analyzing regulations related to land management, wildlife management, environmental protection, and safety;

Question 77. How career staff with technical expertise in land management, wildlife management, environmental protection, and safety will be involved in the operations of the task force;

Question 78. How the task force fits into the process laid out in Secretarial Order 3349;

Question 79. The timeline for the regulatory task force to make decisions;

Question 80. The criteria to be used by the task force to make decisions related to whether or not to modify or rescind existing regulations;

Question 81. Whether there will be any public meetings of the task force and whether or not the task force will accept comments from the public; and

Question 82. Whether any documents created by the task force are intended to be made public once the task force has completed its work.

Answer to Questions 76–82. In addition to Associate Deputy Secretary James Cason's response to your May 2017 letter, we offer the following information. The Department's Regulatory Reform Task Force was established on March 15, 2017, and meets monthly to evaluate existing regulations and provide recommendations to the Secretary regarding their repeal, replacement, or modification. The Task Force focuses on regulations that: (1) place unnecessary burdens on the economy or the American people; (2) are outdated, ineffective, or unnecessary; or (3) are incompatible with regulatory reform principles or directions established in E.O. 13771 and 13777. The Department has invited public input to identify important areas of focus. Since publishing a Federal Register notice on June 22, 2017 (82 FR 28429), asking the public for ideas to lessen regulatory burdens, we have received approximately 215 public comments related to this effort. The public also has the opportunity to comment on the inclusion or exclusion of any individual regulatory action from the unified regulatory agenda, which is issued on a semi-annual basis in accordance with E.O. 12866. We have also established a website (<https://www.doi.gov/regulatory-reform>) to periodically provide information to the public on regulatory reform and encourage the public to share ideas on specific regulations that should be repealed, updated, or otherwise improved. Regulation development will continue to be informed by public input and by agency expertise in the relevant subject matter, whether related to land management, wildlife management, environmental protection, or safety.

U.S.G.S. Climate Change Report:

In May of this year, the Washington Post reported that officials within the Interior Department ordered employees at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to remove a reference to climate change from a press release announcing the publication of a new study on sea level rise and coastal flooding. Scrubbing this press release over the objections of some of the scientists involved in the study deprived media outlets and the general public of the context of the study. In order to prevent future abuses of this kind, I request responses to the following questions:

Question 83. Did Acting Deputy Secretary of the Interior James Cason, or anyone in his office, or at the Office of Management and Budget, review the USGS press release before it was issued?

Question 84. If so, who made the decision to remove the line reported by the authors of the study to read: "Global climate change drives sea-level rise, increasing the frequency of coastal flooding."?

Question 85. If not, what was the highest level Departmental office that reviewed and edited the press release?

Answer to Questions 83–85. The U.S. Geological Survey announced the findings of the study entitled, *Doubling of Coastal Flooding Frequency Within Decades Due to Sea-Level Rise* in a May 18, 2017, press release consistent with existing practices

for all Departmental press releases. The press release aimed to summarize the overall findings of the report, and did not undermine the study findings, as evidenced by the opening line of the study's abstract, which stated, "[g]lobal climate change drives sea-level rise, increasing the frequency of coastal flooding."

Political Appointees Granted Ethics Waivers:

On January 28, 2017, President Trump repealed President Obama's Executive Order No. 13770 and replaced it with his own Executive Order requiring all political appointees to sign an ethics pledge. As with his predecessor, President Trump reserved the right to issue waivers to exempt certain individuals from this ban. Unlike President Obama, however, President Trump is refusing to comply with the Office of Government Ethics' request for a list of those political appointees granted such waivers. The current Administration's refusal to comply with this completely reasonable and standard request for information flies in the face of the President's repeated claims to support an open and transparent government of which the American people can be proud.

Question 86. In the interests of clarity and openness, please disclose all ethics waivers granted since the beginning of the current Administration for political appointees working for the Department of the Interior.

Answer. We are not aware of any ethics waivers granted since the beginning of this Administration for political appointees at the Department.

Review of National Monuments:

On April 26, 2017, President Trump ordered a sweeping review of a wide range of national monuments established under the Antiquities Act in the last 20 years. The Executive Order directed the Department of the Interior with 45 days to issue a report on the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah and any other monument determined appropriate for inclusion in the interim report. The justification for this review was the allegation that certain monument designations were made without sufficient public input and a review was needed to allow the American people to comment on their national monuments. The justification for this review was the allegation that certain monument designations were made without sufficient public input and a review was needed to allow the American people to comment on their national monuments.

Question 87. In the spirit of transparency and open government, please provide a detailed itinerary and list of your meetings while in Utah and any other location associated with the review of national monuments.

Question 88. Additionally, please provide an account of all comments received during the public comment period that includes a tally of positive and negative submissions.

Answer to Questions 87–88. A draft report, which includes the Department's findings and recommendations on national monuments was submitted to the President on August 24, 2017 in accordance with the President's Executive Order. The final report was released to the public on December 5, 2017 and may be found at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/revised_final_report.pdf. Final action and authority rests with the President.

Methane Waste Rule Pullback:

On June 15, 2017, in apparent contravention of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published in the Federal Register a postponement of the effective date of portions of the BLM's rule on methane waste, titled Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation (Methane Waste Rule). As with the Department's postponement of the Consolidated Federal Oil & Gas and Federal & Indian Coal Valuation Reform (Valuation Rule) regulation on February 27, 2017, the authority claimed for postponement of the effective date is Section 705 of the Administrative Procedures Act (5 U.S.C. 705), a questionable interpretation of that section that, to my knowledge, the Department has made no effort to defend as of this date. Postponing the compliance dates contained in the Methane Waste Rule unlawfully deprives the American people of valuable revenue, wastes a non-renewable resource, and threatens people's health by increasing the amount of harmful pollution in our air. Please provide answers to the following:

Question 89. Did DOI's Office of the Solicitor provide a written opinion or memo regarding the legality of postponing the compliance dates in a rule after the effective date of that rule has already passed? If so, please provide a copy of that opinion or memo.

Question 90. Did DOI or BLM perform a legal analysis of the Methane Waste Rule under the four-part test for preliminary injunctions? If so, please provide a copy of that analysis.

Answer to Questions 89–90. The BLM's Waste Prevention Rule is currently the subject of ongoing litigation. I note that in the June 15, 2017 Federal Register publication postponing certain compliance dates for the rule, the BLM concluded that, in light of the pending litigation related to the rule and the ongoing administrative review of rules, postponement of the January 2018 compliance dates would be in the interest of justice, consistent with section 705 of the Administrative Procedure Act.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Huffman

Question 1. Reliable broadband access can frequently be hard to come by in rural communities that border our public lands. As you may know, I recently introduced the Public Lands Telecommunications Act, which provides public land management agencies with fee retention authority to increase funding for telecommunications deployment, and cooperative agreement authority to improve partnerships with local communities and the private sector to expand broadband access. I have long believed that our public land management agencies could do more to improve broadband access in remote and rural communities.

How do you believe the Department of the Interior could achieve this aim with new, sustained funding for telecommunications deployment, as well as cooperative agreement authority to improve partnerships with our constituents and the private sector?

Answer. The Administration has not been requested to provide its position on your bill, H.R. 2425, the Public Lands Telecommunications Act, which was reported out of the House Natural Resources Committee on June 27, 2017. However, the Department supports innovative public-private partnerships, and believes that they are important for management of all Federal lands. I have consistently advocated for increased Internet access on our Federal lands to help enhance the outdoor experience for visitors, particularly millennials.

Question 2. Ranching is important to my district. Last year, I rallied with local cattle and dairy operators to fight a lawsuit that would have limited their grazing rights in the Point Reyes National Seashore area. This is because I believe that carefully management of land resources can allow ranching and conservation to co-exist.

In my district, the Marin Carbon Project has demonstrated that rangeland soils can achieve significant carbon sequestration through use of 'carbon farming' techniques, such as the application of compost as a soil amendment. Barriers to such carbon farming techniques from being more widely among California's ranching community include lack of state and Federal funding, and lack of understanding among conservation and land management agencies, and ranchers, regarding how carbon gets stored and lost in soils.

What steps could the Department of the Interior take to help local ranching communities integrate carbon farming techniques into traditional ranching practices?

Answer. Being a good neighbor through better collaboration with local ranchers and ranching communities is a critical step to ensure the success of any government action. It is my belief that more meaningful involvement and cooperation with communities closest to our public lands will result in innovative ideas and practices as well as better stewardship of the land and its resources.

Question 3. California salmon runs have collapsed during the recent drought, in both the Klamath and Bay-Delta watersheds. This year marked the lowest they have been on record, prompting a complete fisheries closure on the Klamath.

3a. How will your agency prioritize salmon restoration in the coming fiscal year? How is this need reflected in the Department of the Interior's budget, as proposed in the President's Budget Request?

3b. Does the Department of the Interior plan to participate in financing the proposed Delta tunnels (California WaterFix) that are currently under evaluation by Federal regulators and the Bureau of Reclamation?

3c. Is there a finance plan for those tunnels? If so, can you provide it to us?

3d. Are any Bureau of Reclamation contractors ready to pay their proportional share of the cost of the tunnels?

3e. How confident are you that this project will not result in the large cost overruns that are commonly characterize large infrastructure projects?

3f. Is the Bureau of Reclamation considering asking Federal taxpayers to subsidize the construction of a Shasta Dam raise?

Answer. The President's Budget Request includes funding for salmon restoration activities in the Klamath and Bay-Delta watersheds. While the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the primary agency charged with implementing salmon protections; Bureau of Reclamation project operations support many NMFS activities. Pursuant to the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the Department developed the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program's 2001 Final Restoration Plan, which identified 289 actions and evaluations that were determined to be reasonable given numerous technical, legal and implementation considerations. The annual appropriation bill from Congress provides budget authority based on estimated CVPIA collections, and the obligation of these funds can only occur after the collections are made.

The President's budget request includes \$9.2 million for the Klamath Project for ESA activities for the 2013 Biological Opinion that will be implemented over 10 years, including effects analysis of ongoing Reclamation project operations and the Klamath River Coho monitoring program.

On June 26, 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NMFS released biological opinions on the proposed construction and operation of California WaterFix. The Department has made no funding-related commitments and has not been engaged regarding the creation of a finance plan. No decisions been made on raising Shasta Dam, as alternative means of financing (primarily non-Federal) for the construction costs would have to be identified and approved by Congress.

Question 4. Renewable energy development has broad bipartisan support, and plays a large and growing role in our economy. A 2017 Department of Energy report found that solar supports 373,807 jobs. This is more than the number of jobs in natural gas (362,118), and over twice the number of jobs in coal (160,119). Wind also supports 101,738 jobs. Smartly sited, large-scale renewable energy projects on public lands have drawn support from rural counties and other important stakeholders.

If the new Administration is committed to an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, then why is renewable energy the only energy program that is proposed to be cut?

Answer. The America First Energy Plan is an "all-of-the-above" approach that includes oil and gas, coal, and renewable resources. The FY 2018 budget request funds onshore and offshore renewable energy development at a level that is expected to address current industry demand. The Department is also taking steps to improve its leasing processes, including implementation of BLM's competitive leasing rule. This will support a competitive leasing process for solar and wind energy development. The rulemaking updates and codifies acreage rent and megawatt capacity fees for wind and solar energy projects, establishes a new rate adjustment method that provides greater certainty and fair return for use of the public lands, provides incentives for leases within designated leasing areas, updates project bonding requirements, and incorporates sensible solar and wind energy policies into the right-of-way regulations.

Question 5. On June 20, 2017, when Senator Cory Gardner asked you whether Canyons of the Ancients National Monument would be impacted by the broader Federal review of NMs, you mentioned that it wasn't on your "priority review list." This was despite the Canyons of the Ancients NM being specifically named on your list of National Monuments under review. Again, the following day (June 21, 2017), during a Senate subcommittee hearing, you indicated to Senator Tom Udall that you were unlikely to recommend changes to any New Mexico monuments.

Stating that some National Monuments will be left alone, even though they were listed on the DOI "priority review list" and before the public comment period is finished, seems arbitrary. Which national monuments are actually on your "priority review list?"

Answer. All of the national monuments listed in May 11, 2017, Federal Register have been reviewed in accordance with the President's Executive Order. The Secretary evaluated comments and, in certain instances, visited monuments as he prepared his recommendations for the President. As monuments were reviewed and found to require no modification, the Department removed them from the review and let press and local stakeholders know the Department's decision to keep all

interested parties informed. A draft report was submitted to the President on August 24, 2017 and the final report was released to the public on December 5, 2017 and may be found at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/revised_final_report.pdf. Final action and authority rests with the President.

PART II

On May 24, 2016, Mr. John Bezdek, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, testified before the Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee regarding the bills H.R. 4366, "To affirm an agreement between the United States and Westlands Water District dated September 15, 2015, and for other purposes;" and H.R. 5217, "To affirm "The Agreement Between the United States and Westlands Water District" dated September 15, 2015, "The Agreement Between the United States, San Luis Water District, Panoche Water District and Pacheco Water District," and for other purposes." At the time, the Department of the Interior was supporting a legal settlement between the United States and Westlands Water District, and you have given no indication that this support no longer holds true in this new Administration. The Department of the Interior never responded to questions regarding this, that I repeatedly submitted, and as such it is my sincere hope that you will address the following questions now that they fall under your tenure.

Question 1. Please provide an estimate of the total financial benefit that would be provided to San Luis Unit contractors if H.R. 4366 and H.R. 5217 are enacted. Please include financial benefits associated with waiving Central Valley Project (CVP) repayment obligations, Reclamation Reform Act waivers, title transfers of property owned by the Federal Government and other direct and indirect financial benefits contained in both bills.

Answer. The Department continues to support the enactment of legislation to resolve Reclamation's statutory obligation to provide drainage to the entire San Luis Unit, provided that an appropriate offset is identified. The settlement agreement authorized by H.R. 1769 would relieve the United States' obligation to provide drainage service to Westlands Water District (Westlands) in exchange for relieving Westlands from the obligation to repay certain debts, primarily consisting of its share of capitalized construction costs for the Central Valley Project (CVP). While H.R. 1769 would reduce the need for appropriations related to this construction, it would have an upfront mandatory cost. If an appropriate offset were identified, the Administration would support H.R. 1769. The present value of the debts that would be relieved is estimated to be \$331.1 million. Reclamation's assessment of the benefits to the San Luis Water District pursuant to the April 2017 Agreement between the United States and San Luis Water District is estimated at \$69.1 million. These benefits primarily consist of the relief of current, unpaid capitalized construction costs for the CVP, relief of the current operations and maintenance obligations for the Grasslands Bypass Project and relief of the current, unpaid capitalized construction costs of the Demonstration Treatment Plant.

Question 2. Under the settlement agreements, does the waiver of CVP repayment obligations include the capital obligation for the Trinity River Division facilities including the Trinity River hatchery?

Answer. The relief of current, unpaid CVP capital obligations includes the Trinity River Diversion facilities, but does not include the Trinity River hatchery because the hatchery is considered non-reimbursable.

Question 3. If the settlement agreements are enacted, how much Trinity River Division water will be allocated under the new 9(d) contracts provided for in the settlements?

Answer. The CVP is an integrated system and is operated as such. Reclamation does not allocate or quantify water deliveries uniquely from individual units/divisions of the CVP. Under the settlement, new 9(d) contracts, if authorized by Congress, would continue to allocate CVP water as an integrated system, in compliance with Federal law, including then-existing biological opinions, and subject to shortage provisions.

Question 4. As Trustee for the Hoopa Valley Tribe, how can the Administration agree to a settlement based on a CVP water supply to which the trust beneficiary tribe has first priority under Reclamation law, without ensuring that any pending dispute the San Luis Unit contractors have about that priority is fully and finally resolved in the beneficiary's favor?

Answer. If the settlement agreements were approved by Congress, the Department would continue to fulfill its trust responsibilities to the Hoopa Valley Tribe, while managing the CVP as an integrated unit, subject to reclamation and other laws.

Question 5. Section 3404(c)(2) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) requires the Secretary of Interior to incorporate in any contract for CVP water the provisions of the CVPIA and other law. Will you agree to fulfill that requirement in the agreements that would be authorized by the settlement, including: (1) the CVPIA requirement for contractors to pay for the costs of the Trinity River Restoration program for as long as water is diverted by the Trinity River Division; (2) acceptance of the separate priorities provided for in section 2 of the 1955 Act authorizing the Trinity Division and senior to diversions to the Central Valley? If not, why not?

Answer. It is Reclamation's standard practice to include compliance with all applicable laws in any contract. In terms of funding, the Trinity River Restoration Program is funded by both the CVP Restoration Fund and appropriations. Westlands will continue to pay the CVP Restoration Fund charges based on its full contract amount, including on water above the 75 percent cap that Reclamation may use for other CVP purposes. Therefore, the Settlement will not impact CVP Restoration Fund collections.

Question 6. Why does the Administration believe that this this drainage settlement should proceed when fundamental issues regarding entitlement to water for delivery to the San Luis Unit remain unresolved? If San Luis Unit contractors are not entitled to the water being sought in this settlement, wouldn't a consequent reduction in water deliveries to the San Luis Unit potentially resolve a portion of the drainage problem by reductions in CVP water deliveries to the San Luis Unit?

Answer. Reclamation is unaware of any fundamental issues regarding its obligations to fulfill the San Luis Act of 1960 and deliver water, subject to certain conditions, to the CVP contractors in the San Luis Unit. Under the drainage settlement, the United States will have the exclusive right to use all CVP water made available to Westlands in excess of 75 percent of Westlands' contract quantity, or 895,000 acre-feet. The United States' exclusive right to use the CVP water made available to Westlands in excess of 895,000 acre feet will also be an enforceable term in Westlands 9(d) repayment contract.

Question 7. On December 23, 2014, the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior issued Opinion M-37030 regarding Trinity River Division Authorization's 50,000 Acre-Foot Proviso and the 1959 Contract between the Bureau of Reclamation and Humboldt County. In the 18 months since then, have the Department's water managers accounted for that opinion's conclusion in CVP operations models and estimates of water supply? If yes, what has the Department done? If not, why not?

Answer. Reclamation has begun implementing the opinion through its Long Term Plan to Protect Adult Salmon in the Lower Klamath River, including through the development of an environmental impact statement supporting the Plan, and its flow augmentation in prior years. Each of these actions is supported by modeling of CVP water supplies that includes consideration of proviso 2 of the opinion.

Question 8. In an April 21, 2016 letter to Representative David Valadao, Deputy Interior Secretary Michael Connor states that "it is widely recognized that the drainage issue may have lessened over the last few years due to drought and irrigation efficiencies." Has the Department of the Interior developed any updated calculations since the 2007 Record of Decision to estimate the current cost of providing drainage to the San Luis Unit? If no updated estimates have been developed, does the Department of the Interior believe—based on increased irrigation efficiencies and other developments since the 2007 Record of Decision—that a current estimate of drainage costs would be less than the costs identified in 2007?

Answer. While Reclamation has not completed a comprehensive analysis of the changes in drainage patterns and needs that may result from the changes in cropping patterns and irrigation efficiencies that have occurred in the San Luis unit since the a 2008 Feasibility Study, historic hydrologic records indicate that wet cycles will return and drainage will again become a substantial challenge in the San Luis Unit. A variety of factors influence the cost of providing drainage service. Some costs, such as the costs of evaporation ponds, reuse areas, collection systems, and selenium biotreatment, could be reduced by changes in cropping patterns or other irrigation efficiencies, while other costs such as land retirement could increase over time. However, any such future cost estimates are speculative absent additional

analysis, and any such cost savings are not expected to result in savings of such a magnitude that the Department would not continue to support the Westlands Settlement and San Luis Agreement.

Question 9. The Termsheet on the proposed Northerly District Agreement is vague about the future status of the San Luis Drain, and the future management and cleanup of sediments in the Drain. Under some scenarios, the future management of the Drain and its sediments could have an adverse impact on national wildlife refuges and other wetlands that Interior Department agencies are supposed to protect under numerous laws. For example, Section 3406(d) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act requires the Secretary of Interior to maintain and improve wetland habitat areas in California, by providing water supplies and supporting the objectives of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture. In accordance with the Department of the Interior's wetlands-related responsibilities, what is the Department's plan for the future management of the San Luis Drain in and around the Grasslands complex of state, Federal and privately managed wetlands? How will the Department of the Interior ensure that all potential impacts from the Drain and its future management and cleanup will not adversely impact these wetlands and the numerous species they support before the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation relinquish Federal control of the Drain?

Answer. Reclamation intends to continue to use the San Luis Interceptor Drain for the purposes of conveyance of drain water and storm water for the duration of the Grassland Bypass Project, which operates under the terms of the 2009–2019 Agreement for Continued Use of the San Luis Drain between the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority and Reclamation. The impacts of this use were evaluated in Reclamation's Grassland Bypass Project 2010–2019, Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report and resulting Record of Decision.

Reclamation has met several times with Grasslands Water District and other stakeholders to discuss the possible future use of the San Luis Drain. However, no formal discussions have begun regarding the future use of the San Luis Drain outside of the general discussions with stakeholders.

If the San Luis Drain remains in Reclamation ownership and a new stormwater use agreement is desired by the local stakeholders after the expiration of the Grasslands Bypass Project in 2019, or other uses were sought for the drain by the local stakeholders, then Reclamation would work to negotiate the appropriate agreements for those uses and comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable Federal law to determine the potential impacts of those uses. If title transfer for the San Luis Drain to another entity or entities is authorized by the Congress, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable Federal law would be required prior to the transfer. As part of the title transfer effort, Reclamation would work with the receiving entity or entities to determine anticipated future use of the drain and analyze this anticipated future use, as appropriate, in the National Environmental Policy Act documentation and in compliance with applicable Federal law, prior to such title transfer.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Napolitano

Question 1. President Trump's Executive Order on the Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act on April 26, 2017 stated, "Within 120 days of the date of this order, the Secretary shall provide a final report to the President." Do you expect the report to be finished on time?

1a. Will your report recommend any action and/or changes through the legislative process or through Executive Order?

1b. After these recommends, how can local residents, business and cities be confident to implement their city and business plans without fear that the President or the Interior Department will review their nearby designation again?

Answer. A draft report, which includes the Department's findings and recommendations on national monuments in accordance with the President's Executive Order, was submitted to the President on August 24, 2017, and the final report was released to the public on December 5, 2017 and may be found at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/revised_final_report.pdf. As we move forward in managing the Federal lands, we will continue to coordinate with all levels, from locals on the ground and county commissioners to governors, tribal leaders, and Members of Congress to fulfill our mission to be a good neighbor.

Question 2. Do you plan to visit the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument before the comment period ends on July 10, 2017?

2a. If not, how do you plan to make a decision on the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument without meeting with local residents, businesses and cities?

2b. What other information besides public comments made online will you take into consideration? Where will that information come from and who? How can local residents, businesses and cities ensure that that information is in their best interest?

Answer. Each monument was reviewed in a holistic fashion. Although I was not able to visit the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument before the comment period ended, we heard from the local communities including state, county and federally elected officials, tribes, local businesses, and trade associations and I thank you for the input you provided to me. For all of the reviews, each group's input was weighed when we crafted recommendations for the President.

Question 3. The monument designation has helped San Gabriel communities leverage additional Federal dollars for critically needed recreation, trail maintenance, trash collection and fire prevention. Seeing that three major fires—the 2009 Station Fire, the 2014 Colby Fire, and the 2015 Cabin Fire—have threatened our local communities. How do you expect our region to continue to fight forest fires without this critical designation?

Answer. Wildfires are not constrained by land ownership or land designation. The Department is committed to ensuring that all our firefighting assets are utilized in the most efficient way possible, regardless of land designation, and that we work with other Federal agencies, along with our state and local partners, to improve our operational efficiency and take advantage of the firefighting infrastructure and assets that are currently in place.

Question 4. Thanks to the help of the designation, the monument has raised more than \$5 million through the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument fund. One example, is Coca-Cola who has donated \$900,000 toward clean-up efforts in the forest. This was possible because USFS land cannot form private-public partnership unless they are designated a national monument. Seeing that the USFS and Interior Department budgets continue to shrink, do you believe public-private partnerships like the one listed above is important for our parks?

a. Without a monument designation, how do you plan to allow USFS lands to form these partnerships?

Answer. We support innovative public-private partnerships, and believe that they are important for management of all Federal lands, regardless of designation or land managing agency.

Question 5. Many water agencies in the arid West are looking toward recycled water projects as the most cost effective solution to drought management; do you believe we should start to refocus our investments toward recycled water?

5a. What does President Trump's budget do to support recycled water projects?

5b. How can an increase in funding impact the amount of water projects that can be introduced in the drought-stricken West?

Answer. I believe it is important to look at a wide range of approaches when it comes to helping the west effectively manage drought. The Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program supports water supply sustainability by leveraging Federal and non-Federal funding to conserve tens of thousands of acre-feet of water each year. Since 1992, approximately \$672 million in Federal funding has been leveraged with non-Federal funding to implement more than \$3.3 billion in water reuse improvements. Reclamation announced in July 2017 a new funding opportunity for Title XVI projects pursuant to new authority under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (P.L. 114-322).

Questions Submitted by Rep. Sablan

Question 1. In 2005, Interior's Office of Insular Affairs started a competitive system for allocating among the U.S. territories \$27.72 million in Covenant Funds that originally all went to the Northern Marianas to help build our public infrastructure. The Northern Marianas currently receives only about a third of the money. The competition is largely based on financial management criteria. Financial management is important but so is infrastructure. According to the EPA, Saipan, the main island in the Northern Marianas, is the only U.S. municipality without 24-hour potable water. That is a serious health concern. Isn't it time to look at new criteria for the

\$27.72 million in Marianas Covenant Funds, so that public health and safety needs are prioritized?

Answer. The capital infrastructure project (CIP) program funds a variety of critical infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories, such as ports, hospitals, schools, water, public buildings, solid waste, energy and public safety. As you noted, the annual allocation of CIP funds is made on the basis of competitive criteria that measure the demonstrated ability of the governments to exercise prudent financial management practices and to meet Federal grant requirements. These criteria are evaluated and revised as necessary every 5 years.

Question 2. OIA budget justifications for FY 2018 tout the importance of various programs including the Technical and Maintenance Assistance Programs, the Brown Tree Snake Control and Coral Reef Initiatives, and the Empowering Insular Communities program. Yet the request includes steep funding cuts to each of these programs. I appreciate the need to control spending, but these across-the-board cuts would likely end up costing much more, both at the Federal and local levels, if programs are not properly implemented. The Brown Tree Snake Control Program costs a few million, but if these snakes spread, as they have on Guam, the cost in damage to electrical systems and the extermination of native endangered birds would cost tens of millions or more. Isn't it a wiser use of taxpayers' money to prevent problems than to try to fix them after the damage is done?

Answer. Overall, for 2018, the Administration identified areas where the Federal Government could reduce spending and also areas for investment, such as addressing the maintenance backlog across the National Park System and increasing domestic energy production on Federal lands. The 2018 budget requires restrained spending in order to meet the goal of balancing the budget within 10 years. Specifically with regard to the brown treesnake, we recently announced approximately \$3.5 million through the Office of Insular Affairs to continue supporting efforts to control the brown treesnake on Guam and prevent its spread to Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the larger Micronesian region. This supplements more than \$250,000 in brown treesnake investments made by the U.S. Geological Survey and the FWS in FY 2017.

Question 3. Territorial Representatives Bordallo, Radewagen, Plaskett, and I sent you a letter dated March 9, 2017, asking that you retain the position of Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas. We have not received a response to date. The Office of Insular Affairs has administrative responsibility for coordinating Federal policy in the U.S. territories of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Keeping the position of Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, equal to other Assistant Secretaries in the Department, is an important symbol of respect for our constituents as it shows their concerns are taken as seriously as citizens residing in the states, and insular area issues are viewed equally significant as other issues under the Department's jurisdiction. In your reorganization of the Interior Department, will you retain the position of Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas?

Answer. The President nominated Doug Domenech to be Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas on June 29, 2017, and Mr. Domenech's nomination was confirmed by the Senate on September 13, 2017.

Question 4. In my reply to your letter soliciting comments to assist your review of the Marianas Trench National Monument under Executive Order 13792, I wrote about the promises made to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands that remain unfulfilled. For years, we have been urging Interior to produce the management plan, required when President Bush created the Monument. The plan is key to fishing and other resource use in the Monument, public education and outreach, and the development of a Monument visitors center. Please provide an update on any progress and a specific date for issuance of the Monument Management Plan the Fish and Wildlife Service has been working on for 8 years now.

Answer. FWS continues to work with its partners, including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and Department of Defense toward completion of a management plan for the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument.

A number of steps have been taken to address or resolve important issues. FWS issued a patent under the Territorial Submerged Lands Act for the CNMI's territorial waters in December 2016. This was an important step in ensuring that the final monument management plan included all applicable jurisdictions and authorities, including that of the CNMI. NOAA Fisheries has developed and published

fishing regulations for the Islands Unit of the Monument. Management regulations for the Trench and Volcanic Units were implemented under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, through Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3284.

A draft Monument Management Plan and associated Environmental Assessment are awaiting completion of the Administration's national monuments review and any associated Presidential decision arising from the Secretary's recommendations.

Question 5. The Fish and Wildlife Service requests \$470 million—a decrease of \$13.8 million—for management of National Wildlife Refuges. This includes decreases to wildlife and habitat management, visitor services, law enforcement, and elimination of funding for refuge conservation planning. These cuts will surely ensure that American hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts will have less access to sporting opportunities on public lands. Do you believe the proposed funding levels for Refuges are consistent with your vision of increasing access to America's public lands, while also managing and expanding the Refuge System to protect and enhance America's wildlife resources?

Answer. Yes. Through the National Wildlife Refuge System, the Service continues the American tradition, started by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats and to provide recreation opportunities for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. The proposed budget makes tough choices that will lead to a balanced budget, but maintains a commitment to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in both rural and urban or suburban settings, as well as to support the vital role of volunteers on our Refuges.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Beyer

Question 1. Please confirm for me that the contract for Dyke Marsh is on track to be awarded before the end of the fiscal year.

Answer. I am advised that the NPS awarded the contract for construction at Dyke Marsh this past fall, but work will probably not begin this calendar year since not all permits are yet in hand. However, I understand that the construction documents are complete and the permit application process is well underway.

Question 2. I increasingly hear concerns about traffic and traffic safety along the GW Parkway.

2a. Please indicate how the Department tracks usage statistics for the Parkway.

Answer. I understand that there are traffic counters on the roadway that track the number of vehicles on the George Washington Memorial Parkway (Parkway), trail counters on the Mount Vernon Trail to track bicycle and pedestrian usage, and entrance counters at some park sites that track vehicles and tour buses.

2b. Please indicate how the Department tracks accidents along the Parkway.

Answer. The United States Park Police (USPP) utilizes a centralized database, the Department's Incident Management, Analysis and Reporting System (IMARS), that allows law enforcement officers to electronically document accidents/incidents.

2c. What is the Department doing to increase the safety of the parkway? Please speak to the Department's plans for Morningside Lane and how it will budget appropriately to be able to address safety concerns.

Answer. The safety of park visitors is of the utmost importance. I understand that the NPS has implemented several recommendations from a 2016 Federal Highway Association safety assessment of Morningside Lane. Also, NPS has scheduled an additional study to begin next year to identify alternate traffic patterns within the local community to increase safety at Morningside Lane.

2d. What is the Department doing to improve the accuracy of its traffic counts?

Answer. I am told that the NPS is currently assessing equipment along the Parkway and working to replace those pieces that are in disrepair.

2e. What is the Department doing to improve how it tracks accidents?

Answer. The USPP continue to work on crash reporting in IMARS. Specifically dispatchers are being trained to document detailed locations of crashes. This associated with previous improvements should allow for more detailed and accurate reporting.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Torres

Tribal Concerns:

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, there has been some disturbing rhetoric coming from some members of this Committee, as well as some in the Administration, attacking the sovereignty of tribes and questioning the recognition process and the land into trust process. Will you reaffirm your and the Department's commitment to its trust responsibility to all tribes that are currently federally recognized, including the ability to take land into trust?

Answer. I have said before that the importance of my mission as Secretary to partner with American Indians and Alaska Natives is one that I do not take lightly. Our duty as Americans is to uphold our trust responsibilities and consult and collaborate with tribes on a government-to-government basis.

Question 2. To follow up on that, I would like you to address the ongoing issue that is the Carcieri decision. That decision has troubled Indian Country since it came down 2009, and has left many land decisions in limbo. It's been almost 10 years now—do you agree that Congress needs to resolve the Carcieri issue once and for all?

Answer. Congress, as the trust settlor for all Indian Affairs matters, has the sole authority to amend existing statutes, such as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Congress alone will determine if land into trust statutes should be constrained or expanded. The Department welcomes the opportunity to work with Congress on any recommendations to modernize the land into trust process.

Question 3. The Tiwahe Initiative has proven to be exceptionally successful at assisting tribes in addressing the inter-related problems of poverty, violence, substance abuse, and their associated outcomes like youth suicide. Tiwahe is currently in its pilot phase and impacting 61 tribes directly, with an additional \$24 million in Tiwahe Social Services and ICWA funds distributed to tribes across the country. In spite of this success, Tiwahe is being targeted for elimination. Can you tell us if the Department will be able to support the Tiwahe Initiative's success through its continued funding?

Answer. The budget request made difficult choices this year. The Department's budget prioritizes self-governance and self-determination, and focuses funding in Indian Country on core service activities, fully funding the costs for tribes to administer programs for themselves, and maintains essential management functions for tribal resources, among other things.

Question 4. I understand that the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee has been suspended as part of a larger review of DOI committees. This is congressionally chartered committee and does critical work across the country in the rightful return of human remains to Indian tribes. Do you have an estimate of when the department's review will be completed and the committee re-activated?

Answer. In order to make sure all commissions are giving local communities adequate opportunities to comment on park management decisions, the Department is reviewing the more than 200 boards, committees, and commissions under its responsibility. Throughout this review process, committees and commissions have been given the option to pursue waivers to meet. We recognize the critical work performed by these committees.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Gallego

Sexual Harassment:

Question 1. Secretary Zinke, as a follow-up to Mrs. Tsongas' questions during the hearing, please address the following. A workforce survey on sexual harassment is an important tool available to those that are serious about rooting out sexual harassment in their organizations. As you alluded to in your testimony, the military has a sexual assault and harassment problem of its own. In seeking to address this grave and prevalent issue, the military now conducts such a survey every other year. Making the surveys recurring is an honest way to track progress in eliminating sexual harassment, helps refine departmental efforts, and sends a clear signal to employees that sexual harassment is a priority.

With this in mind, will the Department commit to ensuring the National Park Service (NPS) performs its survey on a recurring basis?

Answer. We are mindful of the opportunity to perform this survey on a recurring basis and understand the value of doing so. A decision has not been made yet on whether to repeat the survey.

Question 2. In his recent testimony before the Senate, acting NPS Director Michael Reynolds said this about the results of the sexual harassment workforce survey they are currently conducting: "I assure you that we are committed to transparency and once we receive the final data, we will share it widely with this subcommittee as well as all employees and interested stakeholders." It's a step in the right direction but accountability requires true transparency. And true transparency means anyone—not just the employees or stakeholders—can see the results. Again, the military published the results of its survey for all to see.

In your testimony before the Committee, you indicated your openness to sharing the results of both the January 2017 survey and the seasonal survey scheduled for July 2017. Please confirm that the Department will make both survey results available on the public-facing website.

Answer. The Department has worked with the NPS to ensure that the survey is appropriately shared with stakeholders. The January 2017 survey results were posted on October 13, 2017, to <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/transparency-accountability.htm>.

Question 3. You indicated during the hearing that the sexual harassment issues known to exist in the National Park Service "may be department-wide." Accordingly, and given your stated zero-tolerance policy, please explain what efforts you will undertake to expand information gathering and response efforts so to include the totality of Interior Department personnel.

Answer. As Secretary of the Interior, I am committed to combating all forms of harassment. On April 12, 2017, I issued a memorandum to all employees setting forth the Department's policy on harassment. I directed the Chief Human Capital Officer and the Solicitor to establish additional harassment reporting procedures for managers and supervisors. I also ensured that all managers and supervisors throughout the Department will now be required to complete training on preventing harassment and improving the workplace environment. In addition, I have directed the Department to update its policy, procedures, and guidance to address the impact of harassment as it relates to performance and conduct. This is an important and ongoing process here at the Department and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to craft real solutions that protect employees and hold wrongdoers accountable.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Hanabusa

Hazards Programs:

Question 1. The U.S. Geological Survey's natural hazards programs are critical for communities across our Nation to understand the science behind natural disasters and how we can best prepare for them. The Earthquake Hazards Program and the Volcano Hazards Program as examples today, since they are of particular importance to Hawaii. These programs use science and technology to monitor signs of activity to help ensure the public is given ample warning of an earthquake, tsunami, or volcanic activity, so that proper precautions can be taken to reduce the amount of damage and loss of lives.

Your budget seems to reflect the opposite. On cuts to the Earthquake Hazards Program, it says "This reduction would diminish the EHP's ability to execute its core activities . . ." On cuts in the Volcano Hazards Programs, it says "This reduction would diminish the VHP's ability to execute its core activities to provide forecasts and warnings of hazardous volcanic activity at volcanoes in the United States with the current monitoring networks," among other things.

These proposed cuts are deeply concerning. Although they are not large, they could have serious consequences, especially if these cuts hinder these programs' abilities to "execute its core activities."

1a. Please explain the rationale behind these proposed cuts.

Answer. For 2018, the Administration identified areas where the Federal Government could reduce spending and also areas for investment, such as addressing the maintenance backlog across the National Park System and increasing domestic energy production on Federal lands. The 2018 budget requires restrained spending in order to meet the goal of balancing the budget within 10 years. The 2018 budget

request focuses on core capabilities to provide forecasts and warnings of hazardous volcanic activity with current monitoring networks, including Hawaii; produce updated hazard assessments for high-threat volcanoes; and to revise the national volcano threat level assessment. The budget maintains support for robust national and regional earthquake monitoring and reporting, including Hawaii.

Invasive Species:

Question 2. Invasive species is a global problem that will continue to invade our lands and waters with devastating economic and ecological impacts unless we actively protect our resources. It has been shown time and again that prevention of invasive species saves far more money than trying to eradicate the pest after it has been introduced. It is problematic to cut invasive species funding, seeing as invasive species continue to cost the United States more than \$120 billion in damages annually (Pimental et al. 2005).

Invasive species management requires a holistic effort due to the impacts to both aquatic and terrestrial resources. Especially troubling in the budget are reductions for the Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Insular Affairs, and National Parks Service for invasive species management, while funding is increased by more than \$4.5 million for the Bureau of Reclamation, which focuses on dams. While there are invasive species in dams, the issues plague areas on both land and in the sea. The funding shift away from offices within the Department of the Interior that have jurisdiction over areas with invasive species and to an agency with little expertise in this area would be an inefficient waste of taxpayer money.

My home state of Hawaii, for example, has very unique ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to invasive species. We require robust invasive species funding to prevent further damage from such species as the Brown Tree Snake, Little Fire Ant, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, and the Coqui frog, much of which is best managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

2a. Given that the threat from invasive species is not diminished and reducing prevention will cost us much more in eradication, can you explain the rationale behind cuts to invasive species management?

2b. How is the Bureau of Reclamation going to effectively manage invasive species in places like Hawaii where the Bureau has no presence?

Answer. Invasive species are a significant threat to the Nation's economy, food and water security, public health and environment. The Department leads extensive work to prevent, eradicate and control invasive species, including efforts to strengthen early detection and rapid response capabilities, enhance biosecurity measures, and address high impact invasive species, such as the brown treesnake. The Department is committed to working with the state of Hawaii and all of our partners on these important issues. The budget includes \$101 million for invasive species work across the Department, nearly level with 2017.

The Department recently announced approximately \$3.5 million through the Office of Insular Affairs to continue supporting efforts to control the brown treesnake on Guam and prevent its spread to Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the larger Micronesian region. This supplements more than \$250,000 in brown treesnake investments made by the U.S. Geological Survey and the FWS in FY 2017. The budget requests an increase for the Bureau of Reclamation to help address the threat posed by zebra mussels, which is a serious concern in the West due to the experience seen in the Great Lakes region.

Questions Submitted by Rep. McEachin

Sexual Harassment:

Question 1. Secretary Zinke, during questioning at the hearing, you agreed that your hiring freeze was the reason the DOI attorneys needed to work through the backlog of sexual harassment allegations have not yet been hired. But you seem to blame others for that. There are only two people that can approve exceptions to your hiring freeze; you and your Deputy Secretary—or acting Deputy Secretary in this case. There are really only two people to blame for the failure to do what it takes to work through the backlog. When will those attorneys in the ELLU unit be hired?

Answer. Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. While positions in Washington, DC, and Denver, and positions in the field at the GS-12 level and above, are still generally subject to hiring controls, the Solicitor's Office has authority to hire personnel lawyers and is in the process of doing so. I look forward to

working toward a solution to this problem. As I have stated before, I have a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment and the Department remains committed to addressing this issue head on.

Question 2. Sexual harassment is a sizable, difficult, complex problem that requires a serious long-term commitment. A problem like that needs a plan with clear goals and a viable path to achieving them. I have not found a plan for NPS. I could cobble together the promises made in various statements, memos, and briefing notes to see what has been said but I have not found a plan. Without a plan, it's hard to address the problem efficiently and have accountability for those in charge of getting rid of sexual harassment. Is there a written plan for how NPS will address its sexual harassment problem?

Answer. The National Park Service is pursuing a number of proactive strategies on multiple fronts to address the harassment issues. First, the NPS is examining the breadth and depth of the problems with a workplace survey of both permanent and seasonal employees. Second, the NPS is encouraging employees to consult with a newly established Ombuds Office if they encounter workplace problems. Third, the NPS is improving training programs aimed at recognizing and addressing harassment. Fourth, the NPS is seeking input from employee resource groups. Fifth, the NPS building stronger procedures for reporting, investigating, tracking, and resolving work environment issues. And sixth, the NPS is acting as quickly as possible when new cases are brought to its attention. These issues did not develop overnight and they will not be solved overnight, however, NPS is committed to bringing a culture of transparency, respect and accountability back to the organization.

Inspector General:

Question 3. Secretary Zinke, would a permanent Inspector General help you and your department function more efficiently and transparently?

Answer. The Department appreciates the work of Interior's Office of the Inspector General, currently led by the Deputy Inspector General Mary L. Kendall, in the detection and investigation of waste, fraud, and abuse. I would note that the appointment of an Inspector General is a decision to be made by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Questions Submitted by Rep. Brown

Environmental Justice:

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, decades of studies have proved that minority, low-income, rural, tribal and indigenous populations face tremendous environmental and health disparities. Do you agree?

Answer. While I am not familiar with the studies you mention, the Department of the Interior, and I, recognize that there remain impediments to economic, environmental, and health prosperity for a significant number of rural and underserved communities. The Department supports underserved communities efforts to overcome disparities in much of the work we do.

Programs at the Department of the Interior address issues in Indian Country that range from remediation of legacy wells in Alaska, in some cases to protect the health and safety of Alaska Native communities, to assisting tribes in addressing important human services matters, like child welfare, health, and other social services issues.

Question 2. In 1994 President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 requiring that the U.S. EPA and other Federal agencies implement environmental justice policies. That order required all Federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice considerations in their missions, develop strategies to address disproportionate impacts to minority and low-income people from their activities, and coordinate the development of data and research on these topics. Do you support the goals of this order?

Answer. I believe it is necessary that the Department's management of the Nation's natural and cultural resources is done in a manner that is inclusive of all populations. As I have said before, I recognize that the Department has not always stood shoulder-to-shoulder with tribal communities. I also recognize that all tribes are sovereign and we must respect their right to self-determination and the decisions that they make. We are working to foster stronger and more resilient Native communities.

Question 3. Under your budget, this order faces its gravest assault. The Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), part of the Office of the Secretary, is the focal point for implementing the Department's environmental justice policy, including the environmental justice executive order, and ensuring compliance. The proposed budget would cut the Office of the Secretary—your office—by over 80 percent. How can a cut this large not undermine the environment and health of minority, low-income, rural Americans, tribal and indigenous communities?

Answer. The request for the Office of the Secretary appears to reflect a large reduction because the FY 2018 budget request would transfer funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program from the Departmental Operations account, from which both FY 2016 and FY 2017 funding for PILT was appropriated, to a separate PILT appropriation. With regard to Indian Affairs programs specifically, while this budget makes tough choices, it prioritizes self-governance and self-determination for Indian Country, fully funding the costs for tribes to administer programs for themselves, and maintains essential management functions for tribal resources, among other things.

With regard to environmental justice, while OEPC provides support at the Departmental level, implementation of environmental justice activities at the Department has always occurred at the bureau level.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that. We will start with a round of questions and try to get as much as we can in. First of all, I remind the Committee members that we have a 5-minute limit to questions of the Secretary and the staff that is here. I am going to do that. I am going to be mean on that, so same thing, we will cut you off at 5 minutes. If you are talking when it is 5 minutes, I will cut you off. Don't ask a question when there are only 20 seconds left. Do it the right way.

I also want to apologize because in the middle of this I and Mr. Grijalva have another meeting we are going to have to go to. We are not walking out on you, we will be back. If you are still here, we will come back.

Let me open it up and start with questions, if I could, for you, Secretary Zinke.

There are some people, there are some voices out there that simply try to measure success by the increased dollars and a bigger bureaucracy. As you have mentioned before, that simply is a different era. And you have mentioned before how the revenues have decreased, how access to public land has been further restricted. Overall, a return on services for taxpayers has been diminished, even though there was supposedly, on paper, an increase in revenues.

Can you just tell us more clearly how you expect to try to solve those three problems of the access, the service, and the revenue coming into the country, and how you intend to do that? And if there is some way, statutorily, we can assist you in hitting those areas?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of things.

One, on the revenue side, it is oil and gas and all of the above, but I am a Boy Scout. We are going to do it right. You leave your campground in as good or better condition than what you found it. But clearly, when you put 94 percent of all offshore holdings off limits, it has a consequence. When you decide you are not going to cut any timber, it has a consequence. When you decide you are not going to do anything onshore, there is a consequence.

Compensatory mitigation was a problem. Some people would call it extortion. But when you have a project, let's say a pipeline or a power line, and you force a company to do \$90 million worth of compensatory mitigation in a project that is \$109 million, that is a problem. When the permitting process becomes arbitrary, that is an issue.

In the case of North Shore, when a company buys a \$3.1 billion lease offshore, and is forced to go further out in an unproductive area, and is forced to drill a well that is not proved true because of a Fish and Wildlife rule that is maybe pertinent to the Gulf, where you cannot have platforms and systems 15 miles apart, that forces them to drill a dry hole, that is a \$3.1 billion hit, and that sends signals throughout the industry that we cannot be trusted.

So, my biggest job is to be trustworthy, to be a partner, making sure we work with people, rather than against people, make sure we have a system that we hold industry accountable, because accountability is important. That is why we reintroduced the Royalty Committee, to make sure we have a system that we hold people accountable, but we are viewed as an advocate, rather than an adversary.

Reorganization is not just about number of people in budget, it is how we do things. Let me give you an example. If you have a trout and a salmon in the same stream, and that upstream has perhaps a dam or a lock, and downstream is irrigation, and if that stream happens to pass by tribal lands, you have at least five different bureaucracies. Fish and Wildlife will handle the trout, NOAA will handle the salmon, Bureau of Reclamation will handle the irrigation, Army Corps of Engineers will handle the locks, and BIA will be the subject matter on tribal lands.

Five bureaus, and it could be more, all will have different views, different biological opinions, mind you, and some of the opinions might be unreconcilable. So, how do you manage your public lands? We are looking at more of a joint model on the region side, because if the government cannot align, then how do you expect industry, or how do you expect the public to have a view and transparency of what is best?

We are looking at a reorganization based on jointness, based on how to get the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior together on issues, so we can be more transparent and address things like wildlife corridors and watersheds.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, Mr. Secretary, I am cutting myself off here, too, so let me thank you for that. That is a significant issue.

Can I just say on Antiquities, very quickly, four of the last six presidents have actually changed the way Antiquities has been used. In Bears Ears, you were very nice to actually challenge Congress to come up and solve some of the questions that should be presented. I appreciate that. I know Senators Hatch and Lee will take that on the Senate side; the membership here will do something with that, we will take upon the challenge, and we will give you something legislatively that can be used in that particular area.

I have 9 seconds. I said I wouldn't do a question with that period of time, so let me just give it out to you, that if there is something that you think we can do to help to assist in providing

transparency, accountability, dealing with the Antiquities Act, we would like to hear from you and are willing to do that.

I apologize, and I will now recognize Mr. Grijalva for his questions. Since I went 8 seconds over, we will take it off of yours.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Secretary, the Office of Legal Counsel within the Department of Justice has a written opinion stating fundamentally that only letters or inquiries from committee chairmen should receive responses from the Trump administration. All other letters from Members of the Congress can and have been ignored. We submitted more than a dozen letters to the Administration seeking information, and we have received no responses.

I really believe this policy is undemocratic, as well as offensive to every Member in Congress. Even Chairman Grassley said that it frustrates the constitutional functioning of legislature.

My question is to that issue of information, the flow of information, and the equal treatment of Members. Mr. Secretary, when you were a member of this Committee, if you wrote a letter to the Administration, did you feel your letter deserved to be answered?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, first, I can say up front there is no gag order.

And second, I have met with the Minority in person. I also recall you were in the meeting that I committed to meet with the Minority Members quarterly. And if a Member, which I think is a courtesy, it is not a right, but it is a professional courtesy, that if you have an issue, then I will give you my phone number and we will talk about it personally. I will arrange to come over.

When I was in Boston recently, I called young Joe Kennedy, who I think very highly of. I talked to all Members and said exactly where I—

Mr. GRIJALVA. And I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary, but the point here is the free and open flow of information, Members receiving information.

Our oversight responsibility is more encompassing than your gesture, and we need information, information that becomes part of the record. And while I appreciate the gesture, and would take advantage of it, the fact remains that for the record these responses need to occur.

You wrote nine letters to the Obama administration. All nine you received responses to when you were a Member of this body. And I think that, quite frankly, every Member here, and certainly representing the Minority side, deserves the courtesy that you were extended by the previous administration.

The purpose of these letters was to get the reasoning for the various policy decisions that you would be making. And I really think, and let me ask you, as Members of Congress entitled to a full understanding of the reasonings behind your policy decisions, don't you think that is part of the legislative oversight responsibility that this Committee has?

Secretary ZINKE. I would think hearing it from the Secretary of the Interior directly probably is the most important access I can think of in a democracy.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me—

Secretary ZINKE. As you know, when you write a letter, it is probably your staff that writes it. It probably comes to my staff that answers it. But I have said, and I have absolutely committed, that I will talk to you in person. I don't think that there is a better system, and I can't remember, and I was only here for one term, but I can't remember a Secretary that would offer to talk to you about an issue in person.

Mr. GRIJALVA. OK. I appreciate that. Let me be very specific, though.

Let's talk about Bears Ears. The comment period is over, extended comment period. One of the letters that we sent was wanting an accounting, how many support existing monuments, how many support making changes to the existing monuments. Will your office provide that accounting of those comments as a response to that letter? I realize those comments are public, but there are tens of thousands of them. We would simply like an accounting of the positives and the negatives.

We are going to be resubmitting letters to you as official questions for the record for this hearing. And, as you know, questions for the record are technically coming from the Chairman. Because of that being on the record, my second question, will you commit to providing answers to those letters for the record, given the submittal today?

Secretary ZINKE. As you know, the Antiquities Act is singular in authority. It is by the President, by the executive. It does not require NEPA, it does not require public access or public comment.

Mr. GRIJALVA. All I want is—

Secretary ZINKE. However, on the review, for the first time it was regulations.gov. So, we opened up a website so every comment could be heard. And the President asked me to go forward and get every comment. And I would certainly—

The CHAIRMAN. I have 10 seconds to finish up with you.

Secretary ZINKE [continuing]. Make that available.

And if you want to talk about the Bears Ears in the next round, I will talk about the Bears Ears—

Mr. GRIJALVA. Well, the question was already asked.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. Lamborn, you are up.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is great to have you here. I remember when you sat on this side of the dais, and you always had great, penetrating questions. And I am so happy to see you sitting where you are at now.

Secretary ZINKE. It is easier on that side, but—

[Laughter.]

Mr. LAMBORN. The subcommittee that I chair, the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, has an active infrastructure agenda, already hearing testimony on a number of bills. And a subcommittee bill is also going to be on the Floor today that Mr. McClintock has sponsored, streamlining the permitting process for water and infrastructure projects.

How do these kinds of bills that would remove bureaucratic obstacles and streamline America's water resource developments, including title transfer bills like with the Bureau of Reclamation,

when they have hydropower projects, how do these fit into the Department's goals of advancing the production of American energy infrastructure improvement?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, how we are approaching it, one is that it is just not about funding, it is about process and how we do our permits. If there is one small clerical error, it can go back in a loop, and we added more money in our budget for permitting. But some of it is structural. And that is why we are convinced that, as an example, looking at a joint model would be what we call joint management areas, where, rather than the different bureaus are represented, they are grouped together into a NEPA process or a permit process, where every bureau has representation.

It is not a new concept. This is how we fight forest fires out West, and this is how the military operates under combatant commands. But looking at it more joint, so you don't have the problems up front with different biological opinions, where we actually can work together as a government, and have state input, because a lot of the permitting process also involves state and local communities, which should have a voice.

So, helping streamline the process to making sure it is fair, not arbitrary, consistent in approach, but also understanding that there needs to be some flexibility because the geology is different than what the geology is in the Appalachians or Colorado. So, you need the right people to understand the nuances in the different projects.

Again, being an advocate, rather than an adversary, is a big change.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And we will work with you and your Department on that.

One specific line item in the budget that I do want to ask you about has to do with 3D Elevation Program, or 3DEP. And that does concern me, because it is important to have high-quality 3D elevation data to help resource management of forests, alternative energy, agriculture, other industries, including flood risk management.

Why are you proposing a reduction in that particular program? I am just curious where the Department is coming from on that.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, this is a balanced budget. Look at it. I will work with you on it, but we looked at the USGS, where that program, I think, resides. We did reduce USGS, not all programs, we consolidated some on there.

As far as the program goes, we think there is a good opportunity for public-private partnerships. In many of the cutting-edge technologies, the government is not the lead any more. Now, there are a lot of reasons why, and I think the government should be on the lead in some areas. But, quite frankly, our processes, our acquisition, the way that we approach technology, we are lagging behind some of the private enterprises.

So, we think there is an opportunity for public-private partnership on some of the 3D modeling, certainly some of the surveys, and some of the higher technologies.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you. And last, applications for permit to drill are supposed to only take 30 days. Under BLM, they take an

average of 220 days. What can we do to speed up that particular process?

Secretary ZINKE. We added money into it. I have also appointed a counselor for energy affairs that is specifically looking at the energy sector and the permitting process.

One is, you have to be fair. Two is, it is not a free-for-all in that a public review is necessary on this. So, we make sure the reclamation plan is in place, that it is the right drilling, we have a casing, et cetera. We are actively looking at that, and our goal is to reduce it, but we have added more money in the budget to look at it.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. You violated my 30-second rule there and got away with it.

Mr. LAMBORN. It was 20 seconds.

The CHAIRMAN. Twenty-second rule, right. Well, Mr. Huffman has usurped the Ranking Member's chair, and therefore he gets the right to ask the next questions.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Welcome back to the Committee, Mr. Secretary. It is good to see you.

Secretary ZINKE. Good to be here.

Mr. HUFFMAN. I notice that you are proposing something in the order of \$10 million to come up with a new 5-year offshore oil and gas leasing plan. I wanted to ask if you can tell us when you expect to publish the request for information on that plan.

Secretary ZINKE. I know we are going to do the first Federal Register asking for that, I want to say, within the next 30 days, if not sooner. We think the whole 5-year plan will be done between 2 and 3 years on it.

Again, we looked at the process, the way it is set up—

Mr. HUFFMAN. I appreciate that. I was just trying to hone in on the timeline, if I could.

Secretary ZINKE. I think in the next 30 days we should have something out on it.

Mr. HUFFMAN. OK. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciated your testimony about your desire for a balanced budget to do more with less, and you are undertaking this new \$10 million planning process. I know you want to make sure all those dollars are well spent.

So, let me just save you some trouble when it comes to California and the West Coast. We do not want new leasing off our coastline in California. We learned way back in 1969 in Santa Barbara, with that blowout, what that means. We have been reminded many times of the Deepwater Horizon and other events. We have made that abundantly clear during the preparation of the current leasing plan.

The people of California are simply not going to allow it to happen. In fact, our state wants to remove the existing oil and gas rigs in our waters. We are looking forward to the development of offshore renewable energy, and we are not happy about backwards steps.

So, I know that you want to do more with less. Let me just submit that whether it is the fervent opposition from the people of California, from the state of California, from the local governments in California, from the court challenges that will ensue, to the state lands commission right-of-way and permits that would be

necessary to make that happen, you will be doing less with less if you attempt to drill for oil off the coast of California.

Secretary ZINKE. I am very familiar with Santa Barbara, and I am sure you also appreciate there are 10,000 gallons a year that seep naturally out of that harbor. And to some degree the science will say, actually, relieving some of the pressure is a good thing. But I am very familiar with Santa Barbara.

Mr. HUFFMAN. And I am familiar with that old industry trope, as well.

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely.

Mr. HUFFMAN. That has been debunked many a time.

I want to ask about, again, on this theme of doing more with less, you have talked about reorganization. You want to have an efficient government. You have provided some welcome gestures about accessibility, at least at a personal level, which I appreciate very much.

But as you reorganize, and as you try to instill more responsiveness and accessibility, you have also mentioned having a Department that works with local communities, listens to issues at the community and state level.

Three months ago, on an issue near and dear to my constituents, the safety of Trinity Dam in Trinity County, I and the Board of Supervisors from that county wrote letters to the Bureau of Reclamation. We were asking about the safety of this dam. This is an earthen dam, similar to the one at Oroville, which, as you know, was in real hot water just a few months ago. And we have not had a response back. In fact, we have heard nothing but red tape about an elaborate process necessary to review and sign off on this letter.

So, Mr. Secretary, I want to ask you about how this 3-month delay on something so vital to the communities I represent, and a community impacted by this reclamation facility, involving 25 people, we are told, signing off on a letter in response to a potential disaster, how does that adequately affect an agency that works with local communities, is efficient and responsive, and listens to issues about their safety?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I may be good at reorganizing, but I am not that good. I have not heard. I will check on the Trinity Dam thing.

For the record, it is interesting, I don't have a Deputy. I have about 70 appointments. To date, there is not one that has gone through Senate confirmation yet.

Mr. HUFFMAN. I appreciate it. In the little time I have left, let me just ask this, Mr. Secretary.

You said this is what a balanced budget looks like. But this is not what a balanced budget has to look like. You have chosen to balance the budget with some winners and losers. On the losing side, we see cuts to renewable energy, climate change, ESA implementation, abandoned mine remediation, environmental health, science, national wildlife refuges, LWCF, it goes on.

On the winning side, we see more exploration, drilling, mining, et cetera. Is there any sacrifice for the fossil fuel industry in your budget?

The CHAIRMAN. But you can't answer, I am sorry. Time has expired.

Secretary ZINKE. May I have 3 seconds?

The CHAIRMAN. Three, I am counting.

Secretary ZINKE. As the executive proposes, as the Congress, you have a say, and that is why I am here.

The CHAIRMAN. We have, Secretary, eight other Members from California on this Committee. You are going to hear a lot more California questions.

But first we go to the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for joining us. As panel members, we appreciate the opportunity. And, Mr. Secretary, as you and I worked very hard here on Indian recognition bills, as that process continues, and I want to thank the Chairman for his leadership, too, to try to fix the process to make sure that Congress is the central decision maker there.

As the bill that has passed out on the Virginia tribal recognition, and hopefully also for Little Shell, goes forward, and hopefully the Senate acts, how will your office look upon that bill and your recommendation to the executive branch, hopefully, when that gets to the President's desk?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, as Secretary, I cannot comment on issues before the Interior. But certainly, as Secretary, I can say that I have always thought that it is the view of Congress to recognize.

In Bears Ears, for instance, I asked Congress to take a look at some things that I thought were outside of the executive. One is co-management of monuments. There are a lot of monuments that have cultural relevancy to our tribes, and I think that should be co-managed, rather than just an advisory group. I asked Congress to look at things and take the lead on determining some issues in there.

But I think Congress should take the lead in recognition. I think it is the right body, constitutionally.

Mr. WITTMAN. All right, good. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I want to talk a little bit now about energy development specifically in the draft plan for the Mid and South Atlantic. As you know, the 5-year plan for 2017 through 2022 looks at that particular region. There is also a 2015 Department of Defense plan that looked at compatibility within those areas. I wanted to get your viewpoint on how the DoD assessment report will play in the Department of the Interior's decision making for potential leasing in that area, and does this report, in your mind, show compatibility with DoD mission functions and the ability for the oil and gas development to take place off the Atlantic coast?

Secretary ZINKE. The Atlantic coast is, in some ways, no different than other areas. As the Secretary of the Interior, I think seismic review and inventories are prudent. I cannot give you a decision because I don't know what is there, but as the steward of our public lands, I think having an inventory on what is our potential is important. And that stretches in the 1002 as well as north. It stretches on our precious metals.

I think having an inventory of what is actually there, based on science, is important. Then much of the decision rests on Congress whether or not, given that inventory and science of actually what

we have, whether it is prudent to go forth on drilling extraction or not.

But my job, the way I see it, is to have, and we have a wonderful USGS, we have a lot of capability there. Let's do the inventory, and let Congress decide whether it is appropriate in the case of California or off the coast. And I think that is the way the democracy should run.

Mr. WITTMAN. In asking specifically about renewable energy, and the leasing that takes place offshore, as you know, within the Department of the Interior there are a number of different processes: the solicited bid process, the unsolicited bid process.

One of the concerns that I have when we are looking at that is the length of the approval process. I put a bill in prior to that to make sure that we truncate that approval process to make sure it takes place more quickly. But more importantly is to make sure that in that process, that we get the perspective of everybody within those particular regions, and that is to make sure that we have the views of folks that are users in that particular area, fishermen, our maritime industry, and other stakeholders, to make sure that their perspective gets reflected in that process, whether it is a solicited or unsolicited bid process.

Give me your idea about how robust you think that involvement process needs to be with all the different stakeholders for the use of those particular areas that we would look to for renewable energy.

Secretary ZINKE. I was up in the great state of Massachusetts, talking to the lobstermen and the fishermen, and they were a little irate about the monument because what they saw was reduced access to fishing. The length of the processes that we have, we looked at a sequential model, where you have to do 6 months, and then after you complete this do another, but it is in sequence, you know? And I think you can do a lot of it simultaneously to reduce the time frame, but yet make sure you have the stakeholders' view.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Lowenthal, you are recognized.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming and addressing us. You began, and I am going to follow up, on the offshore revenues and the relationship to what those revenues could be used for. You mentioned that revenues are down significantly since 2008. You mentioned how we made almost \$15.5 billion more in revenues in 2008 than we did in 2016, and that the revenues could be used for the parks, or some of those revenues.

So, I assume that you are talking about it would be good to get back to that revenue. And while you don't say it directly, there must be some policies during the Obama administration that you would like to revise, if that is really so.

So, I would like to understand the steps that you are going to take to increase offshore revenues. Would it be more leasing? Faster permitting? Less regulations? Exactly what do you see to change some of the policies?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, we had yesterday, as a matter of fact, the first successful lease in the Cook Inlet, on a \$3 million lease. That

was, I think, an indicator that we are willing to be a partner, rather than an advocate.

But on leases there is, again, if you are going to operate on public land, then the responsibility is to make sure it is done right.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Got it.

Secretary ZINKE. Transparent. What we are doing is we are doing our seismic surveys, we are moving ahead on that. That is important. But also is an indicator that the rules are not going to be arbitrary.

I could go through some horrific stories of compensatory mitigation, of arbitrariness of rules that the industry looked at us as not a good partner, and they would prefer to drill elsewhere.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Are we talking about offshore now?

Secretary ZINKE. Offshore and onshore.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. OK.

Secretary ZINKE. Onshore, both. The revenue, though, I can tell you offshore, as you know, goes into the LWCF program, which is important. So, when the revenue goes down, so does the LWCF program, the potential for appropriation, but that is not the whole story. Over the course of time, there is about a \$20 billion buildup in LWCF, which most of us recognize is a wonderful program. So, let's fix the system, so you don't have to go—

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Yes, I would like to go back, though, to just some of the revenues, and ask some of the questions.

You are aware that 2008 was an outlier year. That is where gas prices were roughly \$4 a gallon. In 2008, the price of oil was somewhere about \$145 a barrel, in July almost exactly, I guess that would be 9 years past. There was an average price of \$107 per barrel.

You know that in 2016, the price was about \$41 a barrel, less than a third of what it was. So, we are talking about a tremendous drop. And even in natural gas, it is even more.

And we also, as I understand, we had more oil production offshore in 2016 than we had in 2008, so the prices were very high. We certainly don't want to go back to that era, where it was over \$4 a gallon to buy gasoline.

So, the question is if in fact there are policies that really impacted this besides the price of oil, which I think what we are really talking about is the price of oil, what year was the second most productive year, in terms of oil production offshore?

Secretary ZINKE. I will look at that. But to your point, the oil and gas price—

Dr. LOWENTHAL. It was 2014, and the third most was 2013. The Obama administration has produced the greatest amount of revenues, besides the one outlier year. Is that not so?

Secretary ZINKE. If your contention is the last administration was pro-energy, I think—

Dr. LOWENTHAL. I am—

Secretary ZINKE [continuing]. Your supposition is—

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Just the data, just the data. What was the second, 2013 and 2014 we had the greatest amount of revenues from offshore oil production besides the year 2008. I am just asking. Is that not true?

Secretary ZINKE. I would have to look. But if your contention is that the compensatory mitigation, the arbitrariness of the regulatory framework, of the signals the oil and gas, or any industry, to include timber harvest, if your contention was that it was up in the last 8 years, I will get you the statistics from the Department of the Interior that would show a different mind.

Mr. GOHMERT [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Lowenthal. We will now go to Mr. McClintock.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Welcome, Mr. Secretary. And just to follow up on that question, can you tell me when were the offshore facilities that produced that oil actually approved? Before or after the Obama administration?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, to be fair, I have to get the data to you on that. I know the trend lines, and I have seen them, and I don't want to misrepresent the issue.

The overall theme, which was correct, is that revenues have gone significantly—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. My point is that the projects were actually approved, for the most part, prior to the Obama administration. And I believe we will find, in looking at the data, that the Obama administration was very lackluster in approving new projects that will come on-line 10 years from now.

But what I first wanted to do was to thank you for your trip to California, for your visits to the Sacramento regional office, on to Yosemite Valley, and on to Kings Canyon from there. That was a tremendous morale boost for all of the employees that safeguard these national treasures, and really signaled a hands-on Interior Secretary. I just want to acknowledge that and tell you how much it was appreciated from the rank and file and the general public.

On that trip, you saw the condition of our forests in the Sierra. And the Sierra National Forest is adjacent to Yosemite. We have had a 90 percent mortality of pine trees. The tree density in the Sierras is now, typically, three or four times what the land can actually sustain, because we had an 80 percent decline in timber harvests in the Sierra, with a concomitant increase in acres destroyed by forest fire. What can we do about that?

Secretary ZINKE. In the budget, we prioritized fire suppression. And to your point about the front line, the front line is too thin. My opinion, as a former SEAL commander, is that our front line, that is people that are out there with our parks and wildlife refuges, we are too short in the front line and we are too heavy in middle and upper management. And part of the reorganization is to put more assets where they were.

Almost every cost-cutting measure previous has always regionalized assets up. And there is a lot of frustration on the front line, and the frustration is they feel like they have been micromanaged, there are not enough resources. And you would think being a park ranger is the greatest job ever. Employee surveys rank it at the bottom.

So, whether it is a prevalent sexual harassment, a culture of intimidation, whether or not our employees feel micromanaged, they don't have the resources, there are a lot of reasons why. But I am

competitive. I want the rangers to be number one, period, the best job in the world, as it should be.

So, I am going to, we are going to, push a lot of resources back where they belong, out of the middle and upper management, and back on the front line to where our rangers, our wildlife refuge managers, or BLM professionals feel like they are supported.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. That would be a big step in the right direction.

As you know, on the Federal Lands Subcommittee we have three over-arching goals: first, to restore public access to the public lands; second, to restore good management to the public lands; and third, to restore the Federal Government as a good neighbor to those communities that are directly impacted by the public lands. Could you comment on your plans in those areas?

Secretary ZINKE. I think public lands are for public use. And philosophy-wise, I think Muir was correct in some of our lands, where man is a lightest footprint, more of an observer, but much of our lands I think should fall under the Pinchot-Roosevelt of public access, multiple use.

You can extract wealth from our public lands, but you have to do it with a reclamation plan that makes sense, using best science and practices, and understanding the interest of the public is to make sure that the public lands in perpetuity are, over time, the same experience.

I am concerned about our parks. I am concerned about Yosemite, because the experience, for many Americans, the first time they see a park, it is Yosemite. And when the traffic is what it is on the 405, we have to look at how to manage not only our parks, but the public lands around our parks, so the watersheds make sense, the trail systems connect, so we utilize our public lands in a better and more efficient way to maintain the experience. I don't think any of us want to see our parks atrophy and to experience the same as what you would see on our freeways.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I believe Pinchot's maxim was the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run. Thank you.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. McClintock. We will now go to Mr. McEachin.

Mr. MCEACHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you. You made a comment about sexual harassment that I want to go into a little bit. As you know, Mr. Secretary, deeply troubling cases of sexual harassment at the Park Service have come to light in recent years. The Inspector General has revealed in detail behaviors that would be reprehensible in any setting, let alone a taxpayer-funded agency tasked with celebrating the very best of American culture, history, and values.

I am surprised, personally, that we have not had a hearing on it in this Committee, so I am asking the Chairman for one today, and I have sent a letter to the Chairman, as well as the Chairman of Oversight. I have the privilege of being the Ranking Member on Oversight.

You have declared a zero tolerance policy and promised an update of policies, new training requirements, and new reporting procedures. But I want to suggest to you that is not enough. The previous administration left you a transition briefing book which revealed that the high-profile sexual harassment cases at the Park

Service have spurred about 120 new sexual harassment and related reprisal allegations at the Department that need to be resolved.

The brief went on to say, "Because the employment and labor law units existing resources were inadequate to manage and litigate these cases, as well as to undertake efforts necessary to ensure such cases do not recur in the future, the division of general law requests funding to hire six new experienced employment and labor law attorneys." As you know, these attorneys do not just litigate cases, they also provide guidance to supervisors who have to investigate the allegations themselves.

My question is this. When I checked last week to see whether the attorneys were hired, only some have been. It seems that there may be a hiring freeze that prevents the rest of them moving forward. Is that still the case?

Secretary ZINKE. The sexual harassment, let me begin. I have a zero tolerance. As a former commander, I have seen it. But some of it is structural. Let me give you an example to clarify it.

I had credible IG reports too, when I assumed office, of a sexual harassment case, as well as abuse of power, with our senior law enforcement officials. Senior law enforcement officials. What were my options? I brought my solicitors together. Fire him. Couldn't fire him. Wasn't available to me, because he has to go through these two committees. They find it, then it goes to appeals process.

Mr. MCEACHIN. Yes, sir. Mr. Secretary, I am—

Secretary ZINKE. So, structurally, I think I need some help from Congress.

Mr. MCEACHIN. I can appreciate that. And hopefully, if we are able to have a hearing on this, you will be able to elaborate on that. But my question is this. Have you been able to hire the attorneys necessary that the last administration recommended to you be hired? Have you been able to hire them? If so, that would be a yes. And, if not, please explain to me why not.

Secretary ZINKE. I have five solicitors that are pending confirmation and appointment. To date, zero. Zero. I don't have a Deputy. I have five solicitors that are appointments. To date, zero. I don't have a Director of Fish and Wildlife. I don't have a Director of Parks. I don't have a director of anything. So—

Mr. MCEACHIN. Are these the solicitors that you are talking about, the ones you just—

Secretary ZINKE. Well, solicitors on our side, as leadership, and I would think that if you are going into a campaign, and you hire your chief of staff, your chief of staff should have some say on who you hire. And that is the predicament I find myself in, is that—

Mr. MCEACHIN. So, are you suggesting that you have not been able to hire these attorneys because you don't have these solicitors in place? Is that what you are telling us?

Secretary ZINKE. What I am saying is that I don't have any of my five solicitors in. And what I am also saying is this, is that as far as—

Mr. MCEACHIN. My question is not about the solicitors. I thought this was going to be relatively simple, but I see that I am not as experienced at running out the clock as you are. My question is—

Secretary ZINKE. I would find that an inaccurate statement, but go ahead, sir.

Mr. MCEACHIN. I am sure you would, but I am trying to get an answer to a question. Have you been able to hire the attorneys or not? And we could go into the why, but I just want to know, do you have them?

Secretary ZINKE. I have put a hiring freeze on Washington, DC and Denver for a reason, because I think that the hiring is better at the field. If that solicitor, and I will check in what grade it is, if the solicitor is GS-12 and above, which I assume it is, and that solicitor is found in Washington, DC or Denver, then maybe it falls into that. Although there is an exception clause. If the Deputy, which I don't have, the Acting Deputy feels that it is necessary, then he can do an exception on that.

But the idea was to put our hiring where it belongs, as in the field, and not in the headquarters. But I will give you a detailed, line by line, on that position.

Mr. MCEACHIN. I appreciate it, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you.

Mr. MCEACHIN. I yield back.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time has expired. And the gentleman from Alaska, if he is OK with using the term "gentleman"—

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. From Alaska, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOUNG. We are all being gentlemen and ladies today, aren't we?

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you for appearing before this Committee. I only have a couple of statements, and then one question. Our job is to write this budget, and I know the Secretary knows it. He has presented a balanced budget to us, and our job is to write the budget. We can stand here and beat him up all we want, but reality is it is the job of the Congress, not the job of the President. It is his philosophy.

And I know, having served with the Secretary for many years, that he has some requirements for the President, that is why he is the Secretary, and he will follow through with those. Our job is to try to make sure that the money is spent where we want to spend it, and still end up with a balanced budget.

I happen to agree, Mr. Secretary, with your resigning certain people out of the agency because it got stagnant. It was a stagnant agency, and they were forgetting, very frankly, the people they served. I commend you on that.

One question I want to ask you, or maybe two. The prior administration refused to listen to the people, especially in Alaska. They locked up land in Alaska behind Congress' back under the pretense of areas of critical and environmental concern. The land was then managed by wilderness, circumventing the No More clause in my state.

And just out of curiosity, what is your direction in those lands that were designated as critical habitat and then managed by wilderness, circumventing the law?

Secretary ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I follow the law. Alaska is unique. When it came into the union there were certain provisions on Alaska that no other state had on wilderness, on management of wildlife, on surveys, to make sure that we finish the surveys, because there is land as you came into the union, there is land that is supposed to be surveyed and transferred into the state. That is unique. So, I recognize the uniqueness of Alaska, and certainly look forward to working with you and Lisa Murkowski on it.

But part of my job is to go up to Alaska and look at it. You learn a lot. As Secretary, I think my position should be out in the field, asking the right questions, because it is, and I view my job as non-partisan, public lands. Of the things that are partisan today, I would think public lands would be uniquely an American issue, because we all care about it, we all share the same land experience.

But on your example with Alaska, I view Alaska as unique, and I follow the law.

Mr. YOUNG. All right, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I have great fondness for wildlife refuges and preserves, et cetera, but I do not appreciate agencies that set the policy against the law, and do not allow access. That is one of my basic complaints. They have this idea that the land belongs to the agency. It does not. It belongs to the people. And they have insisted on conducting themselves as the lord and master, and the lord will not let the peasants come on the land without permission.

That is not the way to operate a park or a refuge or any other area that is owned by the public. Doesn't mean we are going to rip and ruin and rape. We are going to take and actually visit. Not inside of a building, but see the beauty and the grandeur of the land, experience the stars above us, not inside of a building. And that has been in my frustrations the last, actually, under my administration was just about as bad. The last 8 years has been a horror dream.

Again, Mr. Secretary, I thank you for your presence. I feel sorry for you in many ways. You have been before the Senate, I believe, before two committees. You are going to listen to this Committee and probably the Appropriations Committee. I just wish we would leave you alone and let you go do your job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman yields back. At this time the Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Mrs. Torres, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, first of all, I wanted to associate myself with the comments from my colleagues from California regarding offshore drilling in the coast of California.

Secretary Zinke, I agree with you in your comment, your opening statement, when you said that we cannot ignore the problem of a growing deficit. But we also cannot ignore the problems that we are creating by continuing to disproportionately fund programs that impact the basic human needs of the Native American people.

Now, as a local mayor, for the first time in my city's history we actually balanced the budget. Republicans and Democrats came together and went through it, line item by line item. And we actually balanced our budget, and everybody voted for it.

As a member of a State Assembly in the state of California, we went through a \$30 billion deficit. When I left in 2014 to come to Congress, I left the State Senate with a \$2 billion surplus. I am not a stranger, and I am not afraid of making cuts. But we have to make smart cuts, cuts that are not going to impact, and I am not talking about quality of life issues, I am talking about basic life, human-right issues that impact Native Americans.

In this Committee, time after time after time, and I know that you have participated in the hearings, but we have heard about the unmet needs and the broken promises made to American Indians and Alaska Natives, as well as the immense inequalities that this has created in Indian Country. Yet, this budget slashes or eliminates key programs that aim to address the disparities.

And looking over the budget for the BIA, I am very concerned that there is an effort to ignore the Department's trust responsibility. Can you explain how cutting \$27.3 million from tribal justice programs, \$22.7 million from human services, \$26 million from resource management, and \$10.6 million from tribal government operations, how does this strengthen self-determination? With cuts like this, how do you expect tribal leaders to build the capacity to expand self-governance in these critical areas?

Frankly, I am just sick and tired. Yesterday I was at a hearing in this room where we heard time and time again how tribal leaders are invited for a meet-and-greet meeting, but yet none of their input is ever taken for consideration. As a matter of fact, their questions are not even responded to. And that is incredibly offensive.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, first, as a former Congressman in Montana, I was honored to represent the seven tribes in Montana. And I have always viewed sovereignty should mean something: self-determination and respect. And consultation should be consultation, so I agree with you on that.

The budget is a starting point. Again, a balanced budget makes difficult decisions. The budget honors the core trust responsibilities, the core treaty responsibilities, but it does not add money into a lot of areas which we both would agree, it is going to be the Congress' decision, are worthy—

Mrs. TORRES. Let me just say that if this were to become the actual 2018 budget, the overall funding provided to Indian Affairs would be lower than any level in the past 15 years, a full 20 percent lower than the 2010 funding level. This is a disturbing trend, one that is dangerous for Indian Country.

Native children, specifically, have substandard schools and facilities, and the result of their education suffers. Their future and their potential future is being stolen from them every day that we ignore their problems. And their safety is a major concern.

Secretary ZINKE. I will get back to you. I don't think that that is accurate. But if you want to look at education, for instance—

Mrs. TORRES. It is not accurate that we are shutting down health clinics—

Secretary ZINKE. I don't, I will look—

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. That school roofs are collapsing, sir?

Secretary ZINKE. Schools, we spend \$15,000-plus per student. That is well above the national average of \$9,000. So, why are

Indian schools failing? Why is Indian health failing? Why is the Bureau of Indian Affairs, even if you increase the money, if you give us a grade, how we have done in the last 8 years, I would say that grade would be maybe passing in a few, but overall, failing.

Mrs. TORRES. And I recognize this is not all on you, sir.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I think we do need a discussion of how to provide services better, but particularly on education and Indian health. And I am willing to look for it—

Mrs. TORRES. Ran out of my time. Thank you.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentlelady's time has expired. At this point we recognize the gentleman from New Mexico, Mr. Pearce, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. I appreciate all of the interesting questions. I just have several observations. I will kind of walk my way through them. I am probably not going to ask for too much response from you, but just to know what some of the problems we face in the budget are.

First of all, as far as others have mentioned, the APDs and oil and gas drilling, again, oil and gas pays for 40 percent of our teachers pay in New Mexico, so that is a fairly significant contribution. So, as we are looking at the APDs, we have seen numbers as high as 440 hours to do APDs, compared to 220 nationally. Again, we need focus there.

The discussion about, or the decision to pay for, in our budget, selling off the strategic petroleum reserve, I supported the President's three-part agenda: jobs, jobs, jobs. But when you sell from the petroleum reserve, what you are doing is undermining the oil and gas production. So, just look at that with contemplative eyes, if you would, please.

Also, you have commissioned the Royalty Policy Committee. Again, when an industry is struggling with low prices, the last thing you want to do is increase the tax take-off of that.

I appreciate your objectivity on finding efficiencies in the BLM. We have fought that fight before. They were going to put New Mexico underneath Arizona, and Arizona has very little oil and gas production, yet it is one of the main functions of the BLM in New Mexico. We fought that off, but I fear that there are going to be people still in the agency who will resurface that suggestion. We have experience in that discussion, if you would.

In 1988, and then later in 1993, Fort Wingate was closed. That was in the northern part of my district, and it was supposed to be distributed to two different tribes, the Zunis and Navajos. For 24 years that languished. We put the distribution into the NDAA last year, so right at the end of the year.

And yet, I get a letter, May 31, 2017, from the current Acting Secretary of the Army, Robert M. Speer. His basic conclusion is that public law neither imposes any legal obligation to divest the property at the closed installation, meaning closed after a BRAC, nor places any limitation on the stationing of new forces or functions at the installation.

I think it is going to take the secretarial level to work through this. It is in the NDAA that it is supposed to be distributed, and

the Army refuses to comply. Your agency could offer a great deal of help.

With respect to the wolf recovery program, the plan was developed in 1982, \$37 million has been spent. We still do not have recovery. We don't even know what recovery looks like. So, we would request that no more money be spent on the wolf introduction and the wolf recovery program until they give us some plan and some program.

The next area that we would like to talk about, and by the way, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit the Robert Speer letter for the record if you wouldn't mind. The national monument, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, is a very highly volatile issue in the district. Even when the Democrats owned the House, Nancy Pelosi, they had a filibuster-proof Senate, and Mr. Obama was in the White House, they still could not get this passed through law because it was so contentious.

I would like to submit a list of the 800 businesses who are opposed to the large footprint. Many people on this list feel that the law was not followed in the establishment of the monument, that it was supposed to be the smallest footprint. That would be 60,000 acres, rather than the 600,000 acres that were used. So, I would like to submit this list, Mr. Chairman, for the record, the 800 businesses and the individuals who opposed that designation and would like to see it not revoked, but taken back down to the smallest footprint.

Mr. GOHMERT. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

Rep. Pearce Submission

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE,
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, DC

May 31, 2017

The Honorable Stevan Pearce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Pearce:

Secretary of Defense James Mattis asked me to respond on his behalf to your May 18, 2017 letter concerning the former Fort Wingate Depot Activity (FWDA).

Let me assure you that the Department of the Army will completely and properly implement its responsibilities under section 2829F of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328), without delay. The extensive due diligence and documentation preparation necessary to complete the initial transfer of approximately 2,496 acres under this newly enacted authority is underway. The Army expects to deliver the Letter of Transfer to Department of the Interior (DOI) for this initial phase by July 2017. The Army expects to transfer approximately 4,511 additional acres to DOI by 2022 as environmental remediation of additional parcels is completed with concurrence of the New Mexico Environment Department.

It is important to note that the Department of Defense (DoD) does not currently control all of the lands that once comprised the former FWDA. Prior to enactment of section 2829F, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act governed disposal of the withdrawn public lands comprising the former FWDA. Pursuant to that law and its implementing regulations, DOI transferred jurisdiction over approximately 5,855 acres at the former FWDA from the Army to the Bureau of Indian Affairs by

Public Land Orders published by DOI in 2000 and 2001. In subsequent years, as Army completed environmental remediation of additional parcels, the Army provided notices to DOI that an additional 2,384 acres were ready for transfer. DOI had not yet acted on those notices when section 2829F was enacted, establishing a new transfer process that the Army and DOI are now implementing.

Furthermore, retention and continued use of the Fort Wingate Launch Complex (FWLC) portion of FWDA by the Army is wholly consistent with section 2829F, and neither reverses nor violates the 1988 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendation to close FWDA. Section 2829F(a)(6) explicitly provides for retention of the area designated as the FWLC until "certification by the Secretary of Defense that the area generally depicted as 'Fort Wingate Launch Complex' on the Map is no longer required for military purposes and can be transferred to the Secretary of the Interior." Regarding BRAC, the 1988 BRAC Commission, pursuant to the Defense Authorization Amendments and the Base Closure and Realignment Act (Public Law 100-526), recommended that the FWDA be closed and that its existing depot mission be relocated to Hawthorne Army Ammunition Plant, Nevada. Relocation of that mission was completed by January 1993, constituting closure of FWDA. Once implementation of the recommendation is complete, Public Law 100-526 neither imposes any legal obligation to divest the property at the closed installation, nor places any limitations on the stationing of new forces or functions at that installation.

Thank you for your inquiry into this matter and for your continued support of our Soldiers and their Families.

Sincerely,

ROBERT M. SPEER,
Acting Secretary of the Army.

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the decision to cut PILT in the budget reflects on the eastern viewpoint that PILT is simply welfare to the West. We, in the West, say either give us the land and let us use it for productive purposes, or pay the PILT.

We have seen over the past decade decreases in PILT. Counties in New Mexico, the rural counties with a lot of public land, cannot even have a tax base to pay for their budgets. So, please take a look at that.

And again, I am not looking for a response, I just wanted to put these things on your radar. I appreciate it, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for being here.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time has expired. At this time the Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Guam, one of the classiest people ever in Congress, Ms. Bordallo, for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome back, Secretary Zinke. It is nice to see you again. Mr. Secretary, as you know, the Department of the Interior has broad jurisdiction to administer and coordinate Federal policies in the territories. The Department is also responsible for providing assistance through the compacts of free association to our allies in the Federal States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. And this agreement provides for development assistance, and allows for the FAS citizens to travel to the United States, while providing access to sea, air, and land for national security purposes.

Mr. Secretary, I am very concerned by the cuts being proposed to the Office of Insular Affairs, especially the decreases in technical assistance to the territories, and the elimination of \$3 million for discretionary compact impact provided to our local governments. Although this is seemingly very small compared to DOI's overall

budget, the \$1 million cut to technical assistance could have large negative impacts on a variety of programs at Guam and the other territories.

I am concerned that you have eliminated \$3 million in discretionary compact impact that helps to supplement the mandatory \$30 million shared by the affected jurisdictions each year.

In Guam alone, Mr. Secretary, the government of Guam estimates that it spends well over \$100 million per year to provide social services to the compact migrants, especially in the area of health. When these migrants travel to Guam for special operations, or if they are on dialysis, or whatever the case might be, most of them have no insurance. We have to take care of them, and then it is costing us about \$100 million per year, maybe over. And yet our share of compact impact is only about \$16 million.

The difference here is shocking to me. And certainly we cannot turn down anybody that has a health problem. Again, Mr. Secretary, what are your comments about these decreases? And how can you help us?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you, and I certainly recognize the importance of the territories, particularly in the West. I will say that they, to a degree, are on the front line, again. In World War II, they were front-line on the Japanese empire expansion. Today, they are on the front line of the rise of China.

Ms. BORDALLO. That is correct. We are very strategic.

Secretary ZINKE. So, in our budget we did include \$123.9 million in discretionary to Palau on that. We support the compacts. But you are right, I will go back to this is what a balanced budget would look like. There are some difficult choices.

Congress gets the last say, but it is important also to give a forum for the territories, as you are, to express why the territories should not be forgotten, why such cuts or savings, depending on how you look at it, are inappropriate, and would hurt the citizens of Guam and Palau and everything out there that is important.

Certainly, in my conversations with General Mattis, he is particularly aware of the strategic importance, as well the President is aware. The Vice President has been out there, Tillerson has been out there, Mattis has been out there recently. I intend to go out as well. But I am grateful that you represent such beautiful and great people, and I look forward to working with you on it.

Ms. BORDALLO. Good. Thank you very much. Mr. Secretary, when I think about this, to my colleagues here on the Committee, to our Chairman, being in the Minority, and being a Representative from the territory is certainly one of the most challenging jobs I have ever had. So, I hope in some way you can be of help to us. Thank you.

Secretary ZINKE. I think you are up to the task.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you. At this time the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Gosar, Dr. Gosar, for 5 minutes.

Dr. GOSAR. I thank the Chairman. Mr. Secretary, it is great seeing you. Thank you for all that you do. And I know that Congress, at least on this side, should be petitioning our Senate Members to get your confirmations. When we have somebody hired for a job, we should empower them with the right tools, the right people, and

the right places to get their job done. I think it is up to us now to petition our Members in the Senate to make sure that those confirmations go through.

I want to bring attention to the Administration's idea in regards to improving our transportation and infrastructure. One of those aspects I believe in is that we have to look at the prevailing wage, a fair wage for a fair job that is fair to the taxpayers.

But the second part of that is NEPA reviews. I am going to highlight, according to the 2014 ranking of countries for mining investments analysis, permitting delays are the most significant risk to mining projects in the United States. This kills jobs, it takes a lot of pressure, and increases the cost to do these.

The discovery-to-production process in our country is 20 years or longer for large copper deposits, whereas in Canada and Australia they have shown to do it in 2 to 3 years, without limiting environmental protections. So, if we are serious about getting to this aspect and unleashing this wealth, we have to have those improvements.

Here is my question. Can you discuss some of the concerns you have been made aware of regarding the BLM's planning environmental review process?

Secretary ZINKE. I can. As far as infrastructure goes, the permitting process has been a particularly painful issue, because it has extended programs out, in some cases stopped even replacement of a bridge. The mitigation, compensatory mitigation, that means things that are outside the construction of the bridge have been painful. In some cases, we are at 17 years for permits on a bridge, which ends up spending multitudes more money, because if you push a project out over time it increases the cost over time, and delays.

So, the permitting process, particularly within prescribed easements, if you are going to replace a bridge, expand an existing road, those should be streamlined. And the President, who is a builder, gets it, and we are looking hard at doing that. Some of it can be fast-tracked, we believe, under the FAST Act, and we are looking at executive ways within the confines of the law to do that, particularly in the prescribed easements.

On Interior, and maybe you would be surprised or not, what we are responsible for. About half the backlog in the parks, \$11.5 billion, is roads. And about a third of those roads aren't in the park. They are the Memorial Bridge that is a \$262 million bill, which this budget has \$18 million set against it. We got matching grants from the Department of the Interior. But a lot of our parks are gateways, actually, are part of the Department of the Interior. We own the George Washington Parkway, the parkway out to the Baltimore Airport. It is amazing what we own but are also responsible for that is "outside our park system."

Dr. GOSAR. Do you look at coordination and working with states and limiting some of the duplicity as an option? How do you look at that opportunity to help with that backlog?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, we are thinking the reorganization will be helpful. For example, within the Fish and Wildlife, there was a bat, an Indiana bat, that came into the great state of Georgia. One bat, radio-controlled, shut down, I think, 30 counties because it was

now potential habitat for a bat, and they will never be able to find the bat again. They have looked. It has been millions of dollars. But this one bat caused disruption and about \$1 billion worth of construction, and that is the Fish and Wildlife part of it, and then within bureaus on my side, we had to coordinate better.

And that was one single bat with a radio tracking device caused havoc in 30 counties or so in Georgia, again, at an expense of delaying projects that were \$1 billion worth of construction. Certainly, we can do better, as a country, than that.

Dr. GOSAR. Let me ask you about right-sizing the NEPA process. Can you give me an example or ideas on how you would use environmental assessments, compared to environmental impact statements? And maybe right-sizing those types of mitigations?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, up front, I think NEPA has been the backbone of prudent environmental policy. I am a great supporter of NEPA. But within prescribed easements, there is CatEx, environmental assessment, and EIS, and I think we have to realistically look what is appropriate to the project.

If it is replacing a bridge in a prescribed easement, then maybe a CatEx is more appropriate, or an EA if it is in the sensitive area. But certainly not an EIS. So, I think, looking at giving some judgment, and making sure that we coordinate and collaborate with the local community and the state better on such things to make a determination that is in the best interests of the taxpayer and America would be a great step forward.

Dr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time has expired. At this time, without objection, the Committee will stand in brief recess. It will be no more than 5 minutes, so I would ask the folks here in the audience to be close, because we do not want disruptions when we start back promptly.

Thank you; we will be in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. GOHMERT. The hearing will come back to order. At this time the Chair will recognize the gentleman from the Mariana Islands, Mr. Sablan, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back, sir. And congratulations, again, on your appointment. I want to begin with some thank you's. First, I want to thank, the President included in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget funding for the long-overdue, I think it is 8 years now, compact review agreement with the Republic of Palau. My bill, H.R. 2085, to authorize that agreement has passed this Committee. So, thanks to the Administration for recognizing the strategic importance of America's relationship with our Pacific ally.

Also in February, Mr. Bishop visited the Northern Marianas. One highlight, sir, was the tour of an ancient village on the island of Rota. The national parks resource study team, which Congress authorized to look at a possible national park on Rota, gave us the tour. I learned a lot of things in that, and all of us appreciated it, and we are looking forward to the team's recommendations on the park status.

Thank you also for inviting my comments to assist your review of the Marianas national monument under Executive Order. In my

reply, I wrote about the promises made to the people of the Northern Marianas that remain unfulfilled, Mr. Secretary. We are frustrated, very frustrated for some, that the required monument, the key to long-awaited public education programs and the development of a visitor center is over 6 years past the due date stated in President Bush's proclamations.

So, would you, sir, maybe even at a later time, but soon provide us with an update on any progress, maybe have someone in your office provide us with an update, and a specific date for issuance of the plan, Mr. Secretary? I don't know if you have the answer here now, but I—

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you. As you know, the President tasked me, through an E.O., to review all monuments from 1996 forward of 100,000 acres or greater.

The Department of Commerce has the lead on maritime, although it seems we are taking the lead on many of the maritime monuments.

Mr. SABLAN. I understand, but that decision has not been made, so I am continuing to look at the President's decision that there is still a monument in the Marianas, and maybe with the management plan issued, maybe you would decide that that monument remains.

And in 2005, your Office of Insular Affairs started a competitive system for allocating among the U.S. territories the \$27 million in covenant funds that originally all went to the Northern Marianas to help us build our public infrastructure. The competition is largely based on financial management criteria. And today, the Northern Marianas, which was the principal, the sole recipient intended in that fund, gets less than a third of the money.

Financial management is very important, I agree, and no one can argue against that. But so is the infrastructure needed to provide basic services. According to the EPA, Saipan, the main island in the Northern Marianas, is the only U.S. municipality without 24-hour potable water. To me, sir, and I am sure you would agree, that is a very serious public health concern.

Shouldn't new criteria be established for the \$27 million in Northern Mariana's covenant funds so public health and safety needs in the Marianas are prioritized?

Secretary ZINKE. Yes. And again, the budget presented is a balanced budget, but also it gives an opportunity to hear from you on it. I recognize the importance not only strategically, but also the contributions. I think we forget about that side of the Northern Marianas, and the contributions you continue to make.

Mr. SABLAN. Right, and—

Secretary ZINKE. I will be glad to look—

Mr. SABLAN. And as you know, sir, I think I invited you, a standing invitation, Mr. Secretary. And my time is running out, but I want to mention some justification. The importance of technical and maintenance assistance programs, the brown tree snake control and coral reef initiative, the Empowering Insular Communities program. However, the request includes deep funding cuts to each of these programs. The brown tree snake control program costs a few million, but if these snakes spread, as they have on Guam, and if they spread to Hawaii or the Northern Marianas, or any other

place, the cost in extermination of native endangered birds could cause tens of millions of dollars more. So——

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SABLAN. My time has——

Mr. GOHMERT. Time is expired.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, great to have you here. I did want to be able to point out I really appreciated the comments that you have made to Senator Gardner on Tuesday in regards to the Canyon of the Ancients. And I will not re-ask the same question, but I would like to be able to reiterate how the Canyon of the Ancients is important in my district and to me, personally, of course. And should there be any changes moving forward, we would really appreciate making sure that we are in concert with your office, and having good communication on it.

Secretary ZINKE. My intent on the monument review is to ensure that some of the monuments are settled. My intent was not to, and I have said before, not to rip off Band-Aids and then create wounds where there are none, to make sure that the monuments had public input, that there is overwhelming support with it, and to make sure that the monument designations in the prescribed period follow the law.

So, there are monuments, there were 27 on the list, and I think we are focusing on just a few. And, quite frankly, most of them are either on the proclamation side, maritime monuments is fishing, to make sure that we have a vibrant and healthy fishing community, so in some cases, the proclamations on that would eliminate our ability to fish, which is a big issue, especially out West. So——

Mr. TIPTON. Great. Well, I appreciate that. And one other issue that you are probably aware of, that Senator Gardner and I are working on as well, is the BLM Headquarters Relocation Act. And, as you are going through some of the reorganization in your Department, I just wanted to make you aware of that, and look forward to being able to work with you on that, as well.

We do have one important issue. It does fall under your area, as well. It is called the Arkansas Valley Conduit Project. Actually, it goes back to 1962, with the Frying Pan Arkansas Project legislation, which requires clean drinking water to be able to be delivered down into southeastern Colorado.

Unfortunately, we have only seen enough resources that are going through right now to be able to make sure that the feasibility design be able to service 50,000 people in the Arkansas Valley who would benefit from completion of the project, those are the only resources that have been provided.

The Southeast Colorado Water Conservancy District has recently come up with a new plan that would shave somewhere between 20 to 25 percent of the cost of the project off, and the Bureau of Reclamation thus far seems to be amiable to pursuing that.

I have to note that yesterday there was some disappointment in our office, certainly, that the project was not given any of the Fiscal Year 2017 plus-up dollars for water-related resources account,

despite the fact that we have been advocating for this for an extended period of time.

I would like to be able to get, actually, your commitment to be able to work with my office to be able to ensure that every effort will be made by the Department, under the Bureau of Reclamation, under your purview, to complete it in a timely manner and a cost-effective fashion, which I believe we all want to be able to achieve.

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, and I believe the budget has a \$3 million target for that project, so you have my commitment to work with you to finish it on time.

Some of these projects, as you know, as they extend out, they become more expensive, just because of the time. So, the art is to reduce the amount of time, that will reduce the amount of cost and get the projects done.

Mr. TIPTON. Exactly. And your comments to an earlier question, in regards to going through some of the review process, as well, and the environmental assessments, EISs, is something that can certainly help accelerate this project and to be able to save some resources for a very important project for southeast Colorado.

One issue that I believe you are aware of is we have had, through the Forest Service and now somewhat through the BLM as well, conditional use of permit. We just had testimony in Committee a few weeks ago in Utah, under the BLM, for ranchers to be able to divert water out of a stream, to be able to fill a stock pond, conditional use of permit. If you wanted to be able to do that, you were to sign your water rights over to the Federal Government.

We have draft legislation that we are working on right now, the Protecting Our Water Rights Act, which I think is going to be very important to standing up for a very western issue: private property rights, when it comes to water in the West, priority-based systems, and also State Law, as well.

I want to make sure that that is going to be on your radar, going forward. An important issue, certainly for the West, and for our economies, as well.

Secretary ZINKE. And as I find myself the water master, to a degree, in the West, I am learning. And I will go back, it is very similar to Montana. Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting. It is absolutely an important issue in the West.

Mr. TIPTON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. GOHMERT. Time is expired. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Massachusetts, Ms. Tsongas, for 5 minutes.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Zinke, welcome back to the Committee. Nice to have you here. Looking at the big picture, I have to say I have real concerns with the Administration's entire Fiscal Year 2018 budget request. The President's approach to budgeting prioritizes defense spending around which we know we do have to make some additional investments, but does so at the expense of many other national priorities, including those at your Department.

As your testimony indicates, and as we on this Committee know so well, Interior has a very broad mission, and plays a critical role in the lives of all our constituents. Managing our treasured public parks and public lands, overseeing development of U.S. energy supplies, understanding and reacting to the impacts of climate change,

servicing as the largest supplier and manager of water in the West, and working closely with 566 federally recognized tribes, all this has to be managed on behalf of all Americans.

Cutting Interior's budget by well over \$1 billion, approximately 10 percent, while not as bad as some other departments, nevertheless, it will significantly and certainly hamper the Department's ability to meet these many responsibilities.

As you well know, the National Park Service is facing many challenges, you have referenced some of them, including responding to disturbing reports of sexual harassment in the workplace. Representative McEachin has referenced that. There have been a number of troubling Inspector General reports and newspaper stories regarding a number of incidents of sexual harassment in some of our most well-known national parks.

We, on this Committee, have worked across the aisle to make sure the Park Service was taking these reports seriously, which is why we recommended that the Park Service conduct a service-wide anonymous survey that hopefully will shed light on the extent of this problem. In my service on the Armed Services Committee examining the alarming incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military, we have learned that such cases do not happen in isolation. And the survey can serve as an important first step to better understand the scope of the problem. In fact, under the previous administration they reached out to the Defense Department as they were crafting this survey.

So, Mr. Secretary, can you provide an update on the status of this survey, and the Park Service's work analyzing the results?

And also, in responding to that question, it is my understanding that the Park Service will also be conducting a second survey in July to include seasonal employees who were not included in the first survey, and want to be sure that that is correct moving forward.

Secretary ZINKE. I share your concerns about sexual harassment and intimidation in the workplace, and I think the overall survey of job satisfaction reflects that something is wrong.

We did complete the survey. We will gladly share the results when we get the review done. We are doing a second survey, you are correct in that, on seasonal employees.

I attribute a lot to leadership. And I take my job enormously serious on being a commander of what I see as a 70,000-member command. We have a lot of good people. I am surprised, maybe not surprised, that is not the right word, I am honored a lot of times to go in these places and you see really dedicated people.

There is some frustration, though. The frustration is, again, they feel like they have been micro-managed, they feel like the job description does not match the job execution. They are spending a lot of time in the office, rather than the field. They feel like the resources to the front line have been pared down, which they are correct, in lieu of building these larger regions and headquarters. And it has kind of been a, when you see a broken window, go past it.

Ms. TSONGAS. Well, Mr. Secretary, I appreciate your looking at the broader issues around the culture of the National Park Service. But as we have learned so well in the Armed Services, and all the work that has been done there to address the egregious issues of

sexual assault and harassment, it takes both a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach, and there are unique ways in which one has to address the situation.

I hope that you will commit to coming forward to letting us know the results of both surveys so that we can have a better understanding of how the Park Service is going to specifically address the issue of sexual harassment. Would you commit to that?

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely, and I think this is going to take working together. It is not just the Park Service, it is BLM, and we talk a lot about the Park Service because most of America sees the Interior through the eyes of the parks. But also we have Bureau of Reclamation, Wildlife, BIA, and all the different bureaus that make up the Interior family.

Ms. TSONGAS. So, you are suggesting it is a broader issue throughout the Department of the Interior?

Secretary ZINKE. I am suggesting there is indication that it is a broader issue than just the parks. Certainly BLM has had issues on it. I am aware of other issues within it. So, I think, it may be department-wide. I think that would be a fair assessment.

But it is going to take us working together. Some of it might be legislative, to make sure that a voice is heard, and make sure that the voice is protected when that voice is heard.

And also, culturally, do some hard thinking about what we should be, what our goals are. I think the military, overall, has done a good job with it. But there are imperfections in the military, and there are improvements the military could do. And I don't think there is one person that knows all the answers, but certainly working together I think we can carve a good path, because I know where we want to be. We want to make sure we have an environment that is free of harassment, free of intimidation, that allows our employees to be the very best they can be.

Ms. TSONGAS. Well, I agree with you that wanting is not always enough.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. TSONGAS. I look forward to hearing how you plan to address it.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman from California, Mr. LaMalfa, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, great to see you, good to have you here today. You will be pleased to know H.R. 1873 moved across the Floor yesterday. That was the bill to streamline the process for removing hazardous trees from power lines, a topic, in the previous session, that you were very interested in, as well.

Secretary ZINKE. It took an Act of Congress to remove a tree.

[Laughter.]

Mr. LAMALFA. Yes. It is my understanding also that you have made contact with the National Sheriffs' Association for a meeting on improving coordination between Federal and local law enforcement, which could be very, very helpful and important in establishing a little greater trust with local rural residents and the agencies under your jurisdiction. And also issues we have had with marijuana cultivation by foreign nationals under local enforcement. And we have had legislation on the Plant Act in the past, on help-

ing with that, so I appreciate that contact, whatever you are able to make with the National Sheriffs' Association, and then establishing that.

Let me shift real quickly to the Indian Affairs issues. I sit as Chair of the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs. We had a very important hearing yesterday about some issues in the Great Plains area with tribal health and the facilities there, too.

So, I urge you, in the infrastructure bill that might be coming out, legislatively, later this year or whenever, that we have an important funding component there, addressing the backlog on Indian health facilities and their issues, as well as some of the other issues they are working on for transportation, education they are needing in Indian Country. If you heard the testimony yesterday, there are some big, big problems with Indian health, and especially in some of the Great Plains areas.

Also, more uniquely to California, but in general, as well, the previous administration had engaged in litigation supporting two off-reservation gaming facilities in California. One was outright objected by the voters and was rejected. The other of which did not ever have a valid state of California compact. So, if you would, Mr. Secretary, if you could review those cases that are being litigated, and determine if the activities of the Interior really reflect the policies that we should be pursuing, and in the Administration as well.

Last, and coming back to California, on water issues. Obviously, big challenges here. We had some very huge snowpack and rainfall. We are blessed by that, and happy for it, but the infrastructure still needs to keep up with that, as well.

So, may I ask, what actions would you be looking at to help with the non-Federal water storage projects we have, like Sites Reservoir in California, which is an off-stream project I am sure you are well aware of, 1.8 million acre-feet, or other projects similar to that, where Federal investments could trigger several times as much funding from other sources as a source of confidence in the investment? And that should be part of the key infrastructure plan the Administration has.

We could see a three to four time return in other investment, buttressing the Federal one. What do you think we could be doing to advance that with some Federal investment in water projects?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you. And real quickly, on the Indian gaming land-into-trust issue, on January 19, there were a number of Indian trust issues that were assigned by the previous Secretary. We are reviewing how much latitude I have to review. Some of it is legislatively, when land is taken into trust, what are my options. We are looking at that and going through them. I think I got sued six times the first day in office. So, we are reviewing what legal course and determination, and what should be our policy on it; and we are coordinating with the tribes in question on that to get a path forward.

It is a mistake to think that the Indian tribes are monolithic. Every tribe has a different story, different cultural backgrounds, and different expectations and we are working through that.

On water in the West, we committed to about \$23.4 million on grants for reuse projects. Clearly, in California, water storage is an

issue. One of the first trips I made was to California and visited with the governor to try to align our priorities on expenditures, so we weren't at loggerheads moving forward with that. We were lacking in storage capability.

And also, if water begins in California and ends in California, what is the role of the Federal Government? Clearly, if water transits outside, between state boundaries, to a different state. But if the source and end and use is in California, in this case, the Central Valley, what is our long-term role, as the Federal Government?

There are Federal water holders, but I find myself being the adjudicator between all California issues. And, no matter where I turn, I am not sure that we can ever get in the position where we are not the adversary. So, we are looking at, structurally, what is best to protect all users. But then, going forward, what should we do as a Federal Government?

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes Mr. Beyer for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back. Congratulations on the new job. I have a plethora of questions, so I would appreciate not one-word answers, but maybe two-sentence answers.

Number one, you mentioned 70 appointments that you don't have yet. Can you tell us how many political appointments President Trump, other than yourself and the Deputy Secretary, has submitted to the U.S. Senate?

Secretary ZINKE. I will get that number. The White House slate has been approved, to a degree. I can tell you the hold-up has been the Office of Government Ethics. I could give you a core example in two sentences.

I have a terrific candidate for USGS. I don't think I could find a better kind of candidate for that. And TS, SBI, SSEI. He has circled the earth. I will give you a hint: a great, great candidate, but trying to get through candidates of that caliber—

Mr. BEYER. OK. I just wanted to make clear that it was not the Democrats that were holding up your appointments, so—

Secretary ZINKE. At least so far. It has been frustrating. Certainly, David Bernhardt is the first up—

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Secretary, let me move on to the Memorial Bridge.

Secretary ZINKE. Yes.

Mr. BEYER. I heard you had mentioned that earlier. Thank you. It is in desperate need of repairs. It leads into Arlington Cemetery. We have the first \$90 million for the Fast Lane Grant project, but it requires a 40 percent match from the National Park Service.

The whole National Park Service transportation budget is \$268 million. So (a), do you have a plan for addressing Memorial Bridge? (b), can we perhaps request that appropriations get rid of the match? Or (c), a one-time step-up in the Park Service's transportation budget?

Secretary ZINKE. What we are looking at to incorporate in the President's infrastructure bill are some pathways to particularly

address the national parks part of it. We are also looking at public-private partnerships.

I would love to transfer ownership of the bridge and some of our parkways to the states, but I don't think the states want to assume that liability. Clearly, for northern Virginia, Maryland, and DC, those bridges are less of a park and parkways as they are a vital transportation hub. So, I am particularly concerned that we honor our obligation to make sure that the potholes are fixed, and the bridge is fixed, because I think it would be catastrophic for Washington, DC to have that bridge—

Mr. BEYER. Well, we would love to work with you on plans going forward, because you do own it for the time being.

Secretary ZINKE. I do, and I have talked to Elaine Chao at Transportation, and she wouldn't take it either. So, I guess it is going to be mine in the outyears.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Secretary, you and I, and many others, have gone back and forth on the Endangered Species Act. And one of the great concerns, and this is one of the most successful Federal programs of all time: 99 percent of the list of species have been preserved so far. But we see a 17 percent cut in the President's budget to listing, almost \$4 million in recovery.

So, three quick questions: Is the budget sufficient for you to meet the ESA obligations under the law? Can you achieve the goal of delisting more species without running afoul of the good science, the best available science? And can you do it in a way that the Fish and Wildlife Service will not continue to lose lawsuits over failing to take the required actions?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, it does fund core tasks. Some of the re-introduction of species is not funded. In regards to the courts, I think we are on firm ground on many of the cases we put forward, and the courts have rejected those grounds, even though we have, in some cases, the American Academy of Science's back.

So, we have what I think is a fine legal argument by some of the greatest biologists, wildlife experts, and yet the court will not see that in the same light. I am hoping we can narrow the gap on such things, because we spend a lot of money on litigation that could have been spent in better uses.

Mr. BEYER. Well, let me ask you—

Secretary ZINKE. I want to work with you on that one.

Mr. BEYER. OK. Yes, please. In the last 30 seconds, one more endangered species are senior executive service employees at the Department of the Interior. I know we just had 36 of them receive letters getting relocated. Are there going to be more letters to come? How many more people are going to be affected by this?

Secretary ZINKE. It is interesting, because it is normal course. The SESs, by definition, should be prepared to move. We looked at it, we had a board, and some of the positions had been there for 30 years. Some of it is looking at where we need help, which is actually the front lines. I don't need a lot of help in Washington, DC, other than maybe my Deputy and a few people. I need more help in the front lines.

So, moving people that are in the designated areas, by definition, I think it was appropriate. And quite frankly, some of them are voluntary moves. And we will have a list of who, because they could

voluntarily move or not. And some of it is trying to match skill sets, if they have a degree in biology, a degree in things like that, where should they go, better served. So, we are looking at that.

It is our first round, I am sure we will look at other rounds, as necessary. The reorganization is going to have a look at that, too, as we look at shifting more assets to the front line. What the structure of that front line should look like, that is yet undetermined, because we don't want to do the same thing that I talk about, is one-size-fits-all. So, we actually have to coordinate with the front line to see what skill sets and what structures would be appropriate.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Labrador, for 5 minutes.

Mr. LABRADOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Secretary Zinke, thanks for being here today. It was good to see you in Idaho recently. I hope the comments you heard there from Idahoans will have a positive impact on the decisions you make as Secretary.

I recently heard from some Idaho companies that to print simple notices in the Federal Register, the BLM process takes up to 6 months or longer than the Forest Service process. I am told that this is due to extra redundant steps of bureaucracy that do nothing more than delay.

Mr. Secretary, I think, and I think you believe that this can be remedied by mirroring the Forest Service's process and implement through internal policy. It does not take an Act of Congress. Will you work with me to make the necessary changes to address this issue?

Secretary ZINKE. I will. I look forward to working with you. I am not sure the Forest Service, and I don't mean to be critical, it may be a better model than what we are doing, but I am not sure the Forest Service is the best model. So, I think we should work together to find the best model, of which the Forest Service and BLM can be on the same page. Because a lot of times the checkerboard system in the West, we should be consistent in superior performance.

Mr. LABRADOR. Excellent, thank you. I appreciate that.

In its Fiscal Year 2018 budget justification, the Office of the Solicitor noted an anticipated increase in litigation brought against the Department in the coming year. How does constant litigation impact the Department's ability to fulfill its core missions?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, certainly being sued six times in the first day, it is different because all of a sudden it is Ryan Zinke versus somebody, and they very artfully, by name, I follow the law. So, if the court mandates that we stop, desist, or change, then I am going to follow the law. Does it slow me down? Depending on the suit. I wish that the country was not as polarized as it is. And I think the law sometimes should be clearer on direction.

I could tell you we have a great staff of people that, when we make a ROD, or record of decision, I think it is based on science, it is based on what is appropriate in the best interest of the public lands and all parties concerned. So, I am pretty confident what we bring forward is a good piece, at least during my tenure. The courts may or may not see it differently. And it also depends on what court it is.

Mr. LABRADOR. Yes. You recently issued a Secretarial Order on sage-grouse. Can you describe your order, and how you will involve states in the review process and beyond?

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, the Secretarial Order did two things. One, it established a group, an advisory within Interior, because Fish and Wildlife, BLM, National Parks in some cases, Bureau of Reclamation, we want to make sure that we are unified in our message. And two, to give an indicator to the states that we are willing to look at the state issues and state plans because they are different.

So, we are going to be flexible in approach, and not be one-size-fits-all, to give latitude to the states to include if a state so chooses to look at numbers, a numbers management vice habitat, we are going to honor that. Then we are going to work with the state to determine what a healthy population would look like, and then work with the state to develop a management plan that addresses that vice just habitat alone.

We also incorporated things like predator control, captive breeding, and give the states latitude in the development of their plan.

Mr. LABRADOR. During the previous administration, your predecessors repeatedly said that they were going to work with the states. But when the states had some plans, then they wouldn't follow the input of the states. Are you committing to this Committee that we will work together with the states, and we will be able to have better management and input from the states?

Secretary ZINKE. I am absolutely committed to work with the states in many ways. I think the states are in a better position to manage the sage-grouse than the Federal Government, and we should honor a flexible approach based on a variety of metrics to make sure that we do our part to ensure the bird does not get listed.

Mr. LABRADOR. And finally, I wish Mr. McEachin was still here, but I thought his line of questioning was interesting.

Last year, he is a freshman, so maybe he didn't know this, but last year the OGR Committee, the big oversight committee, not the Natural Resources Oversight Subcommittee, had four hearings on sexual harassment, two in the National Park Service, one in the Forest Service, and one in the EPA. I don't mind having another hearing on that, I am the Oversight Chairman here in Natural Resources. I don't mind having that hearing.

But I thought it was interesting that he would accuse you of not doing something that happened under the previous administration. All he had to do was ask me, and I would have agreed to do a hearing in our Committee. Anyway, thank you very much.

Mr. GOHMERT. The gentleman's time is expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Costa, for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome. Congratulations. I don't know if the view is any better from where you are sitting today from where you used to sit, but I look forward to working with you, and this will be part of a longer conversation that we will continue to have. There are many areas, from forest management to our parks that I would like to talk to you about, but I am going to confine my focus today to water. Water, water, water.

You noted a bit ago that you are not so sure that you are ultimately going to be able to be Solomon-like in dealing with all the challenges we have in California, but I think you are off to a good start. You are meeting with the governor, obviously, who is important as we look toward fixing a broken water system in California. And as you know from your previous experience, it is either feast or famine in California.

The fact that you have taken the time to come out there in your early months, not only to visit our parks but to meet and talk with other folks, I think is a significant good step, first step forward.

You and I voted for the WIIN Act last December, which was important. The President signed it, that really begins to make incremental progress in fixing that broken water system. The legislation has multiple provisions that impact all of California water users, which is why we had such a broad-based bipartisan support.

I want to talk to you about some specific areas of the legislation, Sections 4001 and 4003 that provided greater flexibility for the Department to operate the movement of water through the Federal pumps. Can you provide details on how these sections have been implemented during this very wet water year that we have had? We are very thankful to God for it. As well as whether operating these sections resulted in any additional water supply.

Quickly, and then I have a couple of other questions.

Secretary ZINKE. I don't know the specifics of that, because I don't want to mislead you, but I will find it.

But I know that, given the wet winter, it was a unique winter because it was a lot wetter.

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Secretary ZINKE. And it did not provide the opportunity to look at what would happen as depletion goes lower. So, our report will be more on the, well, geez, we got a lot of water vice on how well we reacted when we didn't.

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Secretary ZINKE. That was some of it. But I agree with you, that providing more flexibility, and some of this solution needs to be a made-in-California solution with us in the supporting role, rather than the other way around.

Mr. COSTA. One size does not fit all, that is for certain.

Sections 4010(a)(4) and 4010(b)(5) both deal with efforts to restore delta smelt, a listed species that impacts project operations. Specifically, 4010(a)(4) requires delta smelt distribution study to be completed to better inform real-time operations under Section 4010(b)(5). It also requires utilization of the delta smelt conservation fish hatcheries. Can you provide an update on the status of the Department's implementation of these actions specifically related to the Fiscal Year 2018 budget?

Secretary ZINKE. I know we are working with the state and the National Marine Fisheries Service, which is NOAA, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Again, this is part of our problem, that we are not acting as joint as we should be, so there are different views within different departments that has created an issue for the smelt.

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Secretary ZINKE. As you know. But we are looking at new facilities and to evaluate supplementing the native fish. We are also looking at the problem with the striped bass.

Mr. COSTA. Right, the predator species.

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, predator control, which was previously not a priority.

Mr. COSTA. You know, some of the water agencies up on the Sac Valley and Reps. LaMalfa and John Garamendi know this and are doing some very unique things to provide other habitat for salmon that we should continue to encourage and expand.

Also, on the monitoring, for real-time monitoring, a number of water agencies have offered to provide us additional support for boat crews, so that we can improve coverage and resulting data at real time. I would like you to get into that or provide some support for that.

There are also some areas on how the capability of the USGS could be used to assist in implementing science activities. And if you could look into that, as well. Additionally, other partnerships with public agencies, as I noted above, can be helpful toward dealing with the biological opinion consultation process for not only delta smelt, but other listed salmonoid species.

What do you think about the Stafford Act applying to dealing with emergency, with the fire conditions that we are facing, instead of using all the management for forestry to put out fires?

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Which you will have a chance to answer soon. Thank you. Your time has expired.

Mr. Westerman.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Zinke, it is great to see you back here in the Committee. It was an honor to be elected with you in the same class in Congress, and to serve with you here on this Committee. And I know that not just me, but a lot of Americans, are grateful to you for your military service, your service in Congress, and now it is great to see you over at the Department of the Interior.

I know from personal experience that you and I share a lot of the same ideas on conservation and land management. I know that one area that you have supported during the last Congress was on reauthorization of the LWCF, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. And I know that in your testimony you mentioned briefly that the LWCF receipts authorization expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2018, and the Administration will review options for reauthorization.

If we look at that fund and the history of it, it has generated about \$38 billion since it was set up in 1965, \$17.5 billion has been spent, which leaves a balance of about \$20.5 billion. Over that time frame there have been over 5 million acres purchased, 42,000 state and local projects done through that fund. When the fund was originally set up, it was supposed to be 60 percent state and 40 percent Federal. It is now, in reality, about 40 percent of the fund went to state projects and 60 percent went to Federal projects.

The purpose of that fund is to require, preserve, and ensure access to outdoor recreation facilities. And I want to tie this in to infrastructure. I am so pleased to see your emphasis on infrastruc-

ture and the recognition that we need to do more on the infrastructure on our public lands, especially on the Park Service.

But there has not been a whole lot of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, I believe, spent for the preservation and ensuring access to outdoor recreation facilities, and infrastructure plays a vital role in that. So, my question to you is, do you think that there is opportunity, maybe through a reauthorization, to restructure LWCF so it is focused more on state projects, focused more on taking care of the assets that we currently have in the system?

Secretary ZINKE. I do, and it is hard to recreate on a beach if the beach doesn't exist because there is not a reclamation program to support it, particularly on the Gulf Coast, and in the Gulf states, I don't mean to talk for your esteemed colleague to your right, but—

Mr. WESTERMAN. I am sure he will have—

Secretary ZINKE [continuing]. When all the money is received, revenue is received offshore, and much of it goes inland, there is always an argument about why is it appropriate. But I think the mission of LWCF and expense, I think we need to look at it. It is hard to recreate if you don't have a road to get there, or the road is closed because they do not have the maintenance to make sure it is safe.

So, using the LWCF in the spirit of how it was formed, to restore lands that would provide access to public activities, recreation, I think is an area where we would agree that the states should have more say. It was set up where, the states are always in a better position to look at recreational opportunities within that state, and to highlight their assets.

So, giving more latitude to the states so the states can decide what their opportunities are, what they should be, I think is a good thing.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Do you feel like you have authority under the current authorization to use more of the LWCF funds for infrastructure?

Secretary ZINKE. It would be nice if I had more latitude, quite frankly. The law is pretty clear. But it would be nice, one is if we had a steady stream of income. You rightly point out that there is over \$20 billion that has not been used, even though offshore assets, oil and gas primarily, have given the revenue for a purpose, and that purpose has not been authorized and not used.

Same with Bureau of Reclamation, by the way. Bureau of Reclamation, about \$18 billion of unused. These are revenues intended to build our rural and reclamation opportunities for water. That is untapped, so I would like, personally, to work with you to have a steady stream, and give the states more flexibility, and use those monies with more flexibility to provide greater public access and use.

Mr. WESTERMAN. I look forward to working with you on that.

Secretary ZINKE. So do I.

The CHAIRMAN. You will get it.

Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I am sorry you came in between my two stints in Congress, so I did not have the pleasure of working with you. I am

the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. So, as you can imagine, the issues regarding the National Park Service are of great concern to me.

You have stated in your opening statement, as well as throughout your statements that you have provided to us, that this is a balanced budget. And I would like to understand how.

We know that the National Park Service has about 417 units. In 2016, it had a record 331 million visits and about \$18.4 billion in direct spending, 318,000 jobs, and \$34.9 billion in economic output.

You also issued in your statement that, and it is on Page 3, "In my first days in office I issued two Secretarial Orders to expand access to public lands and increase hunting, fishing, and recreation activities nationwide." Yet, your next sentence talks about a \$354.3 million reduction in the 2017 budget.

If I am understanding where you are getting those figures from, a lot of it is coming from National Park Service because of the \$2.9 that was there in 2017, \$2.6 is part of the 2018 budget. I am trying to understand how you justify the budget cuts and say you are opening the access, and at the same time your statement to NPS says basically that they will utilize various strategies on a park-to-park basis, which may include limiting the use or closing of certain areas as campgrounds. How do those two actually jive?

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you for the question. It is a balanced budget. As you know, the President submits a budget. It is what a balanced budget would look like, overall.

The Park Service itself did not receive more of a savings than any other one. But also, you notice that there was an increase in areas where we gain revenue. And I don't give judgment, it is just that the revenue picture has been tough. The best use, or the most flexible funds, are through the front door in our parks.

And you are right, we had 330 million visitors last year. But here are the statistics. About half the parks do not charge anything. The Park Service has a four-tier system. A lot of the parks do not even follow that. So, I have also commissioned an internal study, and we want the parks to be the most outstanding, great deal, and incentivize families and usage. But by the same token, we have to look at our revenue picture.

So, what we are looking at on the revenue process, so we don't have to go through these cuts, in a balanced budget is looking at making sure the front door tickets are appropriate, that incentivize families.

Public-private partnerships, since you sit on the Federal Lands, look at Yosemite. What is the opportunity at Yosemite in regards to how do you mitigate the traffic problem?

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Secretary, I don't mean to interrupt you, but is that really what NPS is supposed to do? Is it supposed to be a revenue-generating enterprise? Because I always thought one of the things that we talked about was the fact that NPS and the Park Service were a way to get our families engaged.

And Mr. Secretary, I don't have very much time, but I want to talk to you about an issue that is also very dear to my heart, which is also one which talks about cuts. And that is the Japanese confinement. It is not a lot of money in your budget, it is about \$2.8 billion now. You have cut it to \$1 million. I am the granddaughter

of someone who was in Santa Fe, New Mexico, but also in Hawaii, where we are beginning to do what we need to do.

Honouliuli was very unique in that Honouliuli not only had Japanese-Americans, but also German-Americans and Italian-Americans, because Hawaii's makeup is very unique. We are all minorities, so everyone that was considered an "enemy," even though the Japanese-Americans, and neither were they truly enemies, were interned. And these cuts are going to slow down the necessary work, so I would really like for you, when you say a balanced budget, to keep that in mind.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate Mr. Gohmert taking over in my absence, and he missed his chance to give you questions, so I am going to go to him next for questions.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Secretary. You really are a breath of fresh air, and the Department could use it.

I am curious. You mentioned 70 nominations that are still out there unconfirmed that you desperately need to help achieve your mission. In your office, in the building, Department of the Interior over there, how many of those people that are working there around you are actually people you personally hired?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I want to correct it there. I have 70 appointments.

Mr. GOHMERT. Right.

Secretary ZINKE. In the 70 appointments, some of them have been appointed by me.

Mr. GOHMERT. I see, OK.

Secretary ZINKE. I have, I would probably say around 20 or so. Some of the deputy acting assistants are. But to date, the Senate-confirmed, which are the major leadership team, that is solicitors, the five solicitors I have, my deputies, directors of all the departments, the assistant secretaries, all of them are yet to be in the seat.

Mr. GOHMERT. Right. About how many employees are in that building?

Secretary ZINKE. Overall, I have about 70,000 employees within the Department of the Interior. In DC, somewhere in the order of maybe 6,500. In Denver, 4,200. We had some really large regions.

Mr. GOHMERT. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. And yet in the field we are pretty short when it comes to a specific—

Mr. GOHMERT. I am sure it would be great to have at least some of those folks that are as allegiant to you as they were to the Obama administration.

I want to take you to a problem that seems to exemplify problems we see across the country. In Harrison County in my district, east Texas, we have one of the greatest natural assets in the country called Caddo Lake, at one time the largest natural lake south of the Great Lakes in the United States. At one time during World War II, there were 10,000, 11,000 or so employees working at a plant there, an ammunition plant.

But when BRAC said military no longer needed the land, it had been used for a lot of purposes, they worked great with the commu-

nity, and you can imagine that many employees, what a difference it made in our small county. When you lose that many employees and then we look into BRAC, OK, maybe the community could get it. Could it be a park? Could it be something great, really help? Well, under BRAC, any Department of the Federal Government can jump in and claim it.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife, it turns out, apparently, they love to run in and grab land. And I found out previously that, actually, if they go through and mark pine trees for clearing, and I am a big fan of management, we don't do enough of it, but they do get a personal bonus, based on how much money is made cutting the pine trees.

Well, I went wow, that gives them incentive to claim land that they may not need, but an area where they can make personal money.

Well, we got a new guy in there named Eric Derkov, and he met with me and county judge, Hugh Taylor, Sheriff McCool. He arbitrarily decided that, he felt like it was probably against the law, but he cited NEPA and some other things, and showed a complete ignorance of the law. But despite his lack of knowledge and ignorance, it didn't prevent him from being immovable and intransigent.

There was a firing range there that law enforcement, for 130 miles, from Louisiana over to Dallas, would come and use. They would train people to drive. And Eric Derkov just decided that that is inconsistent with NEPA and the Department of the Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, nobody would be allowed there. They say we may have as many as 10 local people walk their dogs through there, but we are talking about a huge area that is basically devastated, Harrison County, surrounding area, and now we have, I am sure he is competent in some areas, I just couldn't find any within U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

But we need help, and I am just asking if you would look into Mr. Derkov and the damage he is doing there to people in east Texas.

Secretary ZINKE. I will look into it and make sure he is consistent with the policies. You will be happy to know, too, that Interior's south building, we gave that up as we are bringing National Park Service into the main building. And we have given up Interior south back to GSA.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you so much.

The CHAIRMAN. Can we have it?

Secretary ZINKE. I am sorry, sir?

The CHAIRMAN. Giving it up? Can we have it? We are doing construction out here. Never mind.

Mr. Soto.

Mr. SOTO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, Mr. Secretary. I am from Florida, and we care deeply about the Everglades. We recently sent you a letter about designating the Kissimmee River, where we spent billions to restore it, on making it a wild and scenic river. Can we expect a response at some point soon?

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, absolutely. And I have met with the governor, and am catching up to speed on the seagrass, which has become the creek of not much. I understand the problems with the

overflow and the reservoir, the need for the levee system to be redone.

My intention is to be down in Florida right after the break in there to look at it and assess it, and I would be glad to work with you on that. I understand it is a huge problem, but there are solutions. And my commitment to you is to work together to find the solutions.

Mr. SOTO. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We also have a 125-mile buffer through 2022 in the Gulf of Mexico off of Florida for oil drilling. Is that buffer in jeopardy right now?

Secretary ZINKE. We are looking at, with the military, there are some areas that are closed that we would look at seismic assessment. We are working with the military to look at their letter, which I am sure you got a copy of, to make sure that we are all on the same page. I would not say it is in jeopardy one way or the other, we are just making sure it is based on military needs.

As a former military officer, if the military, which is non-political, if they say they need an area, then certainly I would pay attention to that, which I am.

Mr. SOTO. We also saw White House attorney Udham Dillon say that individual Minority Members, Ranking Members, and basically, Democrats and rank-and-file Republicans do not have an individual authority to conduct oversight. Is that the policy of the Department of the Interior, that unless our Chairman sends a request we don't have an oversight right?

Secretary ZINKE. My policy has been any Member has a privilege of being a Member, so I have, as you know, offered to come quarterly and sit down with the Minority in a group and discuss the issues so you know exactly where we are. I think I have given more access than certainly any Secretary in my time.

I think, as an elected official, you deserve the courtesy. As a Secretary of the Interior, it is our Interior Department, it is not just one party's or another. And my commitment is to be responsive to you and make sure there is a level of trust that exists in the Minority, just like the Majority.

Mr. SOTO. And then we have had such a focus on Bears Ears. I know you went over there, there have been a lot of hearings on it. What is the main focus? Why are we setting our sights on an area that has ancestral ties for five Native American tribes? What is it about Bears Ears that has brought your gaze to it?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, an excellent question. Here is the laydown for those that have not been out there. It is 1.5 million acres, about 1.5 times the size of Glacier Park. Within Bears Ears itself, there is a monument, an existing monument. There is a wilderness study area, about 400,000 acres. There is a national forest. There is BLM. And there are antiquities. So, reasons why it became a monument are varying, but it became a monument.

My task was to look at a monument and make sure, first, are there antiquities there? Yes, there are. Does it follow the law, which is smallest area compatible with protection of the object? When I looked at it and talked to everyone, the tribes before, and it is not true that I only spent an hour with the tribes. We had meetings before I got there, we have had meetings afterwards. I called the tribes, and this was the recommendation, that the antiq-

uities within the Bears Ears can be segregated, identified, and the border revised to protect those antiquities.

What I found is when you go out there, and the antiquities that are to be protected, some of the dwellings, when there is no parking lot, designated parking lot, there are no bathrooms, there is no infrastructure that, you can drive in it multiple ways and pilfer. Part of the responsibility when I become the monitor and protector of the antiquities, we need borders to make sure that I can actually do my job. So, the border is revised.

The second thing is I am asking Congress to authorize co-management of that monument with the tribes there. This has never been done. And the authority does not rest with the executive. The authority rests with you. So, I have to ask you to provide co-management, and the request from the President, I think, will be to ask you that.

Last, there are areas within the monument that are better suited, in my judgment, to be national recreation areas, conservation areas.

And last point, Mr. Chairman, if I can indulge you for 15 seconds, is that what happens when you put a monument over a wilderness, over an existing wilderness. A monument is managed by the proclamation. A wilderness, in many cases, can be more stringent in its management application. So, I am asking Congress to provide clarity of what the intent of Congress is when you put a monument over top of the wilderness. What system do you manage it as?

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We accept that responsibility, we are going to do it.

I will just notice here that there is no policy anywhere that says all the questions have to go through the Chairman. But I would like to note that I wouldn't mind that. If we want to do that, I kind of appreciate that one.

Mr. Graves.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for being here. I want to make note for the record that, actually, at a hearing similar to this with Secretary Jewell, I actually asked her to provide follow-up information to our office, and we never heard back. We called them after that and never heard back.

As a delegation, we requested a meeting with the Secretary. That meeting was refused, as a delegation. We requested a meeting with BSEE Director Salerno. That meeting was refused. And we also tried to get NOAA to accept some of Louisiana's science, which was much improved, based upon NOAA related to red snapper fisheries, and NOAA refused to accept that data, or utilize the state data that was better.

Mr. Secretary, you mentioned earlier that in the last year of the Bush administration in excess of \$18 billion was generated from offshore energy revenues, and the last year of the Obama administration approximately \$2.7 billion was generated from Outer Continental Shelf energy revenues. Extraordinary disparity.

And, as you correctly noted, there are certainly in addition to policies by the administration, certainly what goes on in the Middle East, policies and other issues affected energy production and revenues.

If you add up the six states that produce offshore energies in Federal waters: Alaska, California, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and if you add up the production of the five states of Alaska, California, Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama, multiply it times three or four, that is what Louisiana produces in our Federal waters.

Right now, based upon Federal policy, other states like the states of perhaps Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, wherever, they benefit more from the offshore energy revenues than the state of Louisiana. I don't understand that. And while the Obama administration in the last 2 years proposed to cut the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act revenue-sharing funds, I was shocked to see that it was also in the budget that this administration put forth.

I am curious if you can give us some type of explanation as to why you think other states should benefit from our offshore energy production more so than the state of Louisiana.

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you. And it is not a surprise you would ask that question. Senator Cassidy also asked that question in the last couple days. But here, as the argument lies, is that all states share in the OCS revenue.

The argument is the increase in activity will benefit the great state of Louisiana in ways of jobs, et cetera—

Mr. GRAVES. OK. Mr. Secretary, can I actually interrupt you right there? Because I want to go back and point to your budget, where you talk about the recreational fee program, where it says that the recreational fee program, \$290 million annually, is an important social revenue for land management operations, maintenance, and improvements to recreational facilities on public lands.

What I am concerned about is the disparity in treatment in Federal lands. Right now, under the Mineral Leasing Act, states share 50 percent of the revenues or, in the case of Alaska, 90 percent of the revenues go back to their states. In the case of national parks and other fees, the dollars go back into those states. Right now, we are investing more of the OCS revenues into conservation in other states than in Louisiana, that has lost 1,900 square miles of our coast.

Mr. Secretary, I just want to ask you. I would like for our delegation to have the opportunity to sit with you and talk through this and explain this. I know you have been to the coast of Louisiana, and I know you share our concerns with the erosion and what it is doing to our ecosystem and vulnerability to our communities. I just want to ask for a commitment that you give us an opportunity to sit and discuss this, and explain why we think it is an important reinvestment in revenues into the productivity of our ecosystem and the resilience of our communities, rather than, again, allowing other states to benefit.

Secretary ZINKE. I look forward to working with you on it. And I think you would be a magnificent governor in the great state of Louisiana. No one represents Louisiana better than you. I look forward to your future, but I would be glad to sit down with you and work on it.

Again, this is what a balanced budget would look like. And it is a great line of discussion back and forth, and I get the GOMESA.

Mr. GRAVES. That flattery will get you everywhere. Thank you. No, seriously, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you, and I know our delegation will, as well.

A quick question, Mr. Secretary. When you look at the portfolio of the Department of the Interior, and you compare it to other agencies like Department of Commerce, it is somewhat of a head-scratcher sometimes, why fisheries management is in Department of Commerce, with other missions that appear inconsistent. Do you believe that that would perhaps be better aligned with Interior?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, certainly our reorganization looks at the problem set before us. And you correctly point out, and I gave the example of a salmon and a trout in the same stream, and the two departments sometimes are not reconcilable.

Certainly, a path forward would be to make things more joint at the region so the government is on one page, so industry can have some clarity and certainty on either investment or the activities, as well as the public. The public should know that we are efficient. But I think organization and a change is necessary.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Graves, from now on I am referring to you as Governor.

Mr. GRAVES. I am not saying that is a step up, Mr. Chairman. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. It is definitely a step down.

Mr. GRAVES. He just wants me out of here.

The CHAIRMAN. If you had said Senator, that would have been depths of stepping down.

Mr. Panetta, you are recognized.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, good afternoon by now, and welcome. I appreciate you being here, appreciate your testimony, your preparation as well. I also appreciate the fact that you did come here and speak with the Minority staff. Unfortunately, there were some votes that were going on, our Minority Members didn't get a good chance to talk to you. And thank you for your willingness to come again. And also, thank you for your willingness to have individual conversations with Members.

As a freshman Member, I appreciate that. The last thing I would want to do is bother you with a phone call. And know that if I do call you, it is only because there is an emergency, or because our letters didn't get responded to. But once again, thank you very much.

I come from the central coast of California. We have the Pinnacles National Park there, Fort Ord National Monument, the coastal monuments there, as well. I was fortunate enough to meet with BLM employees last month, a very dedicated group out there. But obviously, they are worried about the lack of funding and a lack of resources that they are getting.

On that note, the Federal hiring freeze, how did that affect the DOI?

Secretary ZINKE. The hiring freeze was relaxed, with the exception of Washington, DC and Denver, with the exception of GS-12 and above, which just requires an exception on there.

Our priority was to make sure that we shore up the front line, first, if there is a qualified candidate within Washington, DC or Denver, we were going to fill from that first, and then make sure that the hiring itself, we are looking at the process of allowing superintendents and those on the ground more flexibility to hire locally, which we think is an important aspect on that. Some of it is coordination with the Office of Personnel.

You would be surprised or not surprised, how much latitude a Secretary has in such matters, but we are looking at providing the superintendent more hiring authority to hire local, and then shoring up, again, the front line by looking at qualified individuals from Washington and Denver, and some of our larger regions first, before we go out.

Mr. PANETTA. OK. Great, thanks. You mentioned earlier with Representative Hanabusa, you started to talk about public-private partnerships. You started to get to Yosemite National Park. Can you give us some examples of how that could help the facilities that you oversee?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, in the case of Yosemite, clearly we all want to protect the experience of a park, because the culture and experience of going to a park should be a wow, right? It should be a five-star. That means that when you get there, we should be in the right uniform, the bathrooms are clean, and the experience should be the five.

Part of that is looking at public-private partnership on transportation. I don't want to say a bus. I like to say a transport. But developing and looking at what that transportation means, should look like, it should be an enriching experience. People should want to get on the transport. If they don't get on the transport and do the park, something is going to be missing.

An example would be the red buses in Glacier Park. Those were made in the 1930s, but it has become an iconic feature of visiting our park. Zion has a pretty good transportation system. But that is where we are looking at public-private partnerships. I don't want to run a bus system, but I want to get the greatest talent of people in this country that care about our parks to design a transport system that, for lack of a better term, is the coolest system around so it enriches the experience.

WiFi is another example. In parks, we are the old generation. The younger generation appreciates WiFi, and we should embrace that to make sure that the park experience going down a trail is available on your cell phone: the geology, the wildlife, what you are going to see. And, oh, by the way, if you see a bear, I mean, there is an app that says "bear" that goes down to the local superintendent, so he can notate it.

Mr. PANETTA. OK. Got it. Throughout your testimony today, you have consistently said this is what a balanced budget looks like, in regards to the President's budget. Is this budget, in your position—I mean is this the budget you are willing to go out there and look your employees in the eye and say, "This is one I support, and this is one that I want for you"?

Secretary ZINKE. I support the budget, but I also support and realize this is a starting point. And what is important, I think, is if

nothing else, it has highlighted the Members' priorities, which is important to go back to.

It also highlights our revenue problem, is that we need to work together for our revenue. If you have money, then the decisions are really easy. But if we keep having to borrow, then the decisions became more difficult.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I think Grijalva and I both agree we are not crazy about your WiFi idea there.

Mrs. Radewagen.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Ranking Member. Mr. Secretary, thank you for appearing before the Committee this morning, a Committee that you were serving on just last year. You are missed, and it is great to see you leading the Interior.

I want to express my personal appreciation to you for inviting me to participate in some of the events surrounding the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Virgin Islands Transfer Day. I very much appreciate the interest you have shown in the U.S. territories, not only as a colleague on this Committee, but also since you were confirmed as Secretary.

Being the most economically challenged state or territory in the Nation due to our economic and geographic isolation, American Samoa has been the grateful recipient of funding from the Department of the Interior to supplement funding for local government operations, including the local and only community college on the island, the judiciary, the Department of Education, and last, but certainly not least, the only hospital in the territory, which our veterans cannot even use due to the lack of adequate resources.

Beginning in 1974, the Department of the Interior created the American Samoa operations grants account, at which time the allocation was \$17 million. In 1986, that amount was raised for the first and only time to \$22.75 million, where it has remained since. If you were to use the CPI and adjust for that over time, that amount would be approximately \$50 million today.

In the Department's budget proposal, it states the reasoning behind the lack of any increase is to promote self-sufficiency on the island, which is all fine and well, except for the fact that the Federal Government has imposed unfunded mandates and regulations that extremely hamper that effort, including the mandatory raising of the minimum wage in American Samoa until it meets the Federal minimum standard, a perfect example of the Federal Government placing the territory on the same economic playing field as the states, which is a somewhat irresponsible policy, to say the least, which has done tremendous harm to the local economy, and contributed greatly to two tuna canneries, which are the lifeblood of our economy, leaving the island since 2009.

Couple that with the closing off of large swaths of the Pacific Ocean, which our people have utilized as their traditional fishing grounds for centuries, and you can see how frustrating it can be to hear that we must become more self-sufficient.

This year, that critical funding was reduced by \$1.2 million, which is not much money if you are a state. But it is a tremendous amount for our local government to absorb.

Mr. Secretary, I look forward to having you visit the territories. In February, a congressional delegation visited the territories led by our Chairman Bishop. While there, the CODEL received an eye-opening firsthand account of just how many issues we are facing, particularly our hospital which is over 50 years old and in such disrepair that our military veterans are not able to use it; they, therefore, must be flown to Hawaii and put up in a hotel for at least a few days, all on the U.S. taxpayer's dime, even for the most minor procedures, as flights to and from American Samoa are very limited, which happens to be another issue we are trying to fix.

This does not even take into account the time that our veterans must be away from their families for medical treatment, any medical treatment whatsoever, treatment they have rightfully earned.

While I understand the need for austerity measures, they simply cannot come on the backs of the most economically challenged people in our Nation, the people who love this Nation so much, as demonstrated by our record rate of enlistment into the armed forces.

Mr. Secretary, we as Republicans are always talking about providing a safety net for the less fortunate. This \$1.2 million is part of our safety net. I have been working with Chairman Calvert and Senator Murkowski, and should we be successful in rescinding the proposed cut, I humbly hope that the Department will pose no objections.

Thank you again, Mr. Secretary. As always, it is a pleasure to see you, my friend, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Clay.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me too welcome the Secretary back to this Committee.

I noticed that on your first full day of work you chose an interesting mode of transportation to go to work. Have you ridden your horse to work lately?

Secretary ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I have.

Mr. CLAY. Oh, you have?

[Laughter.]

Secretary ZINKE. At least around the mall a couple times.

Mr. CLAY. Very good. I think that for lack of a better term, I thought that was cool.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Secretary, are Federal agencies required to consult with tribal nations before they recommend a course of action that has the potential to affect their tribal rights and interests?

Secretary ZINKE. They are required, it is interesting on consultation, talking to tribes. Some of the consultation has been a website, rather than personal. Some of the consultation has been more notification, rather than consultation. I think we need to do a lot of work on what consultation really means, and a lot of it is trust, quite frankly, taking the interest.

And I find myself, as the Department of the Interior, to be the champion of all things Indian, and I take that responsibility very seriously.

Mr. CLAY. All right. Several tribes, including the Navajo, Osage, Oglala, Sioux, Crow, Piikani, and Hopi have indicated that the Federal Government, in particular, the Fish and Wildlife Service, has abandoned that responsibility in its proposed rule to remove ESA protection for grizzly bears in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

In a treaty, letters, and resolutions, tribal nations have raised concerns over the science being presented by the Service, and the irreparable harm of tribal sovereignty, sacred site protections, treaty rights, consultation mandates, and spiritual and religious freedoms. Can you discuss your plan to honor the mandatory predecision and meaningful government-to-government consultation with tribes in this matter?

Secretary ZINKE. I will continue to live up to my obligation to do that, I look forward to it. I try to have a great relationship with the tribes. Me in Montana with the grizzly bears has been an interesting thing to watch. It extends beyond the grizzly bear. The buffalo, as well, within Yellowstone, making sure we honor cultural and historic rites of hunt with that.

But I look forward to working with the tribes. As a Congressman, I represented seven tribes in Montana, and now I have a lot more. I know that the tribes in Montana are not monolithic. Wait until you get to the tribes across our Nation, they are anything but monolithic. Each of the tribes has their own expectations, culture, opportunities, and challenges.

And what I really would like is the Senate to push along my BIA Director, I think the tribes are going to be thrilled with that. But we need some help on leadership.

And also the restructure of BIA. I don't think we are doing a very good job, and certainly entertaining how to do it better, working with Congress, I think is a frank discussion.

Mr. CLAY. Will you commit to consult with affected tribes prior to any de-listing announcement?

Secretary ZINKE. I will commit to that. I think it is not only a right, it is the law. And it is the right thing to do.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your answers. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that. Mr. Zinke, I know that you said you had a 12:30 drop dead date, but you committed to stay a few more minutes to see if we can get all the questions in.

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that news to you?

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. We will try to do that. General, you are up next.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Zinke, first, thanks for your leadership style and approach to organizational development. It is already showing. Also, thank you for your proactive approach in all the work you have done in husbanding our Nation's natural resources, as both a Member of Congress and now as the Secretary.

My question today deals with an ongoing issue facing my district in northern Michigan and the Great Lakes region in general: the

double-crested cormorant. For those of you who don't know, or might not be aware of what a double-crested cormorant is, it is a large bird that spends most of its day either resting or eating. It will fly low to the water's surface, and then dive straight into the water to feed on foraged fish, stock trout, salmon, small-mouthed bass, yellow perch, and even catfish in some areas.

By 2009, the cormorant population in Michigan waters alone was estimated at 326,000. Cormorants are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and are currently managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. While states have been given the authority to control cormorant populations through a depredation order for over a decade, a May 2016 court order stopped my state of Michigan, among others, from being able to effectively manage this bird population until a new environmental assessment can be issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

That decision has ultimately led to a degraded situation for our fish populations in the Great Lakes. Without a new EA to re-establish these depredation orders, the livelihood of our recreational and commercial fishing industries is at risk and it is directly affecting our local economies.

Can you share with us where your Department is on this? And, more specifically, where the Fish and Wildlife Service is on issuing its revised environmental assessment?

Secretary ZINKE. I will look into this. This is the first I have heard of this particular issue. And this is why I think, quite frankly, a reorganization is important. When it comes to the Asian carp, or things that are sensitive to the Great Lakes and in that region, sometimes they get lost when they get to DC. So, a reorganization based on more watersheds gives more authority to the states, gives more authority to the regions outside of DC that would be able to, I think, better highlight these areas.

Because I haven't heard of the double-crested before is an indicator that it hasn't been followed in DC, which is absolutely an indicator on why we should reorganize and push more authority to these different ecosystems or JMAs, so they can be addressed. We should be working with the states, rather than against.

And, by the way, I think Asian carp should be renamed the Asian trout, or the Asian bass.

Mr. BERGMAN. Fair enough. And given your answer, I look forward to working with you, your staff, at whatever level necessary to get quick resolution on this because the problem is increasing.

And last, I would like to say you have indicated that, as a Representative from Montana, you represented seven tribes. In the 1st district of Michigan, I represent eight. And not that we are playing the numbers game here, but the bottom line is we know there are a lot of folks who are affected by those decisions. I look forward to working with you and your team to ensure that all our tribes are recognized and included in the decision making at all levels.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. But you have done a good job on the single-crested.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Barragán.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, for the last 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, also known as the LWCF, has been instrumental in ensuring that Americans across the country, especially those living in underserved urban areas, have access to public parks, playgrounds, and green spaces.

In fact, I have been working with the Urban and Community Park Coalition on a bipartisan bill that I introduced a few days ago with Congressman Mike Turner. It is H.R. 2943, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Program, which I invite all of my colleagues here to co-sponsor. It creates a dedicated source of funding for projects that expand outdoor recreational opportunities in cities across the country.

Urban parks are not only safe and beautiful, but they also serve as green engines to help address nearly every critical urban need, from health to housing to education and environmental justice, and countering sprawl to combat crime. I was quite disappointed to see that this budget cuts the LWCF by more than 80 percent, and eliminates the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Grant Program.

The LWCF stateside assistance grants have created parks, playgrounds, and outdoor recreational facilities such as basketball courts and skate parks in over 42,000 communities across the country. As 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas, more funding, not less, is needed to provide these much-needed outdoor outlets for city residents.

In your testimony, you noted your goal for the Department of the Interior is to continue delivering access and services critical to Americans. My question is, would you be able to tell me how cutting the LWCF by 80 percent helps you in accomplishing this goal, especially when those living in urban areas already face barriers in accessing public lands?

Secretary ZINKE. The cuts in the LWCF were for new land acquisition. As I am sure you are aware, in the Park Service itself we are \$11.5 billion behind in maintenance and repair, \$11.5 billion behind. So, the position is, let's fix what we have before we encumber ourselves with more assets.

On the LWCF, as you know, I have been a strong champion over time, and I think it has done some great things. I think on the funding side, we need a steady source of funding. In review, over the course of time there has been about \$20 billion that have been unused in appropriation.

And I think that having the LWCF program funds used for programs would be beneficial, and also giving the states more say. Some states are more urban or more rural than others, but giving the latitude of the states to direct those funds to issues that they feel important themselves. At one time it was 60 percent went to the states. It is much less today.

So, I think Congress has a role to play in making sure that the states have more latitude. You, as a Representative, should have a say, I think, in where those funds should go in your district.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. But if we are cutting funding, how does that help the states? Doesn't it just cut the funding? Or are we directing the money to the states for them to decide?

Secretary ZINKE. The cut in the funding is for new acquisitions, new land acquisitions. It does not cut funding for operations, for maintenance. It does not cut funding for conservation easements and those type of things.

Your colleague, Ms. Dingell, had a lot to do, her husband had a lot to do with building that structure. If it changes for more of a rural or more of an urban taste, then that is the legislative decision that Congress will have to make on how to direct it.

But the budget right now simply has a reduction in land acquisition because, again, the tact is, let's take care of property that we have, rather than buying more property that we also have a maintenance liability on.

Ms. BARRAGAN. So, are you suggesting you believe there are already enough green spaces, that we shouldn't invest in more?

Secretary ZINKE. No, I am suggesting the budget reflects this. The budget reflects that we should not encumber more liability until we maintain what we have. If you want to look at maintenance-wise, if you haven't been to Arlington, I would suggest taking a look at Arlington. I am also going to do a tour on Friday of our regional parks in Washington, DC. Most of our parks in DC, which I am responsible for, are not maintained.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Cheney.

Ms. CHENEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you very much, Secretary Zinke. First of all, thank you for sticking around past the time, those of us who are on the bottom row here very much appreciate it.

I also want to thank you for efforts that you have already made and steps you have already taken for Wyoming in particular. Lifting the moratorium on coal leasing on public lands is crucial, and we are very grateful for that.

I was also very pleased to hear your comments earlier about the reform at the BIA. I represent, as you know, two tribes in Wyoming, and it is crucially important. So, we are looking forward to that.

I wanted to ask you a bit more about what you are doing in terms of the energy permitting. I appreciate the increased revenues that are going in, in terms of BLM, for oil and gas management and for the coal management program. But I hear just about every single day from folks across Wyoming who say, "Look, in some instances it has taken years, from getting an application for a permit to drill, from submitting that, getting the permit, until the project can begin, as long as 8 or 9 years." And you can imagine the economic impact of that is just tremendous.

So, could you talk a little bit more, in addition to the energy council you have mentioned, how you are going to go about streamlining that process so that we are not facing just this unbearable, really, burden of regulation from the BLM?

Secretary ZINKE. I have a couple of approaches. One, in the budget, we added more money for permitting on it, because again, permitting is related to revenues. And one of my principal objectives is to raise revenues so we can afford to pay for the programs that this Committee and others and Americans support. So, revenue is important.

The other thing is the process. I have appointed and have in position my principal advisor for energy affairs, who is specifically looking at the permitting process. The permitting process has been very lineal and in sequence. In a permit process you can have sequential processes that go forward, rather than having 6 months and then it goes to someone else's desk for 6 months, and 6 months, and 6 months. We can do it simultaneously on the permit process.

The other thing is if it is in our approved basin, then you don't have to view a permit as if it has never been done before. If it is in the same geologic structure, and as long as there are provisions to make sure the casing is whole, that the reclamation plan is there, and best practices are used, you don't need to take every permit as if this is the first well we have ever drilled.

So, some of it has been the process has been in place, and some of it has been arbitrary. An individual, either willingly or not, can hold a permit for, in some cases, one would say nefarious reasons. We want to make sure we have the right leadership in place, that it is fair. And when you invest in a holding of the U.S. Government, at least the process should be fair, it should be straightforward. You have a good feeling in the first 6 months or 30 days on some of the easier ones, whether it is going to be approved to give an investment point of view some degree of certainty, and at least a confidence that your investment, if it is not going to be improved, maybe you should make another investment somewhere.

But to kick the can down the road on a permit in the same basin surrounded by like activities, this is the problem we face. And we are going to get to the bottom of the solution.

Ms. CHENEY. Well, I appreciate that very much. I know you know how important it is, economically.

And then just one more question with respect to the BLM. As you know, in so many of these areas, the law is management for multiple use and sustained yield. And we have seen too often, particularly in the last 8 years, that the law has really been ignored. And there has been management, really, to preclude all human use of these lands.

How are you going to go about changing the approach, changing the philosophy? Obviously, getting a BLM Director is going to be crucial, and we are very anxious to see that happen. But could you talk a little bit about how you are going to go back to ensuring that congressional intent, as indicated in the law, is followed?

Secretary ZINKE. Some of it is leadership. And some of it is, you are right, adhering not to the law but a philosophy that parks and public lands should be for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people.

And I think, to a degree, the reorganization has opportunity for both sides of the aisle, because connection to corridors, wildlife corridors, and watersheds is important. So, a holistic approach, to make sure we manage better, is where we should go.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. CHENEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I appreciate your willingness to stay to the end of this. Gohmert left some M&Ms, if you need lunch.

Secretary ZINKE. I will sacrifice lunch for the convenience of—
The CHAIRMAN. The last few questions, he has 10 minutes. You have a legal right for five. Be brief.

Mr. Gallego.

Mr. GALLEGRO. Mr. Secretary, when you were testifying before the House Appropriations Committee a few weeks ago you stated, “I don’t favor oil and gas over coal, over wind, over nuclear. I am just all of the above.” Do you stand by that?

Secretary ZINKE. I absolutely do. I stand by that, the President’s position is an all-of-the-above energy policy, and I support that.

Mr. GALLEGRO. Excellent. And for the sake of a time limit, let me just continue.

Your budget, however, does not reflect that. Only two agencies in your Department have seen an increase, and both deal with only offshore oil and gas. One of them, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, also issues offshore renewable energy leases, but while the overall funding for that agency would go up, the renewable energy program would be cut by more than 10 percent.

We are just starting to see some windmills in the water, and you are proposing a stop to that momentum, when it comes, in its tracks. And it is not just me saying this. The agency’s budget justification admits that these cuts would have a significantly harmful impact. The agency itself states that these cuts would, “Slow the advancement of offshore renewable energy commercial leasing activities on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. This reduction will result in the loss of opportunity to add millions of dollars to the U.S. Treasury annually, to the collection of additional bonuses, bids, and future rents.”

So, do you understand why we see this dichotomy, when you are saying that you have an all-of-the-above approach to energy production, but it is not necessarily reflective in the budget?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, in regards to when the budget matches the anticipated demand, and also, a group of people whose voices have not been heard, in my judgment, are the fishermen. I just got back from the great state of Massachusetts, and their concern is that some of the design of these systems would preclude fishing. And the President believes that jobs are important, and certainly the fishing industry is important, the vitality and the future of this country.

I think to look at some of these projects, to make sure they do not interfere with fishing, and the fishermen have their voice is important.

Mr. GALLEGRO. Well, I thank you, Secretary. I think one of our concerns, again, is to keep true to at least the words of President Trump, as well as yours, an all-of-the-above approach to energy production should be continued and should be reflected in the budget, whether or not fishermen or any other concerns are involved. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you yield back?

Mr. GALLEGRO. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. I will be very brief.

Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for your long record of service to our country, for accepting this challenging new position. I will cut this short.

I heard you say earlier that you were more than willing to meet with this Committee's members quarterly, and even in person to talk about their concerns. Isn't that right?

Secretary ZINKE. That is correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. I also understand that you inherited, from the previous administration, numerous unanswered Committee requests.

So, just to be clear, will you commit that your Department will provide written responses to this Committee's official request for documents and information, in addition to the meetings you have already offered?

Secretary ZINKE. Where appropriate. But it is interesting. When I assumed the job, I found a piece of correspondence from me, as a Congressman, that was there for months and months and months. I felt not to answer it, I didn't have to.

But my commitment is that on some issues it is better to go face to face, rather than having staff-to-staff discussions. The intent is to be transparent, be responsive, and to respect that you are a Congressman and you represent your great district, and I want to be responsive to not only you, but your constituents.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thanks for clarifying that again. I am particularly grateful for your emphasis on streamlining and reorganizing your vast Department, and I just had a quick question about an idea that you raised recently about consolidating two departments within your immediate control.

You expressed a desire to consolidate the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, to merge those two agencies back together, reorganize them in some fashion, so that we can maximize efficiencies. Can you just briefly explain why you think that would be important?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, it was the result of, of course, the tragic oil spill out in the Gulf. And we are looking at it. A decision has not been made.

Whenever you do a reorganization of that size, you want to make sure you look at unintended consequences. From the industry side, the two agencies have gotten further and further apart. Relationships have gotten less and less than there was historically, when they were together. So, we are looking at how to do it, and unintended consequences, to make sure we hold accountable the industry, but also do it in a way that we are a partner.

Some of it is, quite frankly, innovation. The government is behind on its ability to look at innovation and regulate innovation. In some cases, we are the problem. So, we have to have some flexibility and best practices in order to make sure that we are in a best position not to inhibit some of the technology that is better, safer, more environmentally responsive. That is the challenge.

Mr. JOHNSON. Out of respect to my colleagues, I will waive the rest of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. This is unfair, I know, but Miss González, Mr. Hice, 2 minutes each, if you can do that, just for the Secretary. Jenniffer, go. Two minutes.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, for being here, for your time. I want to thank you also for the numerous contributions the Department of the Interior is making in Puerto Rico. And, actually, one of them is the preservation of the territory's iconic national parks, and the protection of our endangered species like the Puerto Rican parrot.

I just have one question, and it is relative to the National Institute for Water Resources. I know the current budget has a proposal to eliminate the program. How can we continue the initiative of managing the water quality, soil erosion control, and flooding in the Department of the Interior with relation to other universities, if we are eliminating that program?

Do we have any other options? Are we looking to have any kind of a partnership or other initiatives that we can work on?

Secretary ZINKE. Yes. And I think by bringing it up, it is important. And I promise to work with you on it, because Puerto Rico is important to the Department of the Interior, and you have some magnificent holdings. We will work with you on it. The USGS has some parallel programs, but I will work with you on it, and be glad to.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hice.

Dr. HICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Great to have you back, Secretary. We miss you, but we are glad you are where you are.

As you know, the President has asked for an all-hands-on-deck approach to offshore research and development. And, of course, you signed an order in May directing the Interior to look at the Gulf of Mexico region for potential drilling sites.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I do have a letter that I would ask unanimous consent to be added to the record here, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has written a letter stating, in essence, that military training and related exercise in the Gulf necessitates a continuation of Congress' ban.

[The information follows:]

Rep. Hice Submission

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Matt Gaetz
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gaetz:

Thank you for your letter dated March 24, 2017, regarding maintaining the moratorium on oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico beyond 2022. Since military readiness falls under my purview, I have been asked to respond to your letter on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. The Department of Defense (DoD) cannot overstate the vital importance of maintaining this moratorium.

National security and energy security are inextricably linked and the DoD fully supports the development of our nation's domestic energy resources in a manner that is compatible with military testing, training, and operations. As mentioned in

your letter, the complex of eastern Gulf of Mexico operating areas and warning areas provides critical opportunities for advanced weapons testing and joint training exercises. The moratorium on oil and gas “leasing, pre-leasing, and other related activities” ensures that these vital military readiness activities may be conducted without interference and is critical to their continuation. Emerging technologies such as hypersonics, autonomous systems, and advanced sub-surface systems will require enlarged testing and training footprints, and increased DoD reliance on the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act’s moratorium beyond 2022. The moratorium is essential for developing and sustaining our nation’s future combat capabilities.

Since signing the 1983 “Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of Defense and the Department of the Interior on Mutual Concerns on the Outer Continental Shelf,” the two departments have worked cooperatively to ensure offshore resource development is compatible with military readiness activities. During recent discussions between the DoD and the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, a question arose concerning whether Congress intended the moratorium to prohibit even geological and geophysical survey activities in the eastern Gulf. We would welcome clarification from Congress concerning this matter.

On behalf of the Secretary, I appreciate your interest in sustaining our testing and training activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

Sincerely,

A.M. KURTA,
*Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness*

Dr. HICE. So, my question, and no one knows this any better than you, as a Navy SEAL commander. You have a great understanding, both of the military and of the Interior. The question is, how do you reconcile these two? Can the two co-exist?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, you are right. As a veteran, I am extraordinarily sensitive to the responsibility of the Department of Defense, in making sure the Interior, that came from the Department of War, does not do anything to jeopardize our military.

I think some of it, too, is the advance of technology, the ability to horizontal drill, and to look at the specific requirements that are involved with the military, and seeing if there is a path forward or not. But I think it involves, from us, getting the leading experts on how we drill. Some of it is subsurface now. As you know, the technology is moving forward.

So, I think looking at what is out there. What we think the technology will be today, in 5 years, in 10 years, is it compatible with military operations or not? I think that is an ongoing discussion. But, certainly, we are going to honor the Department of Defense position, but work together with them if, in fact, that is the right choice.

Dr. HICE. My time is gone, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Grijalva, do you have a UC?

Mr. GRIJALVA. A unanimous consent request, a legal opinion by the legal counsel of the Justice Department relative to Members of Congress to conduct oversight of the executive branch, with no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. It is in the record.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

To our Members who sat here a long time and at the very end we had to cut you short, I apologize for that.

I appreciate you spending more time than you should have with us.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. We will make it up some time with you. I have no idea how, but——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate your candor, I appreciate you being back with us again. Thank you for spending your time.

Secretary ZINKE. It is a pleasure to be with you, sir. It is a pleasure to be with your august Committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Take care. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:57 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

[LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD RETAINED IN THE
COMMITTEE'S OFFICIAL FILES]

Rep. Grijalva Submission

—Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch, by Curtis E. Gannon, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, from the Opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel in Volume 41.

Rep. Pearce Submission

—List of Organization and Government Endorsements who opposed the designation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

