

**THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2018**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
**COMMITTEE ON**  
**ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

\_\_\_\_\_  
JUNE 20, 2017  
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# **THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m. in Room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Lisa Murkowski, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

## **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. LISA MURKOWSKI, U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

We are here this morning to consider the President's budget request for the Department of the Interior (DOI) for Fiscal Year 2018. This is the second of three budget hearings before our Committee this year, following the Forest Service last week and the Department of Energy which is coming up on Thursday.

Secretary Zinke, welcome back to the Committee for your first appearance since our bipartisan vote in favor of your confirmation on March 1st. It was nice to be able to give you the official tally sheet this morning, making it "officially" official.

I want to start by noting that you have taken on some tough tasks at the Department, including some challenges that really have gone unaddressed for years. I think you are off to a good start, and I appreciate that.

I have enjoyed working with you during the early months of your tenure as Secretary. I truly appreciated the opportunity to host you and some members here on the Committee in Alaska a couple weeks ago. We had meetings in Anchorage. We were up on the North Slope, looking at our considerable potential up there, and we attended a Memorial Day ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial at Byers Lake. It was a very important and, I think, a very productive time while you were in the state.

Our hearing today actually coincides with a big milestone for Alaska. Today is the 40th anniversary of the first oil moving through our Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). It was on this day back in 1977 that our 800-mile-long pipeline carried the first of what is now more than 17 billion barrels of oil south to Valdez.

We had an opportunity while you were in Alaska to be at the start of the pipeline—mile zero—along with Senator Barrasso and

Senator Daines of our Committee and a couple others. I believe you saw why Alaskans say that TAPS is not just a pipeline, it is truly our economic lifeline. You wasted no time signing a Secretarial Order that will help us begin to refill that important asset, and your Department's budget request includes a number of proposals that will continue to help Alaska get back on track.

The Administration has requested a total of \$11.7 billion in discretionary appropriations for the Department of the Interior in FY18. Overall, that is a reduction of more than \$1 billion from the current level and it is in line with the Administration's effort to shift funding to defense needs.

Know that we are going to be reviewing all of the cuts that this budget proposes very, very carefully. I do not expect many of them to become a reality, especially those that target popular programs, but I will also say that the positives, in my view, outweigh the negatives. For every item that many of us will not be able to support, there is another one that we can. I have not been able to make that statement for quite a while now, so it is good to be able to say it.

A good example is in the Administration's decision to seek to end offshore revenue sharing for the Gulf Coast states, something that my colleague at the end of the row here is clearly engaged on. Like most Alaskans, I want to expand revenue sharing rather than end it, so frankly, I do not see that proposal going anywhere.

But it is also clear that the Administration understands that we need to strengthen our energy security because I see proposals for both a new five-year leasing program which will hopefully restore access to Alaska's Arctic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) as well as a proposal to open the non-wilderness portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to responsible production.

I have been asked a couple times in recent weeks, why is now the right time to open up the 1002 area? So I want to take a moment to explain why, I believe, this is so important for us to act on.

First of all, it is critical to understand that we are talking about a part of ANWR that Congress explicitly set aside for oil and gas exploration. In 1987, 30 years ago this year, the Federal Government recommended it be opened for that purpose. Today we are at a place in Alaska where we have the highest unemployment rate in the country right now—we need more jobs, we have a dire state budget, we need more revenue, and with global oil discoveries falling but global demand projected to increase, we know that the world is going to need more oil.

So what will opening the 1002 area deliver? By developing just about one-ten-thousandth of the refuge, just 2,000 surface acres in an area roughly the size of South Carolina, we can create those new jobs. We can generate tens of billions of dollars of new revenues. We can bring energy online, right when we need it, to strengthen our security, strengthen our competitiveness. This is something that most Alaskans, more than 70 percent, strongly support.

I also appreciate the Administration taking a deliberative and a constructive approach on a potential royalty for hard rock minerals. I will be interested to see the results of the study that DOI is now conducting. But with our mineral security in a perilous state and

our nation importing at least 50 percent of 50 different minerals, our first goal must be to do no harm and that is exactly what I see here.

The Administration's proposal to extend Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is another good sign. I would note, however, that PILT should be mandatory and it should not be subject to an across-the-board cut, not unless the Federal Government is willing to divest some of its lands and allow local governments to find alternative means to recoup their lost property tax base.

So again, while I do not agree with everything in this request, I think it is better than what we have seen in recent years. It does not rely on budget gimmicks; it asks us to look for areas where we can cut spending—which we will do; it focuses on taking care of the lands that the Federal Government already owns rather than continuing to buy more; and it will help Western states, particularly Alaska, to increase the responsible production of our natural resources.

So again, Secretary Zinke, I thank you for being here. I thank you for the steps that you are taking to help restore Alaska's trust in the Department.

With that, Senator Cantwell, I turn to you for your opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

This morning we are reviewing the President's proposed budget for the Department of the Interior. Overall, President Trump's budget is proposing to cut funding at the Department of the Interior by \$1.8 billion, a 13 percent decrease from current fiscal year funding.

This budget would be devastating to our national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands, and it betrays the Secretary's trust responsibility to Native tribes.

The budget gives us a very clear indication of President Trump's and Secretary Zinke's priorities. Unfortunately, these priorities put the interests of the fossil fuel industry ahead of the public interest by prioritizing onshore and offshore development and cutting funds for all other priorities.

The budget also makes clear the Trump Administration's intention to disregard science and undermine conservation.

Let me run through a few of those low-lights.

Just one year after our National Park Centennial, this budget would cut almost \$400 million from the Park Service budget. It would result in cutting more than 1,000 full-time employees. And according to the Department's own math, "nearly 90 percent of parks would reduce their current staffing levels, leading to a reduction of services to the public."

Secretary Zinke's proposal also uses a budget gimmick to try to obscure the fact that it is cutting the Land and Water Conservation program by 85 percent, \$61 million down from \$400 million. This is our nation's most successful land conservation program, which 85 Senators voted to make permanent just last year. Suffice it to say, this budget would pump the brakes on a booming outdoor

recreation economy, all in favor of industries that have had trouble competing in today's marketplace.

Meanwhile, the Administration's war on science is also on full display. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) would be cut by 15 percent, or \$163 million. We are talking about water and climate science. We are also talking about USGS' work on natural hazards, including earthquakes and volcano warning systems that are vital to public safety.

Secretary Zinke's proposal would also cut 11 percent, \$371 million, from an already woefully underfunded Bureau of Indian Affairs. These cuts would significantly reduce funding for tribal education programs and social services. This is unacceptable, and it is a betrayal of our trust responsibilities to tribes.

Finally, I suppose I should not be surprised the Administration is proposing to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. It has been attempted by every Republican President since the 1980s, but that does not mean that it is right.

I know that this will be something that we will have continued discussion on, but I think it is also important, since this is the first time that Secretary Zinke has been back before the Committee since his confirmation, that we raise a few other issues.

My colleague, Senator Murray, and I are particularly concerned about your national monument strategy, concerned about the Hanford Reach National Monument in the State of Washington.

But it is also clear that there are many other areas.

It took the Trump Administration less than 100 days to launch its unprecedented war on 111 years of bipartisan land conservation—which began with President Roosevelt's leadership. The most glaring example is an ongoing attack on the Antiquities Act in general, and Bears Ears National Monument in particular. Trying to roll back Bears Ears is a taxpayer waste, especially at a time when the Administration is proposing significant staff cutbacks. In my opinion, Secretary Zinke's recent decision to propose another management designation for Bears Ears is an affront to tribes and the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition. These tribes have spent years working to protect these lands. I believe that any action by this Administration to undermine the protection for Bears Ears or any other national monument is illegal, and I will strongly oppose any legislative attempt to weaken this monument status.

Secretary Zinke and the Administration are also attempting to unilaterally suspend rules that have already gone into effect like the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Methane Rule. Last week, the Department announced its legally dubious decision to suspend the Methane and Waste Prevention Rule. This is a common-sense rule that implements a 97-year-old requirement to prevent waste of federal natural gas. Many people here understand that my colleagues in the Senate just voted on this recently. But instead of following what the United States Senate has said should be done, the Department is trying to abandon hundreds of pages of environmental analysis.

I want to be clear. My colleague, Senator Udall, and I are sending you a letter today saying that you must follow the Administrative Procedure Act. You cannot just change this rule without notice



and without comment. You cannot just make up your own new regulation without a due process.

So clearly, we have a lot to discuss today. I look forward to hearing the Secretary's statements, but know that these important issues of our public lands will be defended and we will have an open discussion about our path forward.

I thank the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cantwell.

We are joined this morning, again, by the Secretary of the Interior, the Honorable Ryan Zinke. He is also joined at the table this morning by Ms. Olivia Barton Ferriter, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition and also Denise Flanagan, Director of Office and Budget. It is my understanding that only the Secretary will be offering remarks this morning. Is that correct?

Secretary ZINKE. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary—

Secretary ZINKE. I have some great help though.

The CHAIRMAN. Good help. We appreciate you being here.

I will note to colleagues that we are scheduled to have two votes commencing at 11:00 am. It is my intention to try to just keep the Committee moving throughout that. So when the first vote is called, you might want to look around the dais and figure out when you are up next and plan your timing to go to the Floor around that. But I do intend to keep us moving because it is my understanding that we will have to conclude the hearing this morning at noon.

Secretary Zinke, if you would like to present the President's budget proposal?

Welcome.

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

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you, and I am honored to be before you today to testify in support of the President's 2018 budget for the Department of the Interior. I do request permission to submit my entire statement for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be included as part of the record.

Secretary ZINKE. The President's budget—this is what a balanced budget looks like. I want to repeat that. This is what a balanced budget looks like. There are tough decisions throughout, but if we want to balance the budget, this is a starting point of what a balanced budget would look like—there hasn't been one around for a while.

I fully understand my stewardship responsibilities because Interior touches the lives of more Americans than any other Department. I am the steward of our greatest treasures, and I take that responsibility very seriously.

The President's budget proposes \$11.7 billion and it saves the taxpayer about \$1.6 billion. We make strategic investments to ensure our nation's energy and national security and to address the core responsibilities that lie within the Department.

The President's budget prioritizes an all-the-above energy strategy. It does not favor oil and gas or coal over any other strategy,

but we also think it's necessary to have a prudent focus on boosting revenue through legislative proposals to raise about \$5.8 billion.

And speaking of revenue, in 2008 the Department of the Interior made about \$18 billion a year in offshore alone. We were second only to our friends, the IRS. Last year our revenue was \$2.6 billion—that's a drop of \$15.5 billion a year in revenue. So when we talk about infrastructure, the parks are about \$11.5 billion behind, which represents 73 percent of our total gap in maintenance and repair. We would have made up that, in scale, in one year with the amount of revenue we dropped. So I will be looking at revenue.

One of my first tasks was a Secretarial Order and, thanks to the Ranking Member, I did look at revenues across the board and looked at royalties, rents—all the above—giving no quarter to gas, oil, wind. If you are going to operate on public land, then the public should have a say because we are all stewards of our public lands and we want to make sure we have a fair return. That return should be transparent and it should be trust but verify. So I was pleased one of my first acts was to write a Secretarial Order to do just that, look at our revenues across the field on public land.

When it comes to infrastructure, the LWCF, when it's removed from the budget proposal, is acquisition of new land. Clearly, with an \$11.5 billion deficit in maintenance repair, the priority must be to take care of what we have. And if you doubt that, look at our ability to maintain, I invite you to go up and look at Arlington. Arlington is a national disgrace, and I'm talking about the building up on top—Lee's home. Through neglect the shutters are nearly falling off and the gardens are in disrepair. The building itself is a national disgrace. I invite you to go up and take a look at it, because we have to take care of what we own.

The budget calls for a \$35 million increase for a total of \$766 million in national park infrastructure. This includes \$18 million for the first phase of repairing the Arlington Memorial Bridge.

Of note, of our \$11.5 million backlog in the parks, about half are roads, and about a third of those roads are outside our parks. There is a \$260 million bill on the Memorial Bridge and on parkways, access, and gateway roads that are outside of what most Americans would think would be a park responsibility.

For the first time in many years, Payment in Lieu of Taxes is part of the discretionary budget. As you may remember last year, it was part of mandatory budget that did not pass and it was zero. This year it is \$397 million and the reduction is about the same and the savings is as the other programs. But it's in the budget. That's different from last year.

We fully fund fire suppression at a 10-year average. Fighting forest fires, particularly in the West, has become a billion-dollar problem. And growing up in the West, investing and making sure we remove dead and dying trees in our holdings is a prudent expense.

We also support Indian trust responsibilities with a core focus on self-governments, self-determination and sovereignty.

So we found savings by reducing federal land acquisition, eliminating redundant programs and allowing states, local communities and private partners to take the lead on some others. At the end of the day, this is what a balanced budget looks like. There are tough decisions. I fully understand the responsibility of the Execu-

tive Branch, as well as the responsibility of Congress. Congress gets a say, and I am glad to be here with you today to go through that.

I understand there are different priorities within each of your states, and I will always work with you to make sure we have a budget that represents a great nation.

I can and will maintain our assets, offer a world class experience on public lands and deliver savings to the taxpayers, whether it is through public/private partnerships, encouraging responsible energy development or reorganizing my workforce.

I am thrilled to be with you today, and I look forward to your questions and working together.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Zinke follows:]

**STATEMENT OF RYAN ZINKE, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
ON THE  
2018 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST  
June 20, 2017**

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, 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 FY 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Act and submission of the FY 2018 President's Budget, my statement compares requested funding to the FY 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, D.C., 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 FY 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 two 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 timeframes.

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, D.C., 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% 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 three-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 NRDAR 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 three 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 one-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.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Secretary Zinke.

Let me start off by bringing up an issue that we have had some discussion on both here in Committee and off Committee. And this is as it relates to transfer of federal lands to states.

You have often said that you do not support transferring federal lands to states, but you have also acknowledged that Alaska is unique, that it has some distinctions, and I appreciate that.

When we look to Alaska's lands and what was granted at statehood—the right to acquire more than 104 million acres of land roughly equal to the size of the state of California—Alaska Natives were also granted lands to settle Aboriginal claims. Today, the Interior Department, through the BLM, effectively acts as a real estate agent to accomplish these land transfers.

BLM still needs to finish deciding the fate of 38.4 million acres and still needs to survey more than 16 million of our state's tentative selections before the patents can be issued; our Alaska Native Corporations have another 9.67 million acres under adjudication; and about 750,000 acres of tentative selections await surveys.

To my colleagues, this is a lot of land that is yet to be conveyed. We have been a state now for over 50 years. The promises to our Alaska Native people were made over 40 years ago.

It is something I have pushed through successive Administrations and just want to make sure that we are on the same page here when it comes to land transfers in Alaska. I would ask whether you agree that the Interior Department, according to federal law, has a role and an obligation to convey federal lands to Alaska and to our Alaska Native people?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you, Madam.

And Alaska is different, I'm concerned about the surveying process—I don't know how long we've been at the surveying process.

The CHAIRMAN. Too long.

Secretary ZINKE. But it's too long. So we are working with the state to use technology and agree how to use the technology so we can get it done. There's—

The CHAIRMAN. That still remains a little bit of a rub, but I appreciate that you were updated on that on your visit to Alaska.

Secretary ZINKE. And I would like to work with you. There are surveys that are in the intermediate process. I don't know why we can't go forward and view those as final in the process and get that moving.

You have a veteran issue, Vietnam Veterans. Native Alaskans served their country. They were either not informed or did not take action with that and how to provide their right on land. We've talked. There's multiple ways forward, but we need to get it done. So I will work with you and commit to work with you and get it done.

I think the best path forward is a conveyance to agree and put a timeframe on it and to sit down and look at the best technology in order to get it done. Sometimes the 98 solution—98 percent solution—today is better than the 100 percent solution 15 years from now. And if we both work together, I think we can get this done and quickly. Certainly, on the ones that have been done on the intermediate, I think we should both propose to move to final and get that section of it done.



The CHAIRMAN. Well, know this is something that we need to be working on, not only the state lands and the interim conveyances that are out there, but again, these allotments to our Alaska Native veterans—those lands to those who are termed the “landless Natives.” There is so much that is yet unfulfilled in terms of promises and commitments made to Alaska upon statehood and to our Native people, so we need to be working to advance them.

Let me ask very quickly. The Secretarial Order that you signed when you were up in the state to help increase energy production, again, particularly relevant today in light of the 40th anniversary of TAPS. Do you have any update for me on the implementation of that order, including the revised Integrated Activity Plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and just where you are with implementation of that Secretarial Order?

Secretary ZINKE. I will get the specifics on it, but I wanted just to point out on 1002, specifically.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. That was set aside to assess, and my responsibility as the Secretary of the Interior is to do just that—assess. I don’t have the authority to authorize production in the ANWR or the 1002. That authority lies within Congress. My responsibility is to make sure I assess.

And as the steward of our public’s lands, I think it’s important to know what our inventory is because decisions being made on production levels investment all should be made on the basis of science and fact. So my intent is to move forward rapidly and assess exactly what assets the taxpayers in this great nation have, in the 1002, as was set aside to do just that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We look forward to that. Again, I will work with you on getting some kind of an update on the other aspects of the plan within NPR-A and other areas.

Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you and thank you, Secretary Zinke, for being here.

As you know, my state is home to two of the largest national parks, Mount Rainier and Olympic. Your proposal would cut both parks about seven percent—Mount Rainier would see a funding reduction of \$881,000, and Olympic National Park a reduction of \$909,000. So I am trying to understand. These parks were already underfunded, and these funding cuts will only make the problems worse. Can you explain why you think cutting these parks and support functions and park personnel, who are on the front lines, is the right strategy in balancing, as you say, a budget?

Secretary ZINKE. The infrastructure increased \$38 million—that’s not a cut.

Secondly is our front lines at our parks. Since I’ve been Secretary I have been to, let me make the list—I think I’ve been to Maine, New Hampshire, let’s see, Utah, Montana, Alaska, Connecticut, I’ve toured monuments—and it’s clear the front line is too thin. So my assessment of it for Department of the Interior is we have too many middle management and above and too few in the parks. So we are looking at going through a process, in coordination with you, of how to push more assets to the front line. And we’ve seen it—every cost-cutting measure previous to this has always region-

alized assets up and we find ourselves too short. Where they're needed is in the parks.

And yes, we need more scientists in the field and less lawyers, but also, you look at our stacked on the regions, we have to—we're too heavy in the regions. And unfortunately, that has taken a toll at our parks.

The best funds for the parks are through the door, tickets to the door. We had 330 million visitors through our parks last year. Half our parks didn't charge. And we are divided in a tier system and many of our parks don't even follow the tier system. So we have to look at revenue as well, and public/private partnerships.

We're looking at some of our parks on transportation. If you go to Yosemite, the Yosemite experience is now going up a freeway. Rainier has challenges in your park about the experience whether it's on I-5, too much traffic.

So public/private partnerships, how to move people and how to maintain the experience in the park, is important and we're looking at everything.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, Mr. Secretary, I find the budget so focused on the oil and natural gas aspect of revenue that I think that you are neglecting the fact that the outdoor economy generates \$887 billion a year—\$65 billion in federal revenue, \$59 billion in state and local revenue—that is \$124 billion to the government. So that versus the \$2 billion you are talking about or \$18 billion, depending on price fluctuations for oil and gas. I want to make sure that we are putting pedal to the metal as it relates to the outdoor economy and the opportunities. That is what is going to generate a lot more revenue for us as a government.

I wanted to ask you on this issue of the BLM Methane Rule that we voted on in the Senate to keep the existing rule. Do you believe that you are responsible for complying with the Administrative Procedure Act?

Secretary ZINKE. I know that we entered into the record the notification, and we are following and complying with the law.

Senator CANTWELL. Do you think that public notice and comment are an important part of reviewing public regulations?

Secretary ZINKE. We are reviewing the methane. As you know, there was a CRA that came close to one vote on it. My position on the methane is I think it's—

Senator CANTWELL. So does that mean you are free to do what you want just because you think it came close?

Secretary ZINKE. No.

Senator CANTWELL. The rule stands, right?

Secretary ZINKE. That's not what I said, ma'am. What I said was my position on the methane, I think it's a waste. And we both agree that flaring is a waste.

So we're looking at the rule in order to make sure that we can provide incentives to capture it because as a steward of your public lands, and they are your public lands, I think just flaring it is waste. We have to make sure that we incentivize capture systems and make sure that our isolated assets can connect and we make sure that the taxpayer is getting a fair valuation on our public holdings.

Senator CANTWELL. So my question to you is, do you believe, since that is the law, and now you are proposing to change it, do you believe that you have to adhere to the Administrative Procedure Act? And that you have to have public notice and comment as part of that rulemaking?

Secretary ZINKE. We provided public notice and the public notice is now open as it sits right now. And we entered into the Register the procedure to begin to change the rule. That is within the law.

Senator CANTWELL. So you are going to have a public notice and comment period as part of that?

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely, because I follow the law.

Senator CANTWELL. We will look forward to following up on that with you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cantwell.

Senator Cassidy.

Senator CASSIDY. Secretary Zinke, thank you for being with us, I appreciate it. In your comments, you mentioned the advantage you have growing up in the West and understanding the importance of appropriate measures for fire suppression, well worth, I think, the \$1 billion or so that you are putting forward and I, kind of, compliment you for that. What I bring up now is my advantage of growing up on the Gulf Coast and kind of a lead-in into that.

Obviously, the budget takes the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) payments for the Gulf states for oil and gas leasing and the budget states the Administration proposes to repeal these revenue sharing payments to ensure that the sale of public resources from federal waters owned by all Americans benefit all Americans.

Now, as you know, beginning in 2018, oil and gas revenues for Gulf states are set to increase to \$375 million with an additional \$125 million being distributed to the stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund. Now what you may not know, which of course I do being from Louisiana, in our state these revenues are constitutionally required to be put toward coastal restoration.

Again, I was struck that you mentioned that it is a prudent approach to remove dead and dying trees and so it justifies, if you will, the money for fire suppression—I totally agree with that.

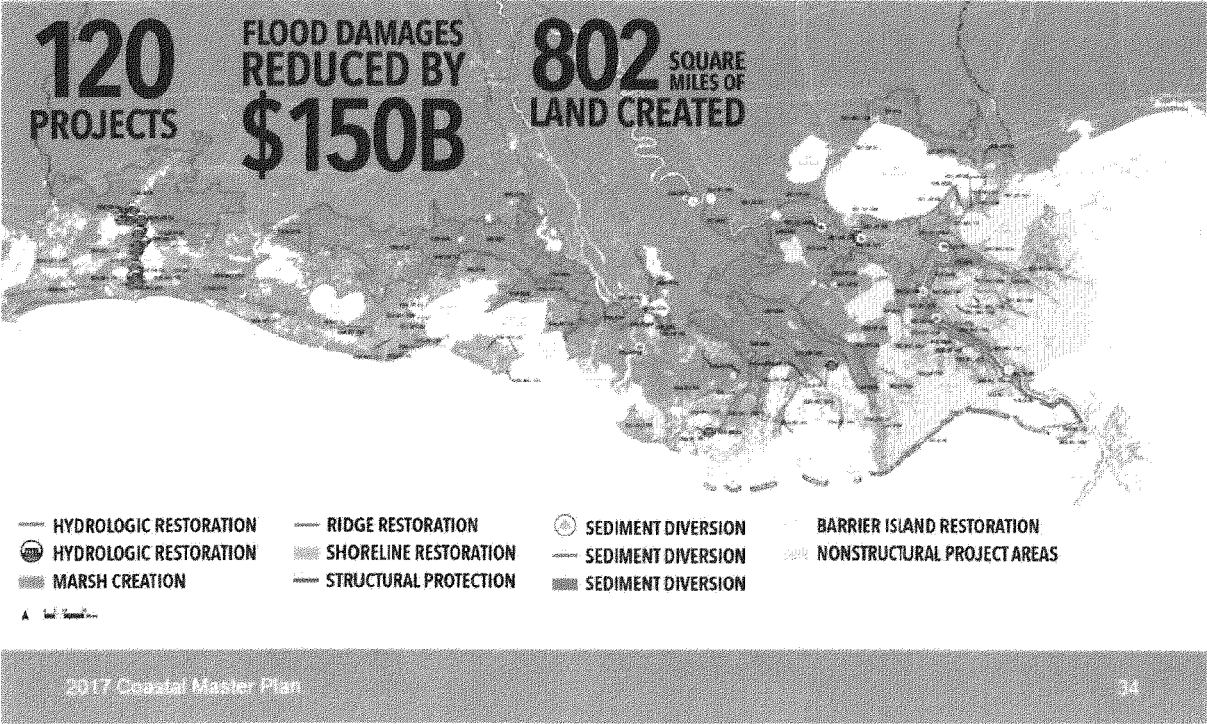
I guess the point I would make is that it is a prudent approach to rebuild the Gulf Coast coastline, otherwise we are paying for more Katrina-type recoveries. Just a couple comments on this though, if you will. The federal role in this—our coastline began to erode when the Mississippi River was dammed, if you will, levied, for the benefit of inland commerce. All those ports up and down the Mississippi benefit because our land is levied and since the year those levies began, our coastline has begun to recede.

So the benefit which is nationwide—and I agree it should be nationwide—the penalty for that is borne entirely environmentally by our state.

Now, if you will, that is where I would see the federal obligation. Let me just show you since I mentioned that the land, the money that we receive has to be used for our Coastal Master Plan. Can we put the first poster up?

[The information referred to follows:]

LOUISIANA'S 2017 DRAFT COASTAL MASTER PLAN



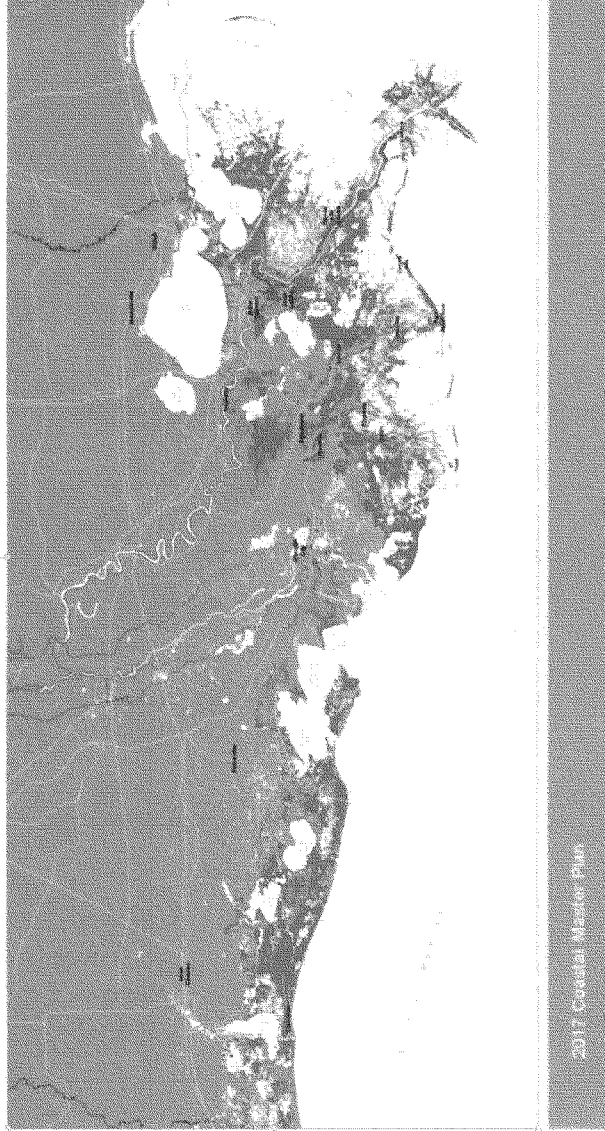
This is our Coastal Master Plan—120 projects which would reduce flood damage by \$150 billion creating 802 miles of land. The green space is where the land will be reduced.

When the hurricanes come toward New Orleans, every mile of wetlands lost allows that storm to be that much stronger—destroying, if you will, levy walls and flooding out homes—creating obligation for the American taxpayer for that as we saw with Katrina. So if we do not have these dollars, this cannot happen. When we met before your confirmation you had mentioned you had gone to Congressman Scalise's offshore energy visits and saw how we used those funds for our restoration.

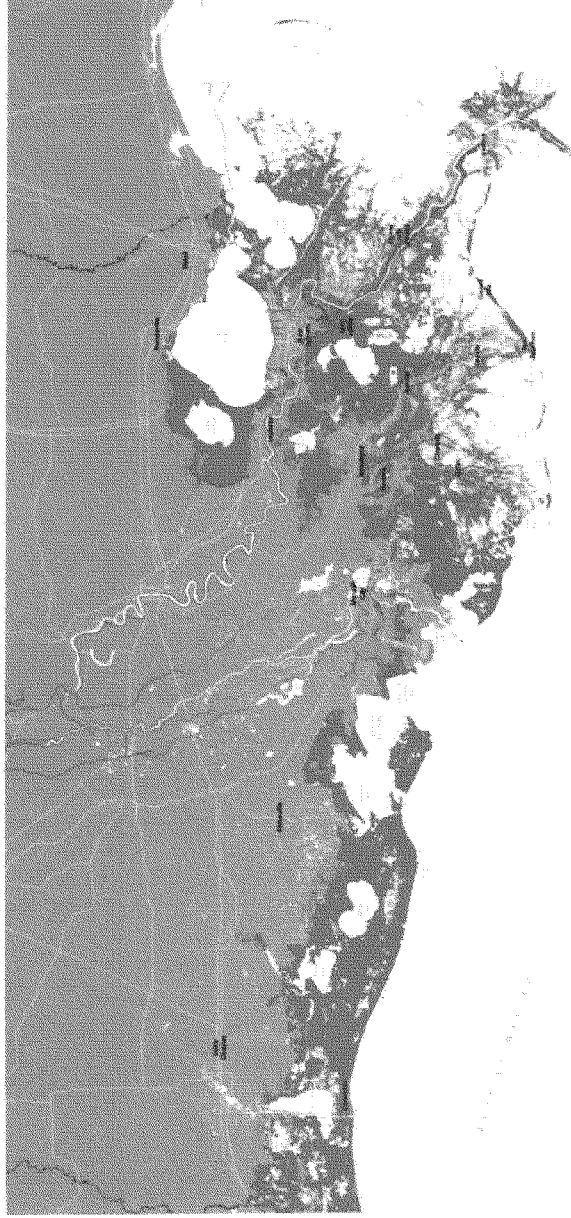
We also know that our coastline has refineries and pipelines that are the energy coast, if you will, for our state so—can we put up charts two and three?

[The information referred to follows:]

**PREDICTED LAND CHANGE**  
FUTURE WITHOUT ACTION | YEAR 50 | MEDIUM SCENARIO



# **PREDICTED LAND CHANGE** FUTURE WITHOUT ACTION | YEAR 50 | HIGH SCENARIO



This is what is going to happen if we do not take action. If we do not have that revenue to rebuild our coastline, this is the high-end scenario, 50 years from now, red is the land that is lost.

This is a future medium scenario, that is the worst, this is medium. So, even at medium, we can see an incredible vulnerability for New Orleans sitting right here, as all these wetlands are lost and, therefore, the ability to buffer storms hitting our coast.

By the way, this is all energy coastline so our nation depends upon the refineries and pipelines here. The price of gasoline rises in the Northeast when our pipelines are put out of business by a large storm.

You have mentioned desiring to be energy secure. That, of course, depends upon our offshore revenue and development but it also depends upon those pipelines and refineries to take that oil and gas. So, my first question. How does removing those GOMESA funds away from Louisiana help fulfill that energy dominance?

Secondly, I will say that you have mentioned the need to address the debt and deficit. I will point out that if we do expand revenue sharing and development off Alaska and the Atlantic Coast, which those states are, frankly, incentivized to participate in by sharing the revenue with them, we will increase revenues for the nation as well as for those states and increase the number of good-paying jobs with more people paying taxes out of good-paying jobs. So, the second question. Would you support legislation that expanded revenue sharing to the Atlantic states, Alaska and the rest of the Gulf of Mexico if lease sales were scheduled off their coast in the next five-year plan?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you for your questions. And you know, Montana and Louisiana are very similar in that the water starts in Montana and makes its way down the Missouri, or Mississippi. And I know more about red snapper than I ever cared to sitting next to Congressman Graves.

But I understand exactly what you're talking about on this. And the budget does take the tact, and again, this is the first step of what a balanced budget would look like. But the budget before you looks at a balanced budget in 10 years and where the revenues come from. The position of this budget is the revenue goes into Treasury.

Clearly the position of Louisiana is that—that is inappropriate. And I understand exactly, well, you know, between the differences on it. What I can say is that I'll work with you on it, certainly. I understand the importance to Louisiana. We think that taking 94 percent of the offshore assets offline has had a significant detriment to revenue of Interior. And when you have a lot of money, you know, the choices become easier.

But when you drop \$15.5 billion a year in revenue, much of it from offshore, much of it from the Gulf, some of it from Alaska and other holdings, it has a significant, creates a significant issue on funding. So, I'll work with you on it, and I'd be glad to.

Senator CASSIDY. Sounds good. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Franken.

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just one note on climate and sea level rise—I think there is a relationship.



Secretary Zinke, welcome. During your confirmation hearing you assured members of this Committee that you took tribal consultation and sovereignty very seriously, but I have to say what I have heard from tribal nations so far is not promising.

When it comes to the Department of the Interior's status review of the Bears Ears National Monument you said that tribes are, "very happy with your recommendation to reduce the boundaries of the monument." But this really isn't the case.

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, which represents the five local sovereign nations, has been clear in its unanimous position to keep Bears Ears National Monument as it is and has condemned your recent recommendation stating, "the radical idea of breaking up Bears Ears National Monument is a slap in the face to the members of our tribes and an affront to Indian people all across the nation." That does not sound very happy to me.

Mr. Secretary, you told this Committee that, "sovereignty should mean something." You have also said you consulted with tribal nations about your recommendation regarding Bears Ears, but they all oppose your recommendation. So can you explain how your decision respects sovereignty and self-determination?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you.

I would invite members to go to Bears Ears and look at what it is. It's 1.5 million acres, roughly one and a half times the size of Glacier National Park. Within Bears Ears, the present monument, there's already a monument, there's national forest, there are wilderness study areas of 400,000 acres, there's a U.S. National Forest, and there's BLM land.

My assessment after talking to tribes in Washington, DC, and tribes there, I met with the Inner Coalition. But also there is a distinct difference between the Utah Navajo and the Arizona Navajo which should be respected. There's a Commissioner in Utah that represents the Utah Navajo which is by—she is an elected official that represents her district. So the monument itself is split on whether tribes agree, I talked to them all.

Senator FRANKEN. Does she have official representation in the tribe?

Secretary ZINKE. She's mandated by Congress as a Commissioner and she's elected in her district and represents that district which is Navajo, sir.

Senator FRANKEN. But does she have representation in the tribe or no?

Secretary ZINKE. She is the only representation of that Utah Navajo in her district. That is actually where the monument is. So to say that Commissioner Benally does not have a say or the tribes that I talked to, the members of the tribes in Utah, all of them have a say. She is not part of the Inter-Tribal Coalition which I'm not sure why she's not.

Senator FRANKEN. I am sure that, I mean, you said that the tribes are "very happy" and the Inter-Tribal Coalition has said that breaking up the monument is a "slap in the face." Those seem at odds.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I did talk to the tribes.

Senator FRANKEN. And you talked to the tribes but you said they were very happy—but we have the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coali-

tion saying that the radical idea of breaking up Bears Ears National Monument is a “slap in the face to the members of our tribes and an affront to Indian people all across the country.” Those seem very at odds, those characterizations.

Secretary ZINKE. I know you probably have talked to the Navajo, but I have too.

Senator FRANKEN. No, I have.

Secretary ZINKE. And the northern Utes. And what they really want is co-management, above all is co-management.

But also, Bears Ears—there’s a little thing called the law and the law says smallest area compatible to protect the object. In the case of the 1.5 million acres of Bears Ears, those antiquities that are contained in, can be separated, identified and the borders can be revised. But I believe it should be co-managed and that’s what the tribes want.

Senator FRANKEN. I am not sure that is what the tribes want. Madam Chair, I am out of time, but it seems that the Inter-Tribal Coalition speaks for what the tribes want more than you do and they say that this is a “slap in the face.” I am sure that the Senator from New Mexico, Senator Heinrich, may have something to add here.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Cantwell.

Secretary Zinke, thanks for being here today and congratulations on your first hearing before this Committee since your confirmation as Secretary of the Interior. Again, the significance of your leadership at the Department to our great State of Montana cannot be overstated. I know very well that you understand the importance of achieving the balanced melody of land use. As we say out in Montana, this blend of Merle Haggard and John Denver, that melody, that blend here, as we look at our public lands.

I also understand the critical importance of setting priorities within spending constraints. I am happy to see your prioritization of energy development. That balance has been lacking the past eight years and we know that in Montana, how much of our state relies on federal oil, coal and gas for good paying jobs and tax revenue that keep many of our rural communities afloat that frankly are sinking as we speak. You are trying to keep their schools, their teachers, their infrastructure funded. However, I remain highly concerned regarding the budget’s proposed reductions in the PILT program and other revenue sharing programs like our wildlife refuges.

I was just up in your part of the state, up there in Columbia Falls, recently. We had some county commissioners, Mineral County, Sanders County. We have counties in Montana that have over 90 percent owned by the Federal Government. And of course, there is no tax base there because the Federal Government does not pay taxes. Trying to help these county commissioners who are struggling, literally, they are reducing their staffing on their road crews. And we have county commissioners jumping on graters, plowing snow in the wintertime to keep the school buses going because of

the lack of revenues because we have lost our timber industry on these federal lands.

However, the PILT program, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes, because the Federal Government does not pay taxes, are a lifeblood for these counties out West. We need to improve the land management, but in the meantime we have to provide, I believe, full funding for these programs to create certainty for our local county budgets.

Today I also want to ask you about some of these cuts to our national parks. I know you are a lifelong neighbor to Glacier National Park. I am one to Yellowstone National Park. We both know how critical our National Park System is.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for prioritizing the deferred and cyclical maintenance in construction accounts in your budget. However, the President's budget request proposed cuts of \$956,000 to Glacier and \$2.5 million to Yellowstone in the operations accounts.

I am concerned as we see these national parks receiving record levels of visitation. I know we are going to be proclaiming the month of June as the Great Outdoors month in current visitation. So I am guessing we are going to see Glacier Park and Yellowstone Park as having yet another record season.

I believe we do share the goal of strengthening our National Park Service for the 21st century. I share your commitment to fully addressing maintenance needs on our public lands, as you so clearly articulated in your opening statement.

My question is this: As the Park Service is likely to continue receiving high visitation again this year and as we share the goal of strengthening our National Park Service, how will these cuts in operations funding help ensure the public has the sort of experience we all expect from what has been called America's best idea?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you for the question. It's always a pleasure to work with you.

First on PILT. PILT, this budget includes \$397 million in PILT. That is a difference from the last budget, a plus \$397 million to the discretionary side. And I can't tell you what the exact amount is going to be because the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) still has not been authorized. And it's going to be difficult to estimate until that does. But right now, it sits in this proposed budget as a 12 percent reduction. And as it sits right now, not knowing the certainty of what's going to happen to SRS—but it is, unlike the last budget, there's \$397 million in it, I think, which is a good start.

The parks. Again, I'll go to when you lose \$15.5 billion worth of revenue it makes a difference. When half our parks don't charge, when even the tier system that—many of the parks don't follow their own tier system—Interior gives away about \$5.5 billion worth of grants and a lot of those grants are in programs outside of our assets. So I think we had to realign in this budget and make sure we fund our core responsibilities.

The parks are our treasures. I think no one understands that more than you and I. But also we are, in my assessment on manpower, we are too heavy in middle and upper management. And so, to shift those assets forward, we intend to do that in working with you in a reorganization that strengthens our core parks.

Senator DAINES. Alright, thank you. I am out of time. We will see you again tomorrow, I think, at the Appropriations Committee. I look forward to exploring other parts of the budget request with you then.

Thanks, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome, Secretary Zinke. As you well know we have had these conversations. I so appreciate you taking the time with me.

In Nevada, with over 85 percent of public lands in the state, many of our rural communities are reliant upon these lands for revenue, local recreation economy, livestock grazing, and energy development. That is why our relationship with the Department of the Interior over the years has been so crucial and why it is important that we have a really good working relationship. So I appreciate the opportunities that you have had to speak with me and look forward to working with you in the future as well, including when you come out to take a look.

I know you are looking at Gold Butte Basin and Range and we have had this conversation as well. You know my concerns and about the Executive Order and the letter that I have sent to you.

I want to ask you just initially—I know we had discussions about you coming out in the fall and when you do come out, will you take into consideration the economic benefit and widespread support of Nevada's monuments before making a decision?

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you for the question.

And right now, my schedule has me in July coming out to Nevada, Oregon and New Mexico. And the way that I've looked at the monuments—one is, does it follow the law? Is it settled? Is the community happy with it?

That's why I talk to local county commissioners and tribal leaders and business folks, because I think taking an all-of-the-above. This is the first time, as well, as regulations.com—that the public can have their say outside.

As you know, a monument designation by the President is singular. It does not require NEPA, nor does it require public comment. But the President has in his Executive Order, he has emphasized public comment and economic development as part of that. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

And let me turn now to the Bureau of Reclamation. The Fiscal Year 2018 request for the Bureau was \$1.1 billion, a cut of \$209 million. The request proposes cuts for WaterSMART grants for water recycling, for re-use projects, for drought response and rural water projects.

The State of Nevada gets the least rainfall of any other state in the nation, so we have to be incredibly mindful of persistent drought conditions as well as infrastructure improvements. Why would the Administration propose cuts for successful programs that help Nevada and the West respond to drought conditions in innovative ways? I am curious how you are going to respond to this.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I'll go back to this is what a balanced budget looks like.

I agree with you on water reclamation, in particular, from a kid who grew up in the West. As you know, there's \$18 billion in the water reclamation, yet we can't appropriate money onto core infrastructure to support rural water.

I would love to work with you on finding a way to not have to go through the stringent appropriation period/process and to streamline it and put money where it belongs—on the front line each time.

So the account, you know, sits. I think there's about \$20 billion "in the account" in the water reclamation, that's for reclamation that has never been appropriated and the same for LWCF. I think there is \$18 billion "in the LWCF fund" that was intended for a purpose that was never used for that purpose.

I would love to work with you and I especially would love to work with you on rural water projects.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

Then in the Administration's budget there is a proposed 12 percent cut to the historically-troubled Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) serving about 180 BIE schools and about 40,000 students. The budget also proposes cuts totaling \$23.3 million for programs that provide social services, welfare assistance, and Indian Child Welfare Act protections. How is this budget proposal an example of honoring the federal trust obligation with the tribes, and can you explain how these cuts will endanger these communities, or the challenge that these communities will now have?

Secretary ZINKE. Clearly when it comes to Bureau of Indian Education, I think we failed. We spend far more money per student and get far less in outcome. The statistics I have is we spend about \$15,391 per student and the Bureau of Education compares a national average of under ten.

So, more money may not produce a better solution, but I'm concerned as well as you are because something is not right. I am open to working together to figure out a better solution—how to do it. I am absolutely committed to making sure that every kid has a great education, in particular, to some of our Indian nations that are isolated. They're already challenged with a multitude of social, economic pressures. I'm committed to working with you on it.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you. Thank you for being here.

Senator BARRASSO [presiding]. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Zinke and others, for being here today. I appreciate your service.

This past weekend I had an opportunity to visit the Junkins Fire out in Colorado. It is a fire that has not even been declared put out yet. This is a fire that was burning at its peak, I guess, last fall. Of course, there is really no active firefighting taking place, but you can still see smoke from it as the snow trickles into the stumps that are burning and other things. It is pretty amazing, the work that is taking place there. I thank you for the combined efforts of the BLM and the work they did with the Forest Service as well on this fire.

We talked about the important role of USGS and some of the flow gauges that they are going to be working with local commu-

nities on, just to encourage you to continue that kind of cooperation with locals as they address the tree flows from fires like the Junkins Fire and how they impact flooding and others in the way.

I will just briefly mention to you the Executive Order regarding national monuments and the review—13792. We wrote a letter to you earlier this year talking about the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and in it we said, “Canyons is an example of what the Antiquities Act was intended to do, protect cultural treasures while incorporating the historic use of the land and the management of the monument so that communities support and promote the designation.” That is what has happened in Colorado with the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. So I would urge you to protect this designation in Colorado as it stands. Is there an update at all on Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado?

Secretary ZINKE. There is—it’s currently not on our priority review list.

Let me just say a word because I think Bears Ears is relevant in this case. What the recommendation on Bears Ears was this. There was a recommendation to resize the boundary in order to protect the antiquities that are found within it because it does say smallest area compatible with protection of the object. But there are certain authorities the President simply does not have that we’re going to request that Congress take a look at. There are lands within the Bears Ears that we think might be more appropriate as a national recreation area or a national conservation area because there is no object, per se, but that authority resides in Congress and not the Executive.

We also looked at about 400,000 acres in the Bears Ears which is wilderness study area. So when you put a monument over the top of a wilderness and that monument has its proclamation, do you manage it as a wilderness or a proclamation because in some cases a wilderness is actually held to a stricter and higher standard of what you can and cannot do in a wilderness. So we’re asking Congress to take a look at that.

In cases across the West, there might be some monuments that have a wilderness or wilderness study group. We’re asking what the intent of Congress was on those. Do you manage it as wilderness or a proclamation? Co-management was a part of it. We don’t have the authority to grant co-management. Above all, the tribes want co-management, but I don’t have the authority nor does the President have the authority to grant it. That was part of it too.

Senator GARDNER. Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate the fact that the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is not on the priority list, and I hope that eventually you will clear up the fact that it is going to remain as is.

During your confirmation hearing we discussed the possibility of moving the BLM Headquarters to the Western United States because it makes sense to do that with an agency that is 99.9 percent public lands that are under its management West of the Mississippi River.

Since your confirmation I have introduced legislation that would do just that—direct the Department to submit to Congress a strategy involving certain metrics for moving the BLM West. The legis-

lation has bipartisan support. Back home, Governor Hickenlooper and the Mayor of Denver support the effort; at least they have made public comments in support of it.

Mr. Secretary, given your goal to move some of your Department to the front lines, out into the West, how can Congress best assist you in this goal to relocate the BLM Headquarters?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, we're looking at doing a reorganization of Interior, and we're going to need you, quite frankly, your help.

The way we're organized currently is all the different bureaus report to their different regions and we're not very good at joint operations. So we're looking at appropriately moving assets where they should be.

When I say joint, if you have a stream that has a trout and a salmon in the same stream, you're going to probably involve NOAA through NMFS, Fish and Wildlife, because we're going to look at the trout and NOAA is going to look at the salmon. If you irrigate out of it, it's probably the Bureau of Reclamation, and if you have a dam, it's probably the Army Corps of Engineers. There are four different bureaus and if it crosses tribal land you're probably going to have BIA in it. You could have actually four different bureaus that have different priorities. In order to come up with a plan, you're not going to have—the plan won't be reconciled between the bureaus. So we're going to have to look at how to be more joint and a lot of that is putting the assets where the preponderance of, in the case of BLM, the preponderance of land and BLM is out West. We are looking at reorganizing to do just that, to push the assets where they should be.

Senator GARDNER. Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I know I am out of time here, but we will have questions to follow up on an Arkansas Valley Conduit issue as well as continued funding and support for Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Gardner.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary, for being here.

First of all, there are a couple things I want to go over. West Virginia is a little bit different from being out West, but we are still wild and wonderful.

Secretary ZINKE. I consider you out West, sir.

[Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. First of all, you have covered the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program and that is very important for our state; some of our rural counties really depend on it. The reduction hits them very, very hard.

First of all, on the coal, you all have been very supportive of the coal industry and the people that do this tremendous work for the people of this country. I am confused a little bit as to why the President's Budget for 2018 proposed \$134 million in payments to the United Mine Workers of America from the Health Benefit Plans from the Treasury. Those are coming from the money distributed from Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. That is a \$45 million reduction from 2016.

We just passed a piece of legislation, put 22,000 miners in the 1993 fund. We are going to be in serious problems here because that AML distribution for the Abandoned Mine Land monies and the Treasury—I don't know if you all have looked at that, or what challenges it might cause for you.

Secretary ZINKE. We did, sir, and I'll go back. This is a starting point.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay.

Secretary ZINKE. Chairman Rogers of the House side, you know, also is——

Senator MANCHIN. Hal watches it very closely.

Secretary ZINKE. ——very focused——

Senator MANCHIN. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. ——on this issue and when I say, I look forward to working with you on it, but I understand, certainly, the rub.

Senator MANCHIN. You see the concern we have right now being able to meet the demands that we have.

Secretary ZINKE. I do and I've long respected Chairman Rogers and I think he does a great job.

Senator MANCHIN. Well, if you will work with us on that and make sure that our miners do not get shortchanged, I would be very appreciative. We are going to be working together with you on that.

Let me go over to something as far as our national forests. I am told that 50 percent of our nation's forests are privately owned, but over 90 percent of the timber for our country comes from that 50 percent. That means that the remainder of the properties that we have in national forests, public lands, about 10 percent comes from them.

Why are we not able to harvest or look at harvesting, financially, especially, because we are losing a lot of the forests from maturing and falling and strike spikes by lightning and things of this sort. I think we could do a much better job of managing our forests, also protecting the forests, but also having the revenue that would come from it. Just the three percent comes from the national forest in West Virginia. That provides about 43,000 jobs.

Secretary ZINKE. I could not agree with you more, sir. It has been an area of frustration before I was in Congress. The Forest Service, alone, has about 71 million acres of dead and dying timber that should be removed. We spend billions of dollars each year fighting forest fires and we can't harvest trees.

In our holdings, only a small percentage is actually available for timber harvest because it's locked up in either habitat, the Spotted Owl, or a different species. And so, our ability to even go forward on a sustainable yield basis, we're going to need some help legislatively to work through it.

There's a case that we're watching closely in the Ninth Circuit that looks at the different balance between the legislative intent on sustainable yield vice habitat and other things. But we're looking at it and my commitment is to make sure we have a healthy forest. And a healthy forest is making sure that we are at sustainable, or as close as we can, and remove the dead and dying timber and have a healthy industry.



Senator MANCHIN. Do people just defy the accuracy or the logic of this that do not want anything touched in these areas, and these are pristine areas, I understand. But still yet, if I am going to preserve a pristine area, I am going to make sure that we are able to allow it to flourish and grow and dying timber does absolutely the opposite.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, we live in a great nation of a lot of opinions.

[Laughter.]

And there are some that believe in the theory of natural regulation more than a mirror model where man is an observer and the lightest footprint. And they're more than content of watching our forests burn down year after year.

I sit on the Pinchot model of using science and multiple use for most of our holdings, which includes timber harvest. But you have to do it right and there have been mistakes in the past, but we have great people that know how to harvest timber.

Senator MANCHIN. My final thing, real quick, my time is running out, is the AML, the Abandoned Mine Lands, again the funds—what we are using them for and the purpose. A lot of that was basically for revitalizing the Power Plus Plan. It was to revitalize some of these areas that lost so much and the President's budget proposes eliminating the Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Development Pilot Program. I would hope you would look at that, sir, before you all make that step because these communities that gave so much to this great country need a little bit of assistance to get back up on their feet, and eliminating that would be very harmful to them.

Secretary ZINKE. My commitment is to work with you on that, and Chairman Rogers also talked to me, point blank, on that one too and I respect him.

But most of all it will affect jobs and I respect hard-working people, whether it's coal or logging or just people putting things together and the manufacturing industry. I come from three generations of plumbers. I just like people that work and so does the President.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Secretary Zinke, it is great to be with you again, great to see you. I was singing your praises along with that of Senator Daines, as well as our friend Ryan Lance at both Boys State and Girls State in Wyoming in the past week because there you were—three young high school students from Montana sitting together at Boys State. That is the aspiration for young people at Boys State and Girls State all across the country can look to you, as well as Senator Daines, as well as Ryan as something to look up to and work for.

Secretary ZINKE. I have to say, I was the slacker of the three.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO. Well, you and I have spoken in the past about the Bureau of Land Management and the backlog of applications for permits to drill for oil and gas on federal land. We discussed that permitting delays vary among field offices. Some of the

offices are having much more substantial backlogs than others. Oil and gas permitting delays directly threaten our energy security. They threaten American jobs and economic stability in small communities.

The Department's budget proposal includes a \$16 million increase for the BLM program that is responsible for processing oil and gas drilling permits. The budget proposal states that this funding increase will "help ensure BLM has sufficient administrative staff capacity to quickly process applications for permits to drill." I am encouraged by your proposal.

BLM needs to have the necessary resources at its disposal to process the oil and gas permits in a timely manner yet we must ensure that it allocates its resources to field offices greatest in need, such as the field office that we certainly have in Casper, Wyoming.

What steps are you going to take to ensure that the BLM field offices have the resources they need to relieve some of these significant backlogs of the permit applications?

Secretary ZINKE. Well I would say the backlog is really two-pronged. One is the resources, but also the process. We want to make sure the process is fair and not arbitrary and holds people accountable. I think we all agree with that. But if it can go into these loops where all of a sudden you can't get an answer for 18 months, two years, you don't have any chance to actually talk to the individual that's doing it or it can be pigeon-holed—there's a problem. I would think in 45 days, given where some of the fields are, you should have a feeling whether that permit is going to be authorized or not or whether it can be mitigated.

So a lot of it is restoring trust in our system, that we're going to do what the public expects us to do, is do a review. The review should be straightforward, trust but verify, make sure their permit process is not arbitrary. And we should work with people and be more of a partner than, in some cases, an adversary.

That's a tall order given that a lot of the government or a lot of the folks out there, whether it's industry or private landowners, don't trust the Department of the Interior. And my number one job is to get back there and talk to communities and be an advocate and restore trust.

Senator BARRASSO. You know, the Department is facing several billion-dollar issues which are going to require prioritization and management well into the future, beyond the upcoming fiscal years. Issues like wild horse and burro management, wildfire funding which you described in your opening statement as a billion-dollar problem, and deferred maintenance costs that cost the Department billions. And they are not going to be solved overnight. This is not just a budget problem proposal—this is a proposal for one year that you are talking about today, to what extent are you examining the long-term needs and the issues that are going to require multi-year planning, like the National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, we're looking at long-term funding. You know, obviously, when you drop \$15.5 billion a year, we could have caught up on our maintenance, but we don't want to go up and down. We want a steady stream. And there's certainly opportuni-

ties on onshore, new revenue to commit against a stable platform of maintenance repair in the out years.

It was mentioned earlier that we had 330 million visitors through our park system last year. We think that's going to increase, and so now we have to look at the public lands around our parks to make sure things like the trail systems connect, watersheds make sense, wildlife corridors connect. Those are going to take resources to do that and having a steady fund of resources come in to put against our infrastructure is part of it. So we are looking at long-term fixes and that will be part of, as I understand, the infrastructure bill.

Senator BARRASSO. My final question refers to the Bureau of Indian Education. You made some comments about it earlier to one of the other questions—that we have failed, something is not right, committed to making sure that the education process is there. As we go forward, I hope that you continue to work closely with tribes, with the Bureau of Indian Education and Congress to make sure that the money is used most effectively because, as you say, there is a lot of room for improvement.

Secretary ZINKE. Well and one comment about Indian education. It's different. You have dorms. You have, in some cases, security. So just the funding mechanisms, so just to say that we're—that it's more expensive is a little bit deceiving in that it's not the same as a public school in some cases.

But it's certainly a priority of mine to make sure that the education experience and the opportunity for a child is elevated and highlighted and prioritized but it's going to take both of us working together and probably giving more flexibility up front to the tribes so that they can look at their issue and cater a more flexible approach.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Heinrich.

Senator HEINRICH. Secretary Zinke, you and I recently talked about a plan that sportsmen in New Mexico have promoted to provide public access to the only legally inaccessible wilderness area in the entire nation. For the very first time this year we have the potential to have access to that area.

Since 2009 when the Sabinoso Wilderness was designated, and long before then, actually, when it was a wilderness study area, this area has been closed to the public with no legal ingress. We have an opportunity to change that with a piece of an agreement that is literally sitting in your lap in time for this year's hunting season. I have heard from local sportsmen's groups as well as the San Miguel County Commission in support of this plan, and I am literally getting calls each and every day from folks wondering when a decision will be final.

I have letters here from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen, the local chapter of Sportsmen Concern, the Wild Turkey Sportsmen's Association and the San Miguel County Commission—the list just, kind of, goes on and on.

[The information referred to follows:]



May 5, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Designated in 2009, the 16,030-acre Sabinoso Wilderness located near Las Vegas, New Mexico, is the only wilderness in the National Wilderness Preservation System that does not have any public access. Right now, the only way you can enjoy the Sabinoso is as a guest of a surrounding landowner. After more than four long years of intensive work by our organizations and other sportsmen in New Mexico, a private foundation now owns the 4,176-acre Rimrock Rose Ranch, the key to public access from a nearby county road.

The private foundation dedicated to conservation and committed to public access has provided a donation of \$3.15 million to acquire the ranch and donate it to the United States. This will create public access to Sabinoso through Canyon Largo, which contains the headwaters of the Canadian River. Spectacular Canyon Largo stretches sixteen miles, with the upper elevations at 6,200 feet. The bottom of the canyon is a meandering riparian strip of green meadows and springs. The diverse flora and wildlife create a microenvironment where mountain lion, black bear, mule deer, Barbary sheep, New Mexico dahl sheep, blue heron, Rio Grande turkey and migratory water fowl reside. It is home to the largest concentration of amphibians in northern New Mexico as well as rare perennial water in this arid landscape.

Since 2009 New Mexico sportsmen and women, along with Senators Heinrich and Udall, have tried to find a solution for creating reasonable access into the Sabinoso. Through good fortune and tenacious work with a willing private seller, we now have that opportunity right in front of us.

Sportsmen all across the west are applauding SO 3347 directing the Bureau of Land Management to identify, inventory and find all possible ways to provide access onto our public lands that are now land-locked and inaccessible. We have no better example of this than the Sabinoso, and a clear solution has been provided.

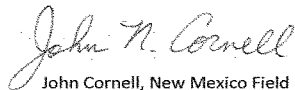
The opportunity for hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, photography and horseback riding in the Sabinoso is immense and the demand for access is high. Access to the Sabinoso Wilderness is sought after by locals and visitors alike, and opening up Sabinoso Wilderness to recreation is one step in the direction of generating a better quality of life for San Miguel citizens and jobs for the community. Newly

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
May 5, 2017  
Page 2

created access to the Sabinoso Wilderness will be an integral part of economic growth locally and regionally.

New Mexico's hunting draw results are in and fortunate sportsmen are getting ready for this fall's big game hunting seasons. We will be starting to scout as early as this summer. New Mexico sportsmen and women ask for your help to insure that another hunting season doesn't go by without the opportunity to enjoy fair-chase hunting and recreating in the Sabinoso Wilderness. With your help, New Mexico sportsmen and women will be able to enjoy the many recreational opportunities in this New Mexico treasure.

Respectfully,



John Cornell, New Mexico Field Representative  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP  
100 Juh Trail, Hillsboro, New Mexico 88042  
575-895-5090  
575-740-1759 cell  
[jcornell@trcp.org](mailto:jcornell@trcp.org)

THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP – Joel Webster, Director, Center for Western Lands

BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS – Land Tawney, Executive Director

NEW MEXICO WILDLIFE FEDERATION – Garrett VeneKlasen, Executive Director

SOUTHWEST CONSOLIDATED SPORTSMEN – John Cornell and Jim Bates, Co-Chairmen

DOÑA ANA COUNTY ASSOCIATED SPORTSMEN – Tony Popp, President

NEW MEXICO SPORTSMEN – Oscar Simpson, State Chair

WILD TURKEY SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION – C. J. Goin, President

SPORTSMEN CONCERN/ LAS VEGAS, NM, AND MORA, NM, CHAPTERS – Max Trujillo, Interim President

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NEW MEXICO – Oscar Simpson, Public Lands/ Legislative Chair



## Board of County Commissioners

*Rock G. Milbani*  
Chairman - District 1

*Arthur J. Padilla*  
Vice-Chair - District 3

*Janice C. Varela*  
Commissioner - District 2

*Maria L. Martinez*  
Commissioner - District 4

*Chris A. Najjar*  
Commissioner - District 5

*Vidal Martinez, Ed.D.*  
County Manager

May 10, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write in strong support of the Sabinoso Public Access Plan. San Miguel County is home to the Sabinoso Wilderness, and public access to the area will make it a significant amenity for our constituents. Most San Miguel County residents have never been able to visit the Sabinoso, despite its location in our backyard, because there is no way for the public to access the public lands that make up the wilderness area. Gaining access to these lands, which belong to all Americans, will be a great victory for this community.

In addition, opening up the Sabinoso Wilderness will be a significant economic opportunity for the City of Las Vegas, our county seat. Access to the Sabinoso is expected to draw significant new visitors to the area, and Las Vegas is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunity to serve those visitors. Las Vegas is the last opportunity to buy supplies before reaching the wilderness and we welcome these visitors to our local stores and gas stations.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal, and we look forward to welcoming you to San Miguel County and the Sabinoso Wilderness soon.

Sincerely,

*Vidal Martinez*  
Vidal Martinez, Ed.D.  
San Miguel County Manager

Administration Complex  
500 W. National Avenue, Suite 201 Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701 (505) 425-9333 phone (505) 425-7019 fax  
[vmartinez@co.sanmiguel.nm.us](mailto:vmartinez@co.sanmiguel.nm.us)

We are finally at the finish line in an effort that has taken well over a decade. Can I go back and tell New Mexicans that they can look forward to hunting in the Sabinoso Wilderness this year?

Secretary ZINKE. You and I talked about it, that the proposal was, and we both agree, public access—the Interior would strongly consider taking it under in public lands. It is—the status of the land—

Senator HEINRICH. It is a donation, not a—

Secretary ZINKE. It's a donation, alright, but it doesn't meet the standard of what a wilderness typically is, but if we can, and I'll work with you because we both agree this is a unique opportunity, we both agree that we should have public access. I think where the rub is, is that we take it in as wilderness or do we take it in something that provides a little more access? As you know, wilderness doesn't include a bike or a mountain bike or a vehicle or a disabled—

Senator HEINRICH. The challenge with that is there is no place to bike to because it is at the end of the road where it abuts the existing wilderness area. The donation was actually made contingent on the land being added to the existing wilderness, and I have spoken to the landowner and they are not willing to make the donation under separate terms from that.

So let's be clear: if you do not accept the donation, the reality is we are back to square one. We are where we were before with zero public access for hunting, zero public access for recreation. There is no Plan B for this. And I can tell you, as somebody who actually went out and tried to find easements that we could purchase into this area for over 10 years, there is no alternative. It is either we get access for the first time or we go back to the only landlocked wilderness in the United States. And that is, clearly, not what my constituents desire.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I don't yield to pressure, only higher principle. When someone comes to the table and says we're only going to give you this donation under these conditions and terms, that doesn't sound to me like a negotiation. That sounds like they dictated terms.

Senator HEINRICH. They did negotiate this with the BLM over the course of many years. At the time, the BLM was open to those terms. Now, there is a new Secretary. I understand that, but—

Secretary ZINKE. And we're open to negotiating so we have public access. So if they're willing to work with us on making sure that the public has access to it, then I'm sure we can come to an amenable solution on it. But to come to the table and say—

Senator HEINRICH. The irony of these terms is—

Secretary ZINKE. Under these terms and conditions only.

Senator HEINRICH. —right now we do not have public access. Zero. And so, by looking a gift horse in the mouth, we are turning back the clock to where we were before.

I can tell you if this does not get done by this fall, there will be an awful lot of people disappointed in Northeastern New Mexico who thought this was a slam dunk. You had the county commission. You had the local groups on board. You had the delegation on board. This is one of those few cases where everybody lines up on

the same side and says, this is good for the community and we can grow our economy with this. Let's do it.

Secretary ZINKE. I'll work with you on it but define public access. Is it your definition of public access? Is it only you can walk through the wilderness without—either walk or horseback—or is it public access where it provides amenities like a parking lot for people that are, maybe, disabled or can't walk through—

Senator HEINRICH. It is easy enough to provide a parking lot under this arrangement, but you are not going to be able to provide mechanized access to the area that is designated as wilderness.

I am all for additional access for mountain bikes, for other forms, but this is not the place. I mean, have you been there? The canyon walls go straight up on either side. There is no place to go to unless you are willing to put a pack on and it is worthwhile then because there are big mule deer, there are Barbary sheep, there are elk, there are turkey. It is some of the best habitat in northeastern New Mexico and right now, what I know is that there is zero, zero, zero public access.

Secretary ZINKE. I think we both agree that we should move forward on public access.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you. Before the witness, a couple of comments.

I want to invite Senator Cassidy to join the climate change caucus and I want to use his charts the next time I am on the Floor talking about climate change. Although, I know in Louisiana part of the problem is subsidence rather than necessarily sea level rise. But that is coming.

Also, Senator Daines, we are going to have to change the name of that park to the park formerly known as Glacier because there were 150 glaciers when the park was founded and there are now 26. They have retreated 39 percent in the last 50 years and that is accelerating. We just, kind of, take cognizance of what is happening. Our national parks are one of the, I guess, the canary in the coal mine and Glacier is probably the most prominent.

Secretary Zinke, first I am not going to lobby you. I want to thank you for visiting our beautiful Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument that is already having positive economic effects in our region. But I am not going to lobby you. I really want to thank you for going, sincerely.

I once went on a Congressional trip and an old man in a foreign country said, "I know why you're here." I said, "Why is that?" And he said, "Because one day of seeing is better than 30 days of reading."

You went to see, and I deeply appreciate your committing. You met a commitment to me you made at the hearing to go to Maine, and I am just delighted that you did that. So I want to thank you for that.

Secretary ZINKE. It was a wonderful experience, and I'm sure you're going to be enthusiastic about the recommendation.

Senator KING. Well, that is as much as I can ask.

Secretary ZINKE. As well as the Governor, I've talked to the Governor, so I think we have a reasonable approach and a recommendation that all parties will be satisfied with.



Senator KING. I congratulate you on that and look forward to the recommendation.

In terms of the cuts to the national parks, many people have talked about it. You mentioned that a substantial part of the cuts will take place in regional, in the bureaucracy if you will, as opposed to the individual parks. Are there cuts at individual parks that will hit the operating budgets?

Secretary ZINKE. On the reorganization, again, what I see is the front line of the specific parks are too short.

In the case of the monument in Maine, there's only one superintendent there. You can add one superintendent plus, you know, a detailed person. And when you go up there, and clearly the infrastructure required there with bathrooms and signs and working together with the state—when you incorporate something under a public trust, in the Park Service or a monument, then there's also an obligation on our side to make sure that it is done right.

Bears Ears, in that conversation, there is no doubt some antiquities there that are well-deserving of federal protection. But what I didn't see is, I didn't see any signs, I didn't see any bathrooms at the trailheads, I didn't see any parking lots.

In one case, in Escalante, I saw a German van with three Germans in it with kayaks looking for the Grand Staircase which—there's no staircase by the way—this is not a kayak thing.

But if we're going to assume the primary responsibility of preserving something, then we have to also assume the responsibility to make sure we preserve it and that's infrastructure, signage, monitoring and those things that are necessary to do that.

Senator KING. And in the individual parks, as we are looking around the country, whether it is Yellowstone or Olympia or Acadia in Maine, do you anticipate operational budget cuts or are you talking about simply regional administration cuts?

Secretary ZINKE. What I anticipate, I don't, individually, very doubtful, parks, probably we're—what I've done in the Headquarters is, as far as the hiring freeze, I maintained it in Washington and maintained it in Denver so we could push bodies to where they belong out in the front. And you'll see a movement to make sure we shore up and expand the front line.

The regional scientists, they're all in the USGS, and that was a decision from a couple secretaries ago. What we're looking at is how to return the scientists back out to the field to where they do more field work rather than headquarters work.

But there are some minor adjustments in the budget, but I think as we go through the process and coordinate with you on reorganization, what our goal is, is to make the parks not only whole, but get more assets on the front line and reduce the middle and upper management side.

Senator KING. In the Armed Services Committee we talk about tooth-to-tail. We are talking about more tooth and less tail, and I don't necessarily object to that point of view.

A final question or final comment. One of the items in the budget, or in the plan, is a suspension of the advisory commissions to the national parks and they are under review. I cannot speak for other parks, but I can tell you that the advisory commission at Acadia in Maine is very important. It makes a great contribution.

They are volunteer members. There are some administrative costs—I understand that is what we are talking about—but I think this is a case where the value to the Park System in terms of good relations with its neighbors outweighs the fairly minor savings from the administrative costs associated. So I commend to you, from personal experience, the value of the advisory commissions.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, and I have 220, which I was surprised at the number, and this is what I asked, you know, rather than going to individual advisory groups and say, well, I'm going to suspend this. I suspended them all with this caveat: tell me who is in your, on your board; tell me what you've done in the last year; tell me what you've done in the last five years; tell me what your budget is; and tell me what your goal is. And if you had an issue, they could ask for an exemption to meet.

As far as Acadia they did not request an exemption yet, but it was really about two pages maximum because now I'm responsible for the 220 boards, to a degree, and I just want to know. And I would think the overwhelming number of boards do great things and it just was an opportunity to me to know who was on the board. I'll look through what their goals are, which I think is important, and then if I had any questions I could ask. But I assume that we'll have all the paperwork on those boards.

If Acadia is meeting, which I understand they want to meet in the summer, all they have to do is put in a request for exemption and certainly I would understand that.

Senator KING. It sounds like the national park version of trust but verify.

Secretary ZINKE. Trust but verify. I just want to know, you know?

We spend about \$15 million which, on the scale of the overall budget is not much, but if you're a plumber, \$15 million is a lot of money.

So as the steward of the taxpayers' dollars, I just want to know the great things the boards are doing, who is on the board, what they've done in the last year, what they've done in the last five years, and then I'll be glad to write them a card and say thank you for your service and then invite them to DC to talk to them.

Senator KING. Good. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator King. I appreciate you bringing up that question because I, too, have heard from a lot of folks back home. We have a couple advisory committees that are pretty important; one impacts the NPR-A in the 1002 area. There are two groups under the BLM, the NPR-A Working Group and the NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel. So, obviously, very key to what we are trying to do up North.

Hearing your explanation, Mr. Secretary, about what your intent was in just conducting this review and how, if there is work that is underway, there is an opportunity for, again, those groups to be up and running and doing the work that I think we all recognize is important. But oversight is always appreciated around here.

Let me go back to another issue relating to land conveyances. The BLM conducted an inventory at Congress' request last year looking into the contaminated lands that had been conveyed to

Alaska Native Corporations and additional contamination that had been on lands pending conveyance. They have identified over 600 contaminated sites and the ownership is, kind of, a mixed bag here. But what we know is that these sites are contaminated and they need remediation.

The Federal Government is moving very slowly and part of the problem is, we just do not have a single agency that is overseeing and coordinating the cleanup. So you have a situation where you have lands that are formally held by the Interior, Army Corps lands, you have FAA lands, you have DoD lands, and everybody is kind of pointing the finger saying, you be in charge. As a consequence, it is just not happening.

Now BLM, we have had long discussions with them. They say that they cannot compel federal agencies to clean up these contaminated sites. But it seems to me that because of DOI's trust responsibility to Alaska Natives, it seems that at a minimum we ought to be able to get Interior to coordinate a working group of these responsible agencies so that we can get the cleanup started on 600 sites.

Again, this is a different issue than the legacy well cleanups which you have already been briefed on up North. We are trying to cut through that backlog as well. But when you think about the situation right now, again, you have Alaska Natives that have not had the commitments under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) fulfilled. You have not had the commitments to our Alaska Native Veterans fulfilled. And then on some of the lands where they did receive conveyances, they got contaminated lands. It is not a good deal. It is not right.

So I would ask if you can have your team go back and see what they can do to work with us on how we can address this issue of contaminated lands. Maybe we need to look at whether Interior could allow ANC's to trade back contaminated lands for selections of new, clean lands. But I need to make some progress on this, and I am asking for your assistance on it.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, the good news, at least on the Alaska legacy wells, is I think we're down to 31 now as opposed to 50. By the end of 2018, I think we're going to be at 25 wells in the legacy.

But I share your frustration. And this is why we're looking at a reorganization based on a joint model of combatant commands because, you're absolutely correct, is that the different bureaus within the government agency, whether it's Ag or Interior or Army Corps of Engineers, don't work very well.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Secretary ZINKE. And you can't task each other without going to the Secretary and we've created a bureaucracy that we can't get anything done.

So we're looking at, quite frankly—and Alaska is going to be more of a joint model, joint management—rather than everybody reporting to their headquarters, reporting to a joint command. The same way we fight forest fires, similar to the way we fight combatant commanders, and then make sure we have a state liaison. We think that model is appropriate when we're looking at wildlife corridors, watersheds, cleanup and these areas that transcend one isolated bureau but are multi-bureau, or would be joint in this case.

We think that that model is more appropriate and we're going to need to work with you to make that happen. Most of the authority relies on the Secretary, but there's some things that we go through, that will be required. No doubt we want to work with you anyway on it, but we're going to need your help in order to bring the ball to the field.

The CHAIRMAN. Just so much of this is interagency coordination and it gets very frustrating, again, when you have one agency pointing the finger at the other one saying, you do it first. So we need to work with you on that.

Let me turn to Senator Franken.

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, my first set of questions was about tribal affairs, and I have heard a great deal of concern from tribal leaders about the role that James Cason at the Department of the Interior is playing. Now during his time at the Department of the Interior during the Bush Administration he earned a reputation for his opposition to putting land into trust. And I am now hearing that land decisions that were previously made at the Assistant Secretary level will now be made by Mr. Cason. In fact, I have heard that Mr. Cason has been delegated a great deal of decision-making that normally is within the Secretary's purview.

What is the scope of Mr. Cason's role at the Department? Does it include overseeing the Cobell Agreement and putting land into trust?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I share your, well perhaps not, but to date I don't have my deputy. Of all the Senate-confirmed individuals, I didn't even have my deputy. So I have about 70 appointments, 20 or so Senate-confirmed. And to date, I have no Senate-confirmed deputy. I have magnificent candidates, BIA included, but they're not in the office. Mr. Cason is my Acting Deputy at the moment, and he comes with a lot of experience from his previous tour in the Bush Administration.

As you know, I think it was January 19th when I probably had an Interior eight or nine decisions based on trust coming in, I think I'm in court on two of them, on determinations of whether or not it's appropriate to take a trust in. So I would love to get a stable platform of—leadership.

Senator FRANKEN. Okay, I am hearing this across the whole Administration in terms of shortage of deputies, et cetera.

I just want to ask you about your statements on the President's budget and whether they reflect a commitment to strengthen tribal sovereignty and support self-determination.

Budget cuts of \$371 million from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Those of us who are on the Indian Affairs Committee, just know how woefully underfunded the tribes are in Indian Country and this, sort of, adds insult to injury. How exactly do these cuts support sovereignty and self-determination? And how can you build trust in Indian Country when you present a budget like this?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I'll go back to the beginning: this is what a balanced budget looks like. We could ignore it.

Senator FRANKEN. There are other ways to balance budgets—  
Secretary ZINKE. And—

Senator FRANKEN. —and on the backs of the tribes, to me, is not the way to do it.

Secretary ZINKE. And they were to a degree, not across the board, some of the cuts were 8 percent, 11 percent, but this is what a balanced budget looks like.

The fortunate thing, or unfortunate depending on how you're standing, is that you have a say on it. But in order to present a budget that balances, which was the President's charge—

Senator FRANKEN. I hear you and I am not going to argue with you because I want to change quickly to climate change.

At a House Appropriations hearing last week you had an exchange on climate change with my Minnesota colleague, Representative Betty McCollum. You talked about glacial retreating in Glacier National Park saying, "The glaciers started melting in Glacier Park right after the end of the last Ice Age." That is true, but you continued, "It has been a consistent melt."

In fact, data released last month by the U.S. Geological Survey scientists, who work for you, show the glaciers in the park have shrunk by 40 percent in just the last 50 years. So we are not seeing a consistent melt. Melting is dramatically accelerating.

I am concerned that our Secretary of the Interior, who is in charge of our nation's public lands, is unclear—and we have this in your confirmation hearing—I am concerned about whether you are clear about the magnitude of warming that is occurring and the backing out of the Paris agreement.

I know I am running out of time.

Can you tell me how much warming government scientists predict for the end of this century under a business-as-usual scenario?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, the Paris accord, in the President's and my judgment, it wasn't about climate change, it was about a bad deal. We spent \$3 billion, \$1 billion in cash.

Senator FRANKEN. Let me just—I know we are out of time, so can you just answer my question? Can you tell me how much warming government scientists predict for the end of this century under a business-as-usual scenario?

Secretary ZINKE. I don't think the government scientists can predict with certainty. There isn't a model that exists today that can predict today's weather given all the data.

Senator FRANKEN. Well, they predict a range and you said we have to go with the science—that is what you said during the early part of this hearing—you said, we have to go with the science. And there is agreement among climate scientists about the range of what we would have in warming by the end of the century. Do you know what that range is?

Secretary ZINKE. If everyone adhered to the Paris climate accord, that change would be roughly 0.2 degrees which is insignificant. And yet, people ignore the fact that China—

Senator FRANKEN. No, no, no.

No. No. No.

Secretary ZINKE. That was an MIT study. We can give you—

Senator FRANKEN. That was what the change would be under the period covered by the agreement. That is not what the change would be in the end of the century if they continued it. So you're really mixing apples and oranges.

I just want you to answer the question that I asked you. That is all I want you to do. Can you tell me how much warming government scientists, working for our government, predict for the end of the century under a business-as-usual scenario?

Secretary ZINKE. Can you tell me, sir, whether or not China increased its CO2 between now and 2030 under the agreement and by what? But I will be glad to give you that answer.

Senator FRANKEN. And that answer is?

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Franken.

Secretary ZINKE. I will be glad to give you that answer.

Senator FRANKEN. So you will give it in writing?

Secretary ZINKE. In writing.

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator HIRONO.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

You said a number of times in response to our questions that this budget is what a balanced budget looks like. So does this budget balance resource extraction with conservation?

Secretary ZINKE. The budget balances fiscally in a 10-year program. The budget does not favor one energy solution over another, nor does it favor extraction over non-extraction—it doesn't favor. It's a budget that produces a stewardship of our public lands.

Senator HIRONO. On the other hand, you also talked about the need to raise revenues and that one of the ways that you would raise revenues is to increase what we get, what you get, from resource extraction. And so, it does appear as though, from a very pragmatic standpoint, that that is one of the ways that you are going to create additional funds to keep the Interior Department going.

I would say that if we look at this budget it probably reflects more of a bend toward resource extraction over conservation.

Let me give you an example. When you were here for your confirmation hearings you were a big supporter, and when I met with you also prior to that hearing, you were a big supporter of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). That fund is supposed to be a conservation program that is funded by oil drilling revenues and yet, this fund is cut by 84 percent. That is an example of how we are moving toward extraction as opposed to conservation.

The reason that I am particularly interested in the strength of the Land and Water Conservation Fund is that it is a very bipartisan-supported fund and Hawaii has submitted a proposal that obtains funding from the LWCF. Our proposal is called Island Forests at Risk and it protects water resources, improves ecosystems, et cetera. So, has your commitment to the LWCF changed?—because this fund is cut by 84 percent in the President's budget, which you support now.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, it's funny that the source of LWCF is offshore oil and gas. So when we drill offshore for oil and gas we put more into the fund. What is cut from the budget is more land acquisition in the LWCF.

Senator HIRONO. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. But as you know the LWCF Fund itself has about \$18 billion over a period of time that has not been appropriated. And so, I think we're supportive of looking at LWCF expansion on onshore too. Some of that is to provide some infrastructure relief.

It's hard to fathom how you would take land in if you can't afford to maintain it. I think we should look at ways to maintain when we have our conservation easements and all the good things the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided. We need to make sure we have a revenue stream to make sure that we can maintain those holdings.

Senator HIRONO. Well, in the case of our proposal, Island Forests at Risk, it is for the acquisition of properties that the private landowners—because we do not have any national forests in Hawaii, we are one of ten states that do not. We rely on other kinds of resources from the Federal Government to support the privately- and state-owned forest areas. And so, there are private entities that have been waiting for years, and we finally got into the pipeline for support from the LWCF and suddenly that pipeline has been closed.

Now, I would like to understand that. I conclude that you do support the President's budget for Interior at this point with all of the cuts that many of my colleagues have pointed out.

Secretary ZINKE. I do support the budget and I commend the President for actually having the focus on providing the first step of what a balanced budget would look like. That is a tremendous change from the proposition that having a budget that doesn't balance really doesn't matter. So at least, if nothing else, it provides a good conversation.

Senator HIRONO. Excuse me, I am running out of time—because a balanced budget is in the eye of the beholder, I would say, because certain other things that are very important to many of us will be cut. Did you push back on any of the cuts that are reflected in the budget for Interior?

Secretary ZINKE. There were certain areas in the budget that I think should be greater prioritized and not—

Senator HIRONO. Such as?

Secretary ZINKE. I've always been a supporter of LWCF although, again, the source is offshore oil and gas for it.

I think that our parks are a treasure, but what surprised me about when you become the Secretary and you open up the budget is how much revenue we lost. You know, that's a concern to me because revenue can pay for a lot of things. If you have money in the bank, then a lot of these problems and programs and things and the hardship doesn't have to occur.

The other thing that is interesting is where we spend our money—\$5.5 billion worth of grants. Most of the grants are absolutely appropriate and good, but looking at it, a lot of money was going outside of other things while our infrastructure was hurting.

Personnel-wise, we have good people in the Department of the Interior, but we're really heavy on our upper bureaucracy. We have about 6,500 people in DC.

Senator HIRONO. Yes, you mentioned that. But I was particularly interested if there were any particular programs that you really

pushed back on cuts to, and it sounds as though the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was something that you very much supported, we need to get that back, I would say, on track.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator CANTWELL [presiding]. Thank you.

Senator Heinrich.

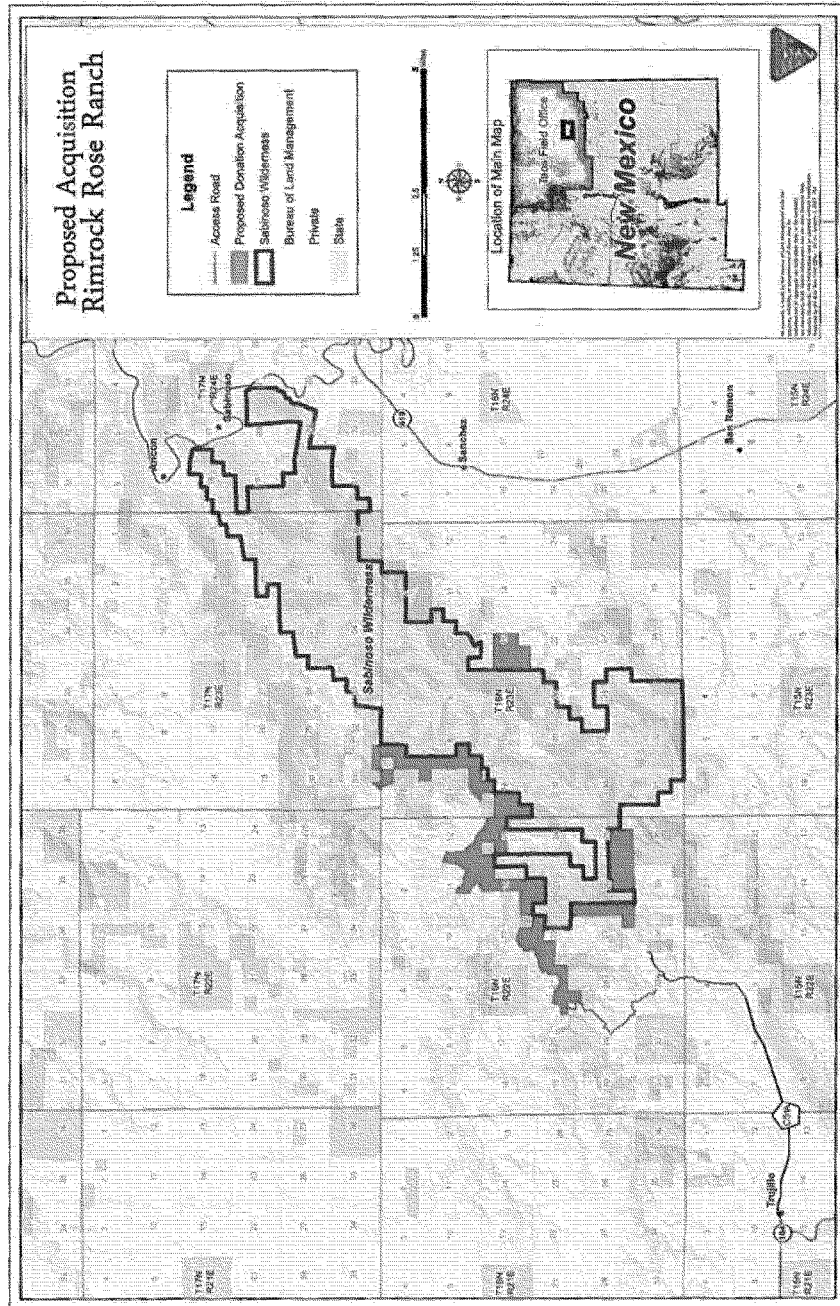
Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, I am always struck with Senator King's wisdom, not to mention his measured demeanor, and he said something that stuck with me when he was having a conversation with you today. He said, "One day of seeing is often better than 30 days of reading."

And so, I ran back to the office—and I will leave this map with you—but it gives a little bit of impression of the Sabinoso because it shows how the donation property is really just the gateway to the existing wilderness that, right now, is in a sea of public land—or private land I should say—which is why public access is not possible.

[The information referred to follows:]





It is my understanding that there is an outside-the-wilderness boundary location where the local BLM and some of the local advocates have hoped to grade and create a parking lot for access into the entire canyon system.

But I thought, given that you said while I was off at a vote that you were coming out to New Mexico, what might really help for both of us is to see it on the ground. And so, I wanted to extend that invitation and see if you might be interested in seeing the location on the ground so that we can have, sort of, a common place to start in terms of where this goes.

Secretary ZINKE. I would be honored to accept your invitation. And I will be out there in—one thing good about this job is you see a lot of beautiful country and you meet a lot of great, great people. I'll commit to go out there, and I'll commit to work with you on it.

Senator HEINRICH. Great. That is very much appreciated. The first time I went in there it was on horseback because that was the most effective way to get in and out.

Secretary ZINKE. And you know I love horses.

Senator HEINRICH. I understand you know something about that mode of transit.

I wanted to go back just for a moment to Bears Ears. You said people should see it for themselves and I completely concur with that. I was actually in Bears Ears just a few weeks ago with my family over spring break. I used to have an outfitter guide permit in that area through the BLM when I was running educational outdoor expeditions. And you said we have to follow the law. I am curious if, as part of your process, you have mapped out the locations of the antiquities and the objects that were in that proclamation over the landscape of the current boundary so as to know how and where it might be adjusted?

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, we're in the process of doing that. There are, obviously, high density ones that are easily recognizable, and there are ones that aren't. So we're working with all parties to go through it.

But the recommendation was this—we think that the antiquities can be identified, segregated and the borders can be revised. But to your point, I know you're very appreciative and supportive of our wilderness. What happens when you put a proclamation with those proclamations in management over the top of the wilderness?

Senator HEINRICH. Sure.

Secretary ZINKE. Because as you know, wilderness in some cases can be more stringent in its management than a proclamation. There are areas in there and within, there's a Forest Service or there's a U.S. Forest in there, there's a monument—

Senator HEINRICH. Up around Elk Ridge in Bears Ears—literally Bears Ears—the Forest Service side. I am familiar with that country.

Secretary ZINKE. There's also areas that are probably better suited in the—and the request was this, the request from Congress, to examine a territory of the areas within it to see whether they're more appropriate with a national recreation area or a national conservation area because there's difficulty to identify an object in those areas.

Senator HEINRICH. I am not trying to cut you off, I am just a little short on time here.

I would point to the example of Bandolier where we have both a monument and a wilderness within the monument that is consistent with the proclamation. It certainly can be done.

One of the things I am concerned about is the importance of not looking at the Antiquities Act just for the antiquities as objects. Teddy Roosevelt was very clear when he created Mount Olympus, for example, where the object to be protected was a scientific object. It was the Roosevelt Elk. This proclamation is very clear in calling out the elk and the mule deer and the bighorn sheep as important objects within the cultural context of that monument as well. I hope we can make sure that we take a look at those as well as the cultural antiquities which are clearly important as well.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Heinrich.

Secretary Zinke, I had a couple of questions for you. I wanted to go back to this issue of the Methane Rule, but I wanted to ask first about hiring for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in the Tri-Cities area. Are you holding up hiring on that position? Is that part of your—

Secretary ZINKE. No, overall what I've done is kept the hiring freeze in Washington in the metropolitan area and in Denver, our two largest areas, and tried to fill the gaps out in the field with that.

On GS11, I'm sorry, GS12 and above, they just have to get a waiver. But I released the hiring freeze on GS11 or GS12 and below and with a waiver so we're not holding anything up. But what we're trying to do is we're trying to fill some of the positions from Denver and Washington with qualified individuals first.

Senator CANTWELL. So will you be moving forward on hiring for the Manhattan Project park? If you do not know today, you can get back to me on that.

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, I'll get back. I don't think we're holding it up, but I'll get back to you.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, it is a new park and to your point, if you are saying you want the front line to be manned, then this is the front line, but it is a new joint DOE/Interior effort. So we—

Secretary ZINKE. Well, and we are also concerned about some of our other holdings when you only have one individual. Katahdin, it has one supervisor and a monument and then they have a detail. So it's really about 1.5 FTXs, or FTEs, up there.

I'm similarly concerned across-the-board on the front line. If it's our holding then we need to have a responsibility to make sure that the front line, at least, is protected from—

Senator CANTWELL. Well, this is a new front line for sure. It definitely will add revenue, I guarantee you because it's great, I mean, from a regional perspective, but you can get back to me on it because I know it might not be something you came prepared this morning to address.

Okay, back to the Methane Rule. Here is the issue. Congress has said this is the law and we want to know how you are enforcing it. You were saying, "Oh, I'm suspending that rule." Well, if you want to suspend that rule you have to go through the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Administrative Procedure Act is about

proposing a change and then having public comment on it before it is finalized. Are you telling me that during this process you are going to make sure that the current law is implemented?

Secretary ZINKE. We are looking at assessing how to implement it because, as you know, it's a little problematic exactly on the law which was part of the issue on the methane law itself, why it was challenged. I'm going to challenge the court with it and we're proceeding.

My intention, so you know, is we're going to rewrite the rule and go through the complete public process on it because both you and I agree on this issue that flaring is a waste. I think from a steward perspective, I think wasting a public asset—which is methane—is just wasteful. So we have to incentivize collection systems and make sure that our public asset is not wasted.

Senator CANTWELL. So you are going to talk to technology people in the meantime about how you can stop the waste in the flaring in the ensuing—

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, ma'am. We're talking to all sides on that, as well it's part of the royalty issue too. The collection of royalties, you know, on that side, because that's revenue in the door. You know, how to do it effectively, how to not incur undue costs, but how to make sure that we're all on the same page about where we're going to go to make sure the law is enforced and we do it by the numbers and by the book.

Senator CANTWELL. But you are not going to spend your time for the next six months dragging your feet on implementation?

Secretary ZINKE. Ma'am, I don't drag my feet. I just, I don't operate that way. As far as the law goes, I support the law, as we all should, that's my obligation to do so.

Senator CANTWELL. Alright, well I appreciate that, and we will definitely be following up.

You know, I had this unusual experience when I got elected to the Senate. John Ashcroft, a nominee before the Judiciary Committee—I asked him this very question. I said, "You're going to be the Attorney General. The last Administration just finished the roadless area rule. Are you going to implement it or are you going to fight it because you're now going to have a new boss?" He said, "If it's the rule of law, I will enforce it." And that is what he did. Now, I will admit there were times when I thought that he lagged in enforcing that as a law and we called him out on it. I just want you to know I will be doing the same here because we certainly feel that this waste should not be at the taxpayer expense, but I thank you for saying you will work to implement it.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Cantwell.

Mr. Secretary, I do have some additional questions. One relates to mineral security, understanding what it is that we have. You mentioned that with the 1002 and up north in the North Slope, it is important to know what we have an inventory. I have a question relating to that as well as to USGS and surveying natural hazards and specifically to the earthquake monitors that are slated to be decommissioned as well as volcano monitors in the state.

Unfortunately, we do not have consent to waive the two-hour rule, so now that the hour of 12 o'clock is upon us, I am not al-

lowed to continue the hearing. You get off the hook that way, but I would certainly hope that you can provide me with some updates on not only these two areas, but some of the others.

I would imagine that we will have other colleagues that will be submitting questions for the record who were not able to be here this morning.

I thank you for, not only being here, but I thank you for your leadership. I hear very clearly your request to this Committee to send you help. We would like to get your deputy up to you. He has moved out of the Committee, but we need to get him moved through the Floor and we need to get the other members of your team through that process. You are working hard, but you need your team with you, and know that we are committed to making that happen just as rapidly as we possibly can.

With that, we thank you for your leadership. Thank you for being here this morning. Have a great afternoon.

The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

## **APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED**

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**Questions from Chairman Murkowski**

**Question 1:** The mineral security of our nation is something we need to look at closely. With our nation importing at least 50 percent of its supply of at least 50 different mineral commodities from other nations, I view this as a significant vulnerability. In the context of the budget, or an infrastructure package, or simply stand-alone minerals legislation, can you talk about whether the administration agrees that this is a threat, and, if so, what do you think we can do to address it?

**Response:** Our Nation is increasingly reliant on foreign sources for raw processed mineral materials, and these mineral commodities are critical to the Nation's economic and national security. Interior is engaged in various activities to address supply concerns, including participating in the creation of a mineral criticality assessment and early warning system, researching the occurrence of rare earth element deposits in the United States, and undertaking geologic mapping to define areas favorable for exploration.

**Question 2:** At Statehood, Alaska was granted the right to acquire more than 104 million acres of land (to include the subsurface mineral estate) to ensure our success as a state. Alaska Natives were also granted lands to settle aboriginal claims. In the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), Alaska Natives were promised approximately 44 million acres of land. Some Alaska Natives were also granted allotments under the Alaska Native Allotment Act that pre-dates ANCSA. The State of Alaska and the Alaska Natives have not yet received all of the land they are entitled to. Do you agree that the Interior Department, pursuant to federal law, has a role and obligation to convey federal lands to the state of Alaska and to Alaska Natives? Do you view these transfers as separate and distinct from your personal position against transfer of federal lands to states?

**Response:** The Department has unfulfilled legal obligations to convey federal lands to the State of Alaska and to Alaska Natives pursuant to ANCSA, and I support meeting those obligations as expeditiously and efficiently as possible.

**Question 3:** Alaska is the most seismically active state in the nation. We have a system of earthquake monitors, called the USArray, which is currently operated by the National Science Foundation. The monitors are slated to be decommissioned in 2018, but I know that USGS, the NSF, and NOAA have begun discussions on transferring the stations from NSF to USGS. Please provide an update on USGS's progress on the transfer of the stations.

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**Response:** The USGS and NSF have been engaged in program-level conversations about the potential transfer of the stations. The talks are ongoing. Congress requested that the USGS provide, by November, an implementation plan for the long term operation of the NSF seismic network in Alaska, and the USGS is developing that plan now.

**Question 4: In Alaska, USGS has been replacing volcano monitors that operate on an analog system with ones that operate on a digital system. What is the status of the upgrades? How many stations remain to be upgraded, and what would happen to that work under the proposed FY 2018 budget?**

**Response:** The 2017 enacted level supports 15 conversions of analog seismic and telemetry stations to digital telemetry on Alaskan volcanoes, a substantial increase from the 3-6 conversions per year previously performed opportunistically with routine network maintenance work out of base funding. After this summer field season in Alaska (ending in mid-Sept.) there will be 128 monitoring stations that are will not have been converted and upgraded. The proposed FY 2018 funding level would support 4-6 station upgrades. The 2018 budget request focuses on core capabilities to provide forecasts and warnings of hazardous volcanic activity with current monitoring networks; produce updated hazard assessments for high-threat volcanoes in the contiguous U.S. only; and to revise the national volcano threat level assessment.

**Question 5: Within the Arctic Council, the United States has taken over as Chair of the Conservation of Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group, with the chair being held by Cynthia Jacobson from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. What funding is in your budget for CAFF and other Arctic-related activities and programs?**

**Response:** The Administration's budget requests a total of \$111,498,000 for Departmental Arctic-related activities. There is no specific funding requested for the CAFF.

**Question 6: Through the efforts of the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee, we have been able to collect elevation data for 84 percent of Alaska. What is the timeline to complete topographic mapping in Alaska?**

**Response:** To date, the USGS has produced 3,731 new Alaska topographic maps in 2016, and in 2017 will produce approximately 3,000 more. The timeline for completing collection of data and converting data into topographic maps of the entire State of Alaska is dependent upon a number of variables. We continue to work with our partners to complete this topographic mapping in the most efficient and effective manner.

**Question 7: What is the status of the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program?**



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**Response:** The USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program was mandated by Congress in the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992 and the current authorization runs through fiscal year 2018. Through a cost-sharing partnership with state geological surveys, geologic map information is collected and distributed to the public via maps and a national database. The extent of geologic map data varies in terms of scale and coverage from state to state. Recent advances in geophysical techniques have made it possible to map the surface and subsurface at much greater detail, and in three dimensions, which lead to new insights into geologic processes, energy and mineral potential, natural hazards and water management.

**Question 8: Under current Interior Department policy, every BLM notice associated with an Environmental Impact Statement must go through a review process in the Washington Office before publication in the Federal Register. Since publication of these notices is required before proceeding with the next step in the EIS process, the permitting process can be significantly delayed. Will you review this process and consider delegating authority for issuing Federal Register notices back to BLM State Directors?**

**Response:** Yes. 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.

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**Questions from Ranking Member Cantwell**

**Question 1:** I would like to follow up on our discussion about hiring a site manager at the Hanford Unit of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

As I noted at the hearing, the National Park Service announced earlier this year that a site manager for the Hanford unit had been selected, but that her transfer from another park was being delayed during the Trump Administration's hiring freeze.

I understand that the hiring freeze is no longer in place, but the appointment still has not been carried out—even though there are currently no Park Service staff on the ground in Hanford and the person selected for this position is simply transferring from one park to another.

We were told that any transfer or new hire requires senior DOI approval, but at the hearing you indicated that you didn't think you were holding up this position.

Can you please confirm that the appointment of a site manager for the Hanford unit is not being held up and provide me with a time frame for when the transfer will be approved?

**Response:** As I stated at the hearing, I believe that we need to provide our front lines in the parks with the appropriate resources to get the job done. I appreciate you bringing this issue to my attention. I understand that the NPS has now named a new site manager who will report for duty at Hanford within the next month.

**Question 2:** On December 30, 2016, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published a notice of application for withdrawal and opportunity for public meeting in the Federal Register. The publication of this notice segregated 340,079 acres of National Forest System land in the Methow Valley in Washington, subject to valid existing rights, for up to 2 years from settlement, sale, location, and entry under the public land laws, location and entry under the mining laws, and operation of the mineral and geothermal leasing laws.

Sections 2310.3-1(b)(2)(v) and 2310.3-2(c)(2) of title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations specify that the BLM must schedule one or more public meetings on applications for withdrawals involving 5,000 or more acres of land. A meeting must be "held at a time and place convenient to the interested public, the applicant and the authorized [BLM] officer."

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The BLM gave notice at that time “that a minimum of at least one public meeting will be held in conjunction with the withdrawal application.” The BLM also opened a 90-day public comment period through March 30, 2017.

I understand that the Forest Service, the applicant for a twenty-year withdrawal of these lands, has been in discussions with the BLM to schedule a public meeting. It has been nearly six months since publication of the Federal Register notice and nearly three months since the close of the comment period. I am concerned that this meeting is being inappropriately delayed.

For example, the BLM promptly scheduled a meeting in Livingston, Montana, concurrent with the notice of the proposed withdrawal in the Custer Gallatin National Forest that you supported as a congressman.

A public meeting in the Methow Valley will provide the BLM and the Forest Service essential local community feedback on the withdrawal proposal. The views of the community are a primary reason I have sponsored S. 566, legislation that would permanently withdraw this same federal land, subject to valid existing rights.

**When will this required public meeting take place?**

**Response:** The BLM is reviewing the comments on the application for withdrawal that were submitted during the comment period. The *Federal Register* notice is currently being processed, and the BLM will ensure the public receives at least 30 days advance notice of the scheduled meeting.

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#### Questions from Senator Wyden

**Question 1:** Our country has seen the beginnings of a concerning movement to sell off our public lands to the highest bidder. Last year, armed occupants even took over a wildlife refuge in Eastern Oregon. When people can't harvest trees and manage forests, when they're blocked from traveling down a rural road or hiking trails in our national parks, it only serves to fuel the fire for the small number of voices who want to sell off public lands.

But the president's budget either cuts, guts, or eliminates funding for programs that increase access to our public lands. Programs that support rural jobs, improve forest health, maintain our national parks, restore roads and trails and manage habitats. It's pretty clear to me this budget is an attempt to hamstring the Interior Department and other federal land agencies to the point where they can no longer manage their lands and allow for public access.

The Department of the Interior and the new administration have a responsibility to ensure the public has access to our nation's treasures -- our public lands. How do the cuts to the Interior Department budget help the agency meet that responsibility?

**Response:** This Administration has committed to making the tough decisions that will lead to a balanced budget, and this is what a balanced budget looks like. At the same time, we are fully committed to maintaining our public lands and increasing access to them. We are prioritizing our assets and personnel in the field and are currently going through a process to determine how to shift resources from Washington, D.C. to the units in the field and how public private partnerships can best benefit our public lands.

**Question 2:** Farmers and ranchers in the West spent nearly a decade coming together in an unprecedented way with private landowners and stakeholders to create management plans that preserve sagebrush habitat and ensure the continued multiple-uses of western lands. The current sage-grouse plans are the reason the Fish and Wildlife Service didn't list the sage-grouse as an endangered species -- something all sides agree would be "lights out" for rural places.

However, recent news reports have made me deeply concerned that you're trying to undo this hard work without talking to Congress or local stakeholders. These conservation programs are not only good for the species, but they also help rural ranchers. In addition to the general cuts to Interior's funding, the budget specifically calls for a cut to sage-grouse efforts by \$11.5 million - a 15 percent cut to the program.

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**Can you lay out how farmers, ranchers and local voices will have certainty that you will continue to support funding for these land management efforts, in spite of these proposed budget cuts?**

**How will you work with Congress to preserve conservation funding for sage-grouse and take into account local voices in your review of the current, widely supported management plans? Because the last thing my constituents want to see is your plan review backfire and Westerners end up with a listing of this bird.**

**Response:** The Budget requests over \$75 million in the Bureau's Wildlife Management program to continue work on the sage landscape, maintaining the Department's commitment to the sage-grouse and its habitat. Like you, my desire is to avoid listing the sage-grouse and I have made a commitment to work with states and other local partners to accomplish this goal.

**Question 3: The president's budget contains massive cuts to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which could have profound negative impacts on Tribal economic development and self-sufficiency. The proposed budget would cut millions from the Bureau's law enforcement, when tribes in Oregon are struggling to pay for even basic services.**

**The budget slashes the Bureau's forestry program, which helps most tribes in Oregon manage their forests. That management in turn generates revenue for basic services for families, jobs in the woods and logs for local mills. The same is true across the country. The budget document itself admits that it would reduce Indian timber harvest by 54 million board feet - a significant reduction when it comes to tribal lands.**

**Can you please explain to what extent Interior consulted with Indian Tribes in Oregon and throughout the country to determine the impact of these cuts and the adequacy of the requested funding levels for the Bureau of Indian Affairs?**

**Can you elaborate on which tribes you consulted? Tribes in Oregon rely on these programs, and the tribal members I have heard from do not feel like there has been adequate consultation.**

**Response:** This budget makes tough budget choices while focusing on the Department's funding of core service activities in Indian Country and makes support for tribal self-determination a priority.

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**Question 4:** In a hearing last week before this committee to discuss the Forest Service budget, I asked Chief Tidwell what the cost of inaction on wildfire funding reforms has been on the nation's forests.

What he told me confirmed what my colleagues and I have been saying all along - that if this broken, common-sense defying system of fighting fires had been fixed years ago, and we had controlled the growing cost of fighting fires, federal agencies could have easily treated millions more acres of forests, better preparing them for future fires and ultimately reducing the cost of fighting wildfires.

My colleagues from Idaho and I have been working to fix this broken system of fire borrowing for more than four years. The gridlock continues, and in the face of inaction, the fires get bigger, and the fire seasons get longer, Washington, D.C. politics prevents any real change from happening.

And as we heard from the Chief, this gridlock is having real impacts in our forests and making the situation worse every year. But the bottom line is, we've got to get this done now. This has got to be the year.

**The FY2018 budget for the Department of the Interior funds 100% of the 10-year average, which as we've seen continues to go up and is no longer considered the best way of determining the true cost of fires.**

**The budget also eliminates the FLAME suppression fund and decreases funding for fuels management, which goes toward making our forests more resistant to fires.**

**Are you supportive of a wildfire budget fix that ends fire borrowing and controls the 10-year average "creep"?**

**Can you explain to me how underfunding wildfire suppression and underfunding fuels management will make our forests healthier and allow the agency to effectively fight wildfires without running out of funds and borrowing from other accounts?**

**Response:** I agree that we need to work together to find a long-term solution to this problem. This budget maintains preparedness levels and supports fuels management activities. But because catastrophic fires don't wait for the budget, we need to craft solutions that make our forests healthy and help prevent fires. We look forward to working with Congress to do that.

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**Question 5:** In recent testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, you lauded the Department's revenue generation from forestry activities, and the payments provided from these receipts to tribes. Yet the FY18 budget proposal recommends cutting BIA forestry by over \$3 million. This, in the estimate of the budget itself, would reduce tribal timber harvest by 54 million board feet and tribal revenue by over \$8 million.

**How is this consistent with this Administration's prioritization of job and revenue creation?**

**Response:** As I indicated at the hearing and in the previous response, 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.

**Question 6:** While the Antiquities Act authorizes the President to designate national monuments, there does not appear to be any authority within the Act to reduce the size of the monuments. Most legal scholars conclude that any ambiguity in the Antiquities Act was cleared up with the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 whereby Congress made clear that only the legislature has the authority to diminish or rescind national monuments.

**Given this, does the Administration intend to ask Congress for legal authority should it want to proceed to implement the interim report's first recommendation?**

**If the Administration is not planning to seek new authority from Congress, please provide a citation for the legal authority that would allow a President to rescind or diminish a national monument that was established by a previous President.**

**Response:** As provided in his Executive Order, our role in the review of monuments is to provide a recommendation to the President. Final action and authority rests with him.

**Question 7:** Bears Ears National Monument was strongly supported by local tribes and the public, evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of public comments and signatures submitted. Despite that support, however, your interim recommendation to the President was to reduce the size of the monument.

**In Oregon, Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is critical to the beauty and economic**

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well-being of Oregon and highly supported by my constituents. I wrote to you about this last month to share with you the robust process and support that was behind this designation.

I am greatly concerned about your analysis and recommendation for Bears Ears. Your decision runs entirely contrary to the flood of public comments your Department received reflecting that the vast majority of the public supports keeping the National Monument intact. I am concerned about the implications that decision has on your review of the remaining National Monuments.

Given your recommendation for Bears Ears, it seems clear that you are unconvinced by the public comments and the opinions of sovereign tribal nations which called for keeping the monument intact. Looking ahead to your review of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, if public comments are not persuasive for you and are overshadowed by far fewer voices of special interests, then what role does the public comment process play in your analysis of Cascade-Siskiyou, or any other monument? And how do your actions help the department achieve your stated goal of regaining public trust?

**Response:** Each monument is being reviewed in a holistic fashion. We heard from local communities including state, county and federally elected officials, tribes, local businesses, and trade associations. For all of the reviews, each group's input is weighed as we craft recommendations for the President.

**Question 8:** In your confirmation hearings, you promised to work with Congress and western stakeholders before making any changes to the BLM and Forest Service Plans to conserve sage-grouse.

**In light of the recent Secretarial Order, who in Congress have you engaged regarding review of these plans?**

**What steps are you taking to ensure BLM has the staff needed to manage American assets and heritage, while providing a transparent process for public engagement?**

**Response:** Like you, my desire is to avoid listing the sage-grouse. I am committed to cooperating with states and other local partners to accomplish this goal. The interagency team established by my Secretarial Order has carried out its initial review directly in conjunction with states. The recommendations detailed within the report provide a path forward for additional work to be carried out in consultation with states and local communities.



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**Question 9:** The budget includes at 84 percent cut to LWCF. LWCF is essential to maintaining and increasing access to our public lands. Cuts this deep would mean LWCF could essentially only cover staff salaries, with possibly a little left over for emergency acquisitions. Willing sellers will be left in the lurch, and projects that could expand access by connecting previously inaccessible public lands could be lost to commercial development.

**Given these cuts, how does this budget reflect the need to improve recreation and other access to public lands?**

**Response:** 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 many maintenance needs have been postponed for too long. Land acquisition is an area where the Department has flexibility to defer expenditures.

**Question 10:** We both agree that Americans deserve a fair, market value return on the coal, oil, and natural gas extracted from publicly owned lands. During your nomination hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, with regard to natural gas extraction you stated that "we're wasting a lot, we're venting a lot, and we're wasting energy, and that is troubling me..." Since then, your agency has halted the BLM's methane rule, which is meant to address the same issues that are troubling you.

**Will you explain how you plan to achieve a fair return to taxpayers, despite halting parts of a rule designed to help achieve those goals?**

**Response:** As I said at the hearing, as Secretary I am dedicated to managing our federal lands and resources as a good neighbor and steward. I believe conservation and energy development can occur simultaneously under effective multiple use management. The Department is committed to assessing the rule and its requirements and crafting pragmatic policies that will incentivize responsible energy development, including minimizing waste of valuable natural gas resources.

**Question 11:** The budget cuts the Bureau of Land Management's budget by 15%, which includes conservation and environmental programs. Yet the Department of the Interior's oil and gas programs survive the overall 12% cut to Interior. Interior's offshore program gets an increase, and there's a \$16 million plus-up in the BLM's oil and gas permitting office. The

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budget intends to open up oil and gas drilling in ANWAR, and cuts renewable energy programs both on and off shore.

In your nomination hearing, you stated your support for an all-of-the-above energy policy that can reduce our nation's dependence on energy imports and benefit the environment.

**Can you explain how Interior's budget accomplishes these goals?**

The President's budget cuts funding for renewable energy development on federal lands despite seeing exponential growth over the last few years, reducing that sector's growth and threatening the jobs it creates. But the budget for oil and gas is increased, despite a flat oil and gas market.

**Why does this administration care more about oil jobs than any other?**

**Response:** The Budget supports implementation of a comprehensive energy program that will put America on track to achieve the President's vision of an America First energy plan, freeing us from dependence on foreign energy. The FY 2018 budget takes the first steps toward energy dominance by implementing an all-of-the-above strategy. It not only increases funding for oil and gas development programs onshore and offshore, but also supports renewable energy and boosts coal development from public lands. This budget will improve the processing of energy permits and energy related rights-of-way, and will support the development of a new 5-year offshore leasing plan.

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#### Questions from Senator Lee

**Question 1:** BLM law enforcement has a poor reputation in Utah. Rather than fostering a cooperative relationship with local residents and authorities, BLM agents have created an atmosphere of distrust and fear. I'm concerned that DOP's budget request includes an increase of more than a quarter of a million dollars for BLM Law enforcement. What do you intend to use these additional funds for, and what are you doing to make BLM law enforcement more cooperative with and respectful of local residents?

**Response:** Restoring trust between the Department's land management bureaus and the public they serve is one of my top priorities. Ensuring public safety on our public lands is an important law enforcement function, but I acknowledge the BLM has a great deal of work to do in order to be a better neighbor. This is why I am committed to leading the Department to move forward in a way that fosters a sense of cooperation with public land users and local communities.

**Question 2:** I was encouraged by your recent secretarial order to review federal sage grouse conservation plans. The state of Utah had its own sage grouse management plan in place, which increased sage grouse populations in the state by 40 percent in a single year. But in 2015, the previous administration inexplicably scrapped the state's successful, locally driven plan and imposed its own highly restrictive top-down strategy. You mentioned in your order a desire to "enhance the involvement" of the 11 western states impacted by federal sage grouse conservation policies. What are some of the specific opportunities you plan to give states to empower them with real authority in the management of sage grouse within their borders?

**Response:** Our primary goal is to ensure that management of the sage-grouse is done in such a way that listing of the bird is avoided. The interagency review team has conducted an initial review of these plans, keeping a wide range of state-driven options and ideas on the table. Each affected state has different needs and issues. As the Department moves forward with the strategy for sage-grouse habitat conservation, we want to make sure that what we do is done in direct consultation with state and local governments.

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**Questions from Senator Stabenow**

**Question 1: Secretary Zinke, the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and U.S. Geologic Survey partner with many of my constituents on projects that restore and protect the Great Lakes and contribute to our scientific understanding of them.**

The Fish and Wildlife Service helped remove Nashville Dam on the Thornapple River in southwest Michigan, which has improved fish habitat and water quality and provided more recreational opportunities.

Researchers at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore have established a program to reduce botulism outbreaks that have killed thousands of shore birds there.

The U.S. Geological Survey, along with the Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, installed rocky reef in the St. Clair River, which created 40,000 square feet of spawning habitat for lake sturgeon.

This work was made possible by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, funding which supplements the budgets of these agencies and enables them to expand their ability to partner with local communities and my state to protect and restore the drinking water for over 30 million people.

These activities are not possible, however, without robust support for the base budgets of these agencies. Yet, the Interior Department's FY2018 budget would slash funding for each. Funding to USGS would be cut by \$138 million, to the Fish and Wildlife Service by \$200 million, and to the Park Service by \$200 million.

**How will the Interior Department be able to maintain the level of work we have seen for the past few years in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes under the Administration's FY2018 budget request?**

**Response:** Geographic Programs fund a variety of ecosystem protection activities within specific watersheds, including the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, and others. These activities are primarily local efforts and the responsibility for coordinating and funding these efforts generally belongs with states and local partnerships. Eliminating the Geographic programs refocuses agencies on core national work. These programs perform local ecosystem protection and restoration activities, which are best handled by local and state entities. The Geographic Programs, including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, have received significant

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federal funding, coordination, and oversight to date. State and local groups are engaged and capable of taking on management of clean-up and restoration of these water bodies.

**Question 2: The MotorCities Heritage Area inspires and educates Michigan residents and visitors on how the automobile changed our state, the nation, and the world. This site exemplifies Michigan's pride in our automotive and labor history and has a positive influence on our region's future. In FY17, MotorCities received only \$491,000 but the site generates \$35.4 million in tax revenue, supports 4,560 jobs, and is estimated to have an overall economic impact in the region of \$410.4 million. Your proposed budget eliminates all funding for this National Heritage area as well as the other 48 heritage areas across the country.**

**When asked about eliminating funding for these important cultural areas during last week's House Appropriations Committee Hearing, you provided no further justification than "tough choices had to be made." I find this to be eye opening when you also propose to increase funding for fossil fuel production on public lands. Can you explain how you justify eliminating funding for some of our most important cultural and historical areas while shifting that funding to fossil fuel development?**

**Response:** 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.

**Question 3: Secretary Zinke, you have said the President's budget "saves taxpayers by focusing program spending, shrinking bureaucracy, and empowering the front lines."**

**Could you specifically identify how the proposed budget empowers your agency's front lines?**

**Response:** This Administration has committed to making the tough decisions that will lead to a balanced budget, and this is what a balanced budget looks like. We are prioritizing our assets and personnel in the field and are currently going through a process to determine how to shift resources from Washington, D.C. to the units in the field and how public private partnerships can best benefit our public lands.

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**Question 4:** On April 12, 2017, you issued a memorandum that required DOI headquarters to approve all grant awards over \$100,000. I am told that this action is significantly slowing down the expenditure of congressionally appropriated funds and is negatively impacting local science support and partner organizations.

**Doesn't this order centralize decision making within D.C. instead of allowing local experts to efficiently carry out their work across the country?**

**Response:** Interior distributes about \$5.5 billion in grants and cooperative agreements every year. In an effort to increase accountability so we know where our taxpayer money is being distributed, we initiated this review. It has been a good way for me to better understand this spending and how it relates to Interior's mission. We have an efficient process in place and the reviews are moving along quickly.

**Question 5:** The National Parks Service has a well-known maintenance backlog across the country, including sites in Michigan like the Sleeping Bear Dunes and Isle Royale National Park. According to a report by the Pew Charitable Trusts, total deferred maintenance on Park Service lands in Michigan totaled nearly \$50 million.

**It is my understanding that Interior's FY2018 budget cuts the Park Service's Operations account by \$200 million compared to FY2017 levels. In addition, I understand the budget proposes to decrease Park Service staff by 1,200.**

**While you have testified about your commitment to addressing the Park Service's maintenance backlogs, could you explain how the FY2018 budget would accomplish that objective? It strikes me as difficult to address these needs when you are cutting the resources and the personnel that are required to maintain our National Parks.**

**Response:** Across the Department, 2018 funding for land management operations is reduced by approximately seven percent, which will impact staffing levels. However, the budget also prioritizes funding non-recurring infrastructure projects that will help address the deferred maintenance backlog. In the long run, this will create a better experience for visitors and staff by ensuring that facilities are safe, functional, and can be operated more efficiently.

Additionally, the current estimate for the NPS deferred maintenance backlog is \$11.3 billion which is difficult to address fully using only annual appropriations. NPS continues to pursue innovative public/private partnerships, such as the Centennial Challenge program, and uses the Recreation Fee program to reduce some of the backlog. We will continue to work with NPS and

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Congress to develop innovative funding ideas to reduce the backlog.

**Question 6:** The BLM and USDA's Forest Service share responsibility for managing the bulk of the nation's wildfire suppression needs. Climate change, coupled with a century of aggressive suppression and increased development in the wildland urban interface, has resulted in larger and more complex fires. As you know, these fires are very expensive to suppress and drain other parts of land management agencies' non-fire budgets. This problem is particularly acute for the Forest Service. As we've tried to tackle this issue in the past, we've run into problems with OMB and other agencies that don't have expertise in natural resource management.

**To avoid these problems in the future, will you commit to working with Secretary Perdue to meaningfully engage OMB Director Mulvaney and other relevant Administration officials in a dialog regarding a comprehensive solution to the fire budget problem?**

**Response:** I agree that we need to work together to find a long-term solution to this problem. This budget maintains preparedness levels and supports fuels management activities. But because catastrophic fires don't wait for the budget, we need to craft solutions that make our forests healthy and help prevent fires. We look forward to working with Congress to do that.

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#### Questions from Senator Flake

**Question 1:** You and I have discussed the importance of tribal water rights settlements in Arizona and their potential to provide much needed water supplies on reservations. Settlements also create certainty and allow for partnerships with non-tribal water users. I am encouraged by your commitment to work with me on tribal settlements in Arizona. However, I am concerned about the unfilled positions in the Department that are related to tribal water rights and the impacts those vacancies have on ongoing negotiations. Can you give me an anticipated timeline for staffing of your tribal water rights team sufficient to evaluate the Hualapai Tribal water rights settlement?

**Response:** Senator, my team is working as expeditiously as possible to fill important positions at the Department. With regard to the Hualapai Tribal water rights settlement, the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office negotiation team continues to evaluate this settlement. I would be glad to keep you apprised as developments unfold.

**Question 2:** In western Arizona the wild burro situation has grown out of control. The latest population estimates show Arizona's burro population as almost three times what the BLM has determined as the highest appropriate management level. Burros cause extensive damage to natural landscape, compete with native animals for food, and pose a public safety hazard. I have repeatedly asked the BLM for a path forward for the management of wild horses and burros. This year's budget request proposes a \$10 million reduction for the wild horse and burro program while returning all the management tools provided by the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act. I would like to emphasize that while BLM works to improve the wild horse and burro management it should not be focused predominately on horses and instead needs to address the burro issues facing western Arizona. What efforts will the BLM undertake this year to control the growing burro population and bring them down to acceptable management levels?

**Response:** The current program is financially unsustainable, and I agree a new approach is needed. Rangelands are incapable of handling this overpopulation and these ecosystems are out of balance. In addition, program costs have more than doubled due to the cost attributable to care for excess horses and burros located off-range. To meet the Department's long-term goal of realigning program costs and animal populations to fulfil our statutory obligation to maintain appropriate herd management levels, BLM must have the necessary tools as provided in the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to manage on-range herds more effectively and humanely.



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**Question 3:** On May 3rd, 2017, the Acting Special Agent In Charge of District III of the Bureau of Indian Affairs sent a letter to tribal chiefs of police in Arizona regarding detention contracts with counties. The letter asked tribes to begin to adhere to a maximum bed limit for Navajo, Yavapai, and Kane Counties, as well as the Hualapai Tribe. It is my understanding that, at least for some tribes, these limits are below the typical daily population housed in county detention facilities. The letter went on to explain that if tribes were to exceed the daily maximums the contracts might be suspended. This would leave counties without the beds they need to keep dangerous criminals off the streets and without the time or resources to find enough beds elsewhere. The BIA has suggested that tribal police and courts implement “alternative sentencing” and commute sentences to meet the reduced bed limit. It is troubling to me that the BIA’s shifting use of resources may manipulate outcomes in our criminal justice system by predetermining the type of punishment the courts may impose. Is the BIA currently imposing a daily population limit on contract detention in county facilities? If so, how does the BIA propose that counties and tribes will meet this daily limit?

**Response:** The BIA is not currently imposing a daily population on contract detention in county facilities. BIA sent the May 3, 2017 letter referenced in your question at a point in time when the bureau was contemplating a year-long Continuing Resolution and was looking to manage any potential limited funding. On June 22, 2017, the BIA sent a letter to the Tribes in Arizona rescinding the May 3, 2017, letter.

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#### Questions from Senator Franken

**Question 1:** Secretary, following up on our conversation at the hearing, when I asked you to tell me how much warming government scientists predict for the end of this century under a “business as usual” scenario, the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Climate Assessment predicts about 8 degrees Fahrenheit, with the possibility of well over 11 degrees Fahrenheit. Do you agree with this?

**Response:** As I have stated, I do believe the climate is changing and man does have an influence, but I do not believe scientific models can predict global warming scenarios with much certainty.

**Question 2:** Could you help me understand your response to my colleague Rep. McCollum at a House hearing last week? You said that when we consider the climate: “Man has had an influence. But man has a negative influence not only on CO2, but you look at arsenic, you look at the chemicals that we have from agriculture, so man has not been a particularly good influence on a lot of things.” Was your intent to downplay the importance of addressing carbon dioxide?

**Response:** My intent was to discuss the effects of human activity on our environment in a broader context.

**Question 3:** When do you plan to start holding meetings of the White House Council on Native American Affairs? The council serves to break down barriers across agencies to ensure efficient programs for Indian Country.

**Response:** The White House Council on Native American Affairs is operating under the management of the White House to ensure Tribes have a direct line of communication with our Executive Branch leadership.

**Question 4:** It has been widely reported that earlier this year, the White House directed agencies to ignore oversight inquiries from Democrats. This is, frankly, unacceptable. And even Senator Grassley expressed his clear opposition in no uncertain terms.

- A. Do you agree with the White House’s position?
- B. Is it the official position of the Department of the Interior to ignore Democrats’ oversight inquiries?

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**C. Will you commit to responding to Democrats' inquiries on this committee, as well as those of other relevant committees?**

**Response to A, B, and C:** As I stated multiple times at the hearing, I believe in transparency and have encouraged members, no matter the party, to reach out to me when they have a request and we can discuss. I think it is important that we work together.

**Question 5:** Last Friday, the *Washington Post* reported that you are shaking up the Department of the Interior—reassigning up to 50 senior career public servants. While, this is within your purview, but according to long-serving DOI officials, there's never been anything similar involving so many people.

- A. What is the purpose of this mass reassignment?**
- B. Some have suggested that you are targeting career civil service employees who worked at a senior level during the Obama Administration for retribution. Is this the case?**
- C. If not, why do this now? Why do this before the eventual heads of various agencies have a chance to assess the current leadership and suggest changes?**
- D. Was this move your idea or did it originate from Acting Deputy Secretary James Cason, because the reassignment letters that the senior officials received came from him?**
- E. Is this part of a larger DOI reorganization? And if so when will you present plans for Congress and the public to consider?**

**Response to A, B, C, D, and E:** The Senior Executive Service (SES) 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. Rotation of SES provides an opportunity to improve talent development, mission delivery, and collaboration. It facilitates problem-solving and effective decision making. The purpose of these moves was to shift staff to areas where their skill set was better suited or to get staff out of Washington and into the field where they are needed most, which is a priority.

**Question 6:** Secretary, during your confirmation hearing you spoke about the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to preserve special areas and improve public access to the outdoors. You also touted your support of the program while serving in the House. This is something that we really agree on—the LWCF has done great things in Minnesota, such as improving state and local parks and helping to protect some of the most beloved areas of the state. This is why I am so disappointed to see the proposed cuts in the

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**President's budget. Did the administration consult with you before releasing the budget proposal? Did you support their proposal to cut LWCF? If so, how do you justify this shift, do you still support the program?**

**Response:** In recent years, a large portion of the Department's LWCF portfolio has focused on projects to acquire new lands both on federal lands and through grants to states. 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 many maintenance needs have been postponed for too long. Land acquisition is an area where the Department has flexibility to defer expenditures.

**Question 7: The Lewis and Clark regional water system reaches across three states connecting 20 communities and water systems with a much needed, reliable water source. However, current federal funding for Lewis & Clark has slowed to a point where the states, including Minnesota, have prefunded the federal government's share in order to maintain progress. Just last week, the State of Minnesota approved an additional \$3.5 million in funding for Lewis & Clark in order to reach the town of Worthington, Minnesota which needs this connection in order to provide their citizens safe drinking water and a reliable source of water to support the town. Do you see a project like Lewis & Clark as a priority for your agency and the Administration and what can you do as Secretary to ensure the federal government meets its commitments to the water system, as well as the states and communities relying on Lewis & Clark?**

**Response:** Rural water projects, such as the Lewis and Clark project, help build strong, secure communities and are important to supporting the livelihood of local economies. At the same time, they must compete with a number of Reclamation's priorities, including aging infrastructure, Indian water rights settlements and other priorities intended to address future water and energy related challenges, but I do appreciate the importance of this issue.

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#### Questions from Senator Manchin

**Question 1:** In West Virginia, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the reason you and your agencies have incomparable public assets such as the Harpers Ferry and the Gauley and New Rivers National Recreation Area. In 2016, West Virginia received more than \$400,000 in grants from the state side of the fund. These funds were used for all sorts of upgrades that will make the West Virginia outdoors even more wild and wonderful. I know it is just as important to your home state, where it protects the Greater Yellowstone area and Glacier and, I understand, key recreation access and drinking water supplies for your own hometown of Whitefish, Montana. I was surprised by your FY18 budget recommendation for LWCF, which would gut the program by 84 percent and stop many conservation and access projects dead in their track. Furthermore, your budget submission offers what I consider a false and dangerous choice between maintaining facilities in these parks and conserving public access and the actual resources people go to the parks to enjoy. Good management requires that you do both, just as I worked to do with West Virginia's state parks when they were under my care as governor.

The FY2018 Budget in Brief document says, "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."

Simple yes or no question, do you support permanent reauthorization of LWCF?

Do you have any recommended policy proposals for permanent LWCF reauthorization that you would like to share with the Committee today?

How do you intend to balance those commitments with a budget that essentially wipes out LWCF, and specifically endorses diverting those very revenues you previously sought to defend for their intended LWCF uses?

**Response:** Yes, I continue to support the LWCF. In recent years, a large portion of the Department's LWCF portfolio has focused on projects to acquire new lands both on federal lands and through grants to states. 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. Land

acquisition is an area where the Department has flexibility to defer expenditures.

**Question 2:** The President's budget proposes eliminating the Heritage Partnership Programs Commissions and grants, a program of the National Park Service. National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. There are currently 49 – two of which are located in West Virginia. These are not land management programs – they are cultural and heritage programs that generate revenue. As an example of the positive economic impacts of a national heritage area designation, the National Coal Heritage Area in southern West Virginia generates \$207 million in economic impact, supports 2,744 jobs and generates \$16.8 million in tax revenue. National Heritage Areas leverage federal funds to create jobs, generate revenue for local governments, and sustain local communities. NHAs average \$5.50 for every \$1.00 of federal investment. According to the budget justification, this is a program that is better funded locally. The problem with that is there are 49 National Heritage Areas spread all over the country, the local hunger to contribute to these programs will vary depending on location, mission, etc.

**Do you believe the National Park Service has a role to play in ensuring that funds that have already been invested continue to yield as high of a return as possible?**

**Are you concerned that the administration may be viewing opportunities for potential cuts from a high level, and not considering hearing the local support for these programs?**

**Response:** 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.

**Question 3:** Secretary Zinke, during your confirmation hearing you said that we must find ways to get the younger generations –specifically millennials—into the outdoors. You said, specifically, “We have to motivate and incentivize outdoor activities to teach our millennials the importance of the great outdoors. If you look at the numbers, and the demographics are actually a little different. The people that are visiting the parks are the older generations. So we have to look at new ways of incentivizing younger millennials to experience the parks...”

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I couldn't agree more, and part of my motivation as a Senator is to conserve areas that are simply too special to not be preserved so that we can pass them off to our children and grandchildren. West Virginia is an outdoorsman's paradise, with some of the best hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities you can find. Like you, I am a grandfather, and I have enjoyed taking my grandchildren hunting and fishing to teach them the joys, and serenity of the great outdoors. That is why I can't escape the irony of the President's budget request proposing to eliminate several programs that do exactly what you described in your confirmation hearing—getting millennials out to enjoy and conserve our public lands and quite possibly become the next Teddy Roosevelt. The President's budget proposes to eliminate the Fish and Wildlife Service Youth Conservation Corps Program, and reduce funds for the National Park Services Visitors Services Youth Projects and Interpretation and Education Projects as well as the Volunteers in Parks Program.

Do you still stand by your statement in your confirmation hearing that we must find ways to get the younger generation into the outdoors?

Do you believe this budget reflects that goal?

**Response:** Yes, I believe that it is important to get our children and grandchildren out to our parks and public lands to experience our collective heritage. By focusing on priorities to ensure that we take care of the assets we currently own, as this budget does, we make sure that these lands will be maintained and available for future generations.

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#### Questions from Senator Heinrich

**Question 1:** In 2014, Congress made improvements to sec. 365 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to provide additional resources to seven of BLM's busiest field offices to hire and support sufficient staff to meet current demands. Subsection 365(e) requires BLM to report to Congress annually on the allocation of the additional funds among the seven Project offices and the accomplishments of each office. The first annual report, due February 2016, has never been submitted to Congress as required by law. The second report was due in February 2017. When will BLM provide the two overdue reports?

**Response:** The BLM is now in the process of developing and finalizing the reports.

**Question 2:** I continue to hear about problems arising from the large number of long-standing job vacancies in BLM's field offices in New Mexico. Of particular concern are significant vacancies in Farmington, the Federal Indian Minerals Office and Carlsbad. Currently there are 60 vacant positions in BLM offices in New Mexico, with as many as 21 vacant positions in Carlsbad alone. Clearly the administration's hiring freeze contributed to the delay in filling these important federal jobs. What actions are you taking to address promptly the need to fill the large number of job vacancies in New Mexico's various BLM offices?

**Response:** Overall, the BLM has faced challenges with recruitment, training, and retention of technical staff. That said, the BLM is working to boost recruitment and other hiring incentives to compete with agencies and industry for qualified staff. 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.



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#### Questions from Senator Hirono

**Question 1: The President's budget proposes cutting the USGS Natural Hazards Program by more than \$20 million. This cut specifically removes \$3.6 million from the Volcano Hazards Program.**

Right now in Hawaii we have lava actively flowing from Kilauea Volcano. In addition to monitoring Kilauea USGS personnel at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory are also actively monitoring earthquake activity from Mauna Loa, the world's largest volcano. Mauna Loa occupies over half of Hawaii Island and its eruptions produce lava at a much higher rate than those of any other volcano in Hawaii. The last time it erupted in 1984 the lava came within 7.2 km of Hilo, the largest population center on Hawaii Island. Hawaii County (comprised of Hawaii Island) is the fastest growing county in the State and the potential for an eruption from Mauna Loa to threaten lives and property in Hawaii is very high.

**How will the administration's proposed cut to the Volcano Hazards Program impact USGS's ability to detect, warn, and respond to an eruption at Mauna Loa?**

**Response:** At the FY 2018 proposed funding level, continuous situational awareness and capability for warnings and forecasts of volcanic activity on Mauna Loa (as well as Kilauea) will be maintained with the current monitoring networks.

**Question 2: The President's budget proposes to reduce the Operation of the National Park System account by \$200 million, which would reduce base funding for parks throughout the country, impacting staffing, hours, and services. The budget proposes reducing staff by 1,242 FTEs, causing 90 percent of national parks to reduce current staffing levels.**

The National Parks subcommittee just held an oversight hearing on opportunities to improve the workplace environment within the National Park Service. It was mentioned how employees are currently overextended with increased park visitation and how that negatively impacts employee morale.

**Do you think this reduction in National Park Service staff funding will improve or worsen the workplace environment?**

**Response:** Across the Department, 2018 funding for land management operations is reduced by approximately seven percent. However, the budget aims to create a better experience for staff

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and visitors by prioritizing funding to address the deferred maintenance backlog and shifting more resources to the field rather than Washington.

Furthermore, morale is not solely related to the budget, but is affected by many different factors. One important factor is whether leadership is setting a positive example and addressing the inappropriate actions of employees. As Secretary, my expectations are clear. We are committed to addressing these issues.

**Question 3: You have also noted that one of your highest priorities as Secretary is to address the \$11 billion deferred maintenance backlog within the National Park Service.**

**If there was an influx of funding to address the backlog, whether it be as part of an infrastructure package or something else, how do you expect projects to be completed if there aren't enough National Park Service staff to perform those duties?**

**Response:** I believe that we have to realign our employees to make sure that the focus is at the field level. This type of realignment will help to support the proposals contained in the 2018 budget, particularly those prioritizing taking care of the assets we currently own.

**Question 4: Despite a theme of 'climate change denial' within this administration, we in Hawaii are seeing first-hand the impacts of climate change. Since 2012 the University of Hawaii at Manoa has hosted one of the Department of Interior's eight regional Climate Adaptation Centers, which were created to address challenges resulting from climate change and provide land use managers tools to plan and adapt to these changes.**

**The President's budget proposes to eliminate four of the eight regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers to refocus "work on the highest priority needs of Interior bureaus and States." Will the Pacific Islands regional center at the University of Hawaii at Manoa be eliminated under this proposal?**

**Response:** No decision has been made about which centers may be consolidated, but such a decision would be based on competition to determine how to refocus work on the highest priority needs of Interior bureaus and states.

**Question 5: The National Park Service is charged with not only protecting our nation's natural resources, but also the cultural and historic resources that tell the story of our country. An example of this is Honouliuli in Hawaii where the story of Japanese internment is told.**

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**What will you do as Secretary to ensure the telling of our nation's diverse history, as well as the preservation of historic and cultural resources, receives adequate funding and capable management given the dramatic cuts proposed in the current administration's budget?**

**Response:** I am a strong supporter of the National Parks, including those parks that tell our Nation's story. 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, including historic and cultural resources.

**Question 6: As noted before, climate change continues to be a major factor in landscape, infrastructure, and natural resource planning in Hawaii.**

**How will you ensure that our national park sites in Hawaii and beyond are protected and adequately resources in the face of these changes and what appears to be inadequate funding in the administration's budget?**

**Response:** The President's budget supports actions to mitigate and adapt to extreme weather, drought, flood, wildfire, and other hazards that affect federal lands. These mitigation and adaptation strategies are fundamental to the Department's stewardship mission.

**Question 7: Roughly a third of the nation's listed species are from Hawaii. The proposed cuts to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's programs will disproportionately impact my state and almost certainly result in extinctions of the plants and animals of our natural heritage and revered by the native Hawaiian culture.**

**Land acquisition programs like the Conservation Grants programs, the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition, and Recovery Land Acquisition Grants are not funded in this budget. Acquisition is necessary to actively protect the native forests and wetland areas that are threatened by development, fire, and invasive species. Funds from these programs allow the state to set aside lands for conservation, which provide vital habitat for listed species. Knowing this, do you think Hawaii, which has one of the smallest budgets and most expensive land prices in the nation, should be solely responsible for the acquisition of land to protect one-third of the federally listed species the US government have been mandated to protect by the Endangered Species Act?**

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**Response:** The Administration's budget includes \$101 million for invasive species work across the Department and I believe this work is important. Regarding land acquisition, our focus is on being good stewards of the lands we already own. Acquisition of new lands is not a priority for the Department in FY2018.

**Question 8:** The Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance grants program has been cut by 30%. Habitat Conservation Plans allow for permits to be issued to private entities and businesses undertaking projects that might otherwise result in the destruction of endangered or threatened species. The development of an HCP is required by federal and state laws to obtain needed permits, without which the projects cannot move forward. However, developing an HCP can be cost prohibitive and this grant program provides crucial support for economic growth in the state by offsetting costs to small businesses who would otherwise not be able to afford the expense to develop an individual HCP. Hawaii has a low population size and tax base. With reduced federal support, the state will not be able to carry the same workload and therefore will be forced to eliminate many economic opportunities for Hawaii. Furthermore, HCP planning assistance grants prevent delays in mitigation and conservation actions for our most imperiled species.

Do you believe that cutting this program will slow development and have negative economic and conservation implications throughout the nation?

**Response:** No. Due to the fluctuating demand for the development of regional, multi-species habitat conservation plans from year to year, the Department is requesting to reduce funding for HCP Planning Assistance to align with anticipated demand.

**Question 9:** Hawaii is home to 37% of the nation's listed bird species. To support their protection, the "State of the Birds" program – a congressional earmark program that started in 2000 has provided USFWS with approximately \$1.6 million for Hawaiian birds. This program provides vital support for some of the nation's most critically endangered bird species, bringing them back from the brink of extinction, like the Hawaiian Crow or alala, which only exists in captivity. By defunding "State of the Birds," many of these birds that depend on the captive propagation facility to build their numbers in the wild will surely go extinct. Thus, all the millions of dollars already invested to recover these birds would be lost.

Will this budget cut allow FWS to fulfill their mandate to prevent extinctions and safeguard America's unique natural resources?

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**Response:** Yes. Preventing extinction and achieving recovery of listed species has always been, and will continue to be, one of the FWS's highest priorities.

**Question 10: DOI is in the consultation process regarding its reorganization. Thus far, what feedback have you received at these consultations? Additionally, can you expand on your reorganization plans and what you plan to do to continue to meet DOI's trust responsibility to Native communities?**

**Response:** Interior's bureaus are organized and report across regions, have their own priorities, and are not good at joint operations. 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.

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#### Questions from Senator King

**Question 1:** I wanted to follow up on your comment during the hearing about cuts to individual national parks. In the hearing after I asked if there are cuts at individual parks that will hit their operating budgets, you stated that those kind of cuts would be “very doubtful” to individual parks. Yet Acadia National Park is facing an 8% cut to its Operation and Maintenance budget from the National Park Service FY18 budget request. This cut is also in the context of a national park that has seen nearly 60% increase in visitation in ten years, and is facing a nearly \$70 million backlog.

How does the Department of Interior specifically plan to make the National Park Units function more efficiently while visitation levels are at their highest and are projected to continue to grow, yet Operation and Maintenance funding is requested to be cut?

**Response:** I am a strong supporter of the National Parks. 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.

**Question 2:** You specified in the hearing that Advisory Commissions, though temporarily suspended during the review period, could apply for exemptions to meet formally for scheduled meetings. You also stated that if the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission had a scheduled meeting, “all they have to do is put in a request for exemption.” If a request for an exemption is requested and filed for a scheduled September 11th meeting of the Acadia Advisory Commission, will this request be granted, as you stated?

**Response:** 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, and the Acadia Advisory Commission was approved to meet on September 11, 2017. The review is scheduled to be completed later this year so that commissions can get back to work.

**Question 3:** Back in January during your nomination hearing, you stated before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that “I am on record supporting full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for a reason. I think it is an incredibly important

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program that has done great work.” Unfortunately the President’s budget calls for an 84% decrease to all LWCF non-outdoor recreational program funding. This hits home in Maine where LWCF grants have served the state well not only in acquisition but in development, planning or infrastructure investments in land conservation that helps generate outdoor recreation revenue. How does limiting LWCF funding in such a large way help protect the program?

**Response:** In recent years, a large portion of the Department’s LWCF portfolio has focused on projects to acquire new lands both on federal lands and through grants to states. 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. Land acquisition is an area where the Department has flexibility to defer expenditures. In addition, as I pointed out in the hearing, the LWCF program is funded by offshore royalties and revenues, which dropped significantly throughout the last administration. In order to support future funding for programs like LWCF, we must prioritize our revenue portfolio as well, which this budget does.

**Question 4:** It is my understanding that LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants over \$100,000 awarded by the National Park Service in 2017 have been put on hold for “an additional layer of review.” This is unfortunately putting a substantial burden on local organizations who have worked to line up project partners, funding sources and timetables to accomplish their conservation and park projects.

One such project in Maine is in the town of Acton, for the purchase of 25 acres at Goat Hill, a valued destination for the year around and seasonal residents of the region. The current owners have allowed access over the years but have recently decided to sell the 25 acres of hill top. The Town of Acton (pop. 6000) has voted in referendum to contribute more than half of the funds needed for this purchase. Acton’s LWCF State and Local Assistance Grant award funding is needed to help with the purchase price and to begin infrastructure investments to be sure the public can access the trail and summit during Maine’s peak outdoors season.

What is the process for review of projects that have already been awarded, like the project in Acton, and when will the process be completed? Will these communities be given some guidance in the near term on whether and how their work to secure assistance through the NPS state grant program will be affected?

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**Response:** After being confirmed, I made it a goal to be accountable for how the Department spends the taxpayer's dollar. As a part of that effort, I asked for a review of all grants that exceeded \$100,000 so we could have a thorough accounting of what is being dispersed and how it is being used. This is a good governance effort as we look to spend taxpayer dollars in the most efficient and wise manner.

**Question 5:** Can you relay the findings of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's analysis (required by the FY 2016 omnibus that passed in December 2015) as to whether it would be appropriate to include Echinoderms in the Service's exemption to clearance requirements for import and export of fishery products? Additionally, I am still interested in receiving the data on inspection requests and executions, which were also provided for in that same legislation. Any comment on the reason for delay, which is now more than a year past due, would be appreciated.

**Response:** In response to this directive in the FY 2016 Appropriations Conference Report, the Fish and Wildlife Service carried out an analysis of the history and context of the relevant regulations and exemptions, the role of the Service's inspection processes in the trade, the current legal and illegal trade in echinoderms, and the risk to protected species due to a potential exemption. Based on this analysis, the Service concluded that the exemption granted to shellfish and fishery product imports and exports was not appropriate for echinoderms. We are happy to provide you with the data on inspections requests to you and your staff as well.



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#### Questions from Senator Duckworth

**Question 1:** On April 12, 2017, a memorandum directing Department of Interior bureaus and offices to submit all grant and cooperative agreements of \$100,000 or greater, or modifications to awards which will result in a total award reaching \$100,000 or greater for that award number, for review. This is already having impacts heritage areas.

Given that this funding was appropriated by Congress, I am concerned by the action Interior is taking and how it is impacting the communities these funds were intended for.

Can you report provide details regarding who is managing this review process and how long it will take for the reviews to occur and grants to be processed in a timely fashion?

**Response:** Interior distributes about \$5.5 billion in grants and cooperative agreements every year. In an effort to increase accountability so we know where our taxpayer money is being distributed, we initiated this review. It has been a good way for me to better understand this spending and how it relates to Interior's mission. We have an efficient process in place and the reviews are moving along quickly.

**Question 2:** As you are aware, there is an \$11+ billion National Park Service maintenance backlog. What specific plans does the Administration have on how this backlog will be addressed in the Administration's infrastructure proposal?

**Response:** As demonstrated in the President's budget, it is important that we take care of the assets that we own. The Department continues to work with the Administration on the enactment of this budget and any infrastructure proposals moving forward.

**Question 3:** During your confirmation, you shared that the National Park Service deferred maintenance backlog is a priority, as is supporting front line park rangers. However, the Administration's budget cuts the park service operating budget by 8% and reduces staff levels by over 1,200 people.

How can we reasonably expect the maintenance backlog to be addressed if we're cutting the staff that would do this work?

How are you proposing to support front line rangers when you are seeking to cut more than 1,200 rangers?

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**Response:** 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. This type of realignment will support the proposals contained in the 2018 budget, particularly those prioritizing taking care of the assets we currently own.

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**Questions from Senator Portman**

**Question 1:** I've been working on the implementation of my World War II Memorial Prayer Act, which was signed into law by President Obama on June 30, 2014. This Act requires the Interior Department to install a plaque at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. with the prayer that President Roosevelt gave to the nation on the morning of D-Day. I understand that the site for the plaque has been approved, but that the design of the plaque is still being reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. I have written to the Park Service to encourage them to move as quickly as possible to complete this project. Can you make the completion of this project a priority for the National Park Service?

**Response:** I support the placement of this plaque, and the sacrifices of all our men and women who defend our nation. I understand that the design concepts for the plaque were favorably presented to the National Capital Planning Commission in July. After approval of a final design, the NPS will work the Friends of WWII to complete this commemoration as expeditiously as possible.

**Question 2:** The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, which includes the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, has been on the National Park Service's Tentative List for consideration to become a World Heritage site since 2008. I understand that the next step is to issue a Federal Register notice to announce the nomination. Will you work with the Ohio partners to ensure that this nomination process continues to move forward?

**Response:** I look forward to learning more about this nomination and reviewing it as the process moves forward.

**Question 3:** As you know, my National Park Service Centennial Act was signed into law on December 16, 2017 (P.L. 114-289). The Act provides a reliable funding stream for the Centennial Challenge fund and the Park Foundation's endowment. I know you have been pushing for the change in the senior pass fee in a timely manner and I believe it will actually result in a leverage of greater than 2 to 1 over time. Can you please provide an update on when the Department will announce and implement that increase providing crucial funding to the parks?

**Response:** The Senior Pass increase took effect across the country on August 28, 2017. The National Park Service issued a news release with this information on July 10, 2017.

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**Question 4:** I've worked with Senator Mark Warner to introduce the National Park Service Legacy Act, which will provide funds from oil and gas leases for backlog projects. I was encouraged during your nomination hearing when you said you'd like to see NPS infrastructure projects included in the infrastructure reform plan, and hope that my National Park Service Legacy Act can help with this effort. As the infrastructure package hopefully begins to take shape do you believe that the Legacy Act could be an option to provide additional funding to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog? Can you help us in the Administration with these efforts?

**Response:** Yes, I look forward to working with you, Congress, and the Administration on options to address and reduce the deferred maintenance backlog at the Department.

**Question 5:** As you know, another program that is funded by oil and gas leases is the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Like you, I support the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and I support its permanent reauthorization. The LWCF is also of particular interest in my home state of Ohio, as two factory buildings at the Dayton Aviation Heritage site were included on the list of LWCF priorities in the previous budget request. These factory buildings were where the Wright Brothers built the first airplane, and are the oldest surviving aviation-related buildings in the U.S. It is important to have these buildings acquired by the Park Service so that our aviation heritage is preserved and can be taught to future generations. I am aware that the President's budget proposes to severely cut LWCF and does not include any new land acquisition projects. However, Congress appropriated \$400 million for LWCF in the FY17 Omnibus bill. If Congress continues to appropriate money for LWCF, will you support the activities of the LWCF program?

**Response:** 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. In addition, as I pointed out in the hearing, the LWCF program is funded by offshore royalties and revenues, which dropped significantly throughout the last administration. In order to support future funding for programs like LWCF, we must prioritize our revenue portfolio as well, which this budget does. That said, I continue to support the LWCF and will work with Congress to ensure support for our federal lands.

**Question 6:** Finally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey both play critical roles in protecting the Great Lakes from invasive species, such as Asian Carp, zebra mussels, and sea lamprey. In the FY17 Omnibus bill, Congress appropriated \$16.6 million to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to combat invasive species and \$5.6 million for

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**USGS to continue monitoring and track the movement of Asian Carp to ensure they do not enter the Great Lakes. The Fish and Wildlife Service and USGS have also been important partners in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in combating invasive species and restoring habitats and toxic areas. Will you make sure that the Interior Department continues its role in protecting the Great Lakes if Congress provides the necessary resources?**

**Response:** Interior continues to play a leadership role in addressing invasive species issues, including serving as Co-Chair to the National Invasive Species Council and as one of several federal agencies that directs funding toward programs and projects in the Great Lakes watershed, including those that address aquatic invasive species, toxics and contaminated sediments, nonpoint source pollution, and habitat protection and restoration. Interior will continue ongoing efforts in the Great Lakes watershed consistent with the funding directives provided by Congress.

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#### Questions from Senator Cortez Masto

**Question 1:** : The Southern Nevada Public Management Act is an important program for Nevada that both my colleague Senator Heller and I support. Since its enactment, SNPLMA has funded over 1,200 projects, with notable investments across Southern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and Lake Mead. It is a critical program that represents a successful compromise by Nevadans to allow the Department to sell public land and invest that money in public works and conservation projects. The Administration's proposed budget cancels SNPLMA's account balances, which I believe is an affront to a state's ability to compromise and improve its economy. Secretary, you believe that states should be able to determine local issues and once they do that their compromises should be respected. So, do you support cancelling the funds for this account?

**Response:** The budget makes tough choices that are necessary to achieve balance in ten years. The budget does not eliminate the SNPLMA program, which will continue, but proposes cancelling \$230 million from the unobligated balances in the SNPLMA special account. This will not affect projects that are underway or have already been approved by the Bureau.

**Question 2:** Why do you believe the Administration is undermining a successful compromise by Nevadans?

**Response:** As indicated in the response to the previous question, the SNPLMA program is not being eliminated. It will continue. The budget proposes to realize \$230 million in savings from unobligated balances in the SNPLMA special account.

**Question 3:** The 2018 budget will encourage the Department to be more innovative and look at creative ways to manage programs and increase revenues, which will have a longer-term positive impact on economic output. Interior can and will maintain its assets, offer a world-class experience on public lands, and promote economic growth by developing public-private partnerships, encouraging responsible energy development, and reorganizing the workforce. In particular, as I said at my hearing, we need to provide our front lines with the appropriate resources to get the job done.

**Response:** The 2018 budget will encourage the Department to be more innovative and look at creative ways to manage programs and increase revenues, which will have a longer-term positive impact on economic output. Interior can and will maintain its assets, offer a world-class experience on public lands, and promote economic growth by developing public-private partnerships, encouraging responsible energy development, and reorganizing the workforce. In

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particular, as I said at my hearing, we need to provide our front lines with the appropriate resources to get the job done.

**Question 4: The Administration's budget proposes \$68 million in cuts to the PILT Program. PILT funds are utilized in 49 states and nearly every Congressional district. Nevada is ranked tenth in the amount of PILT funding received. In 2016, Nye County received \$3.1 million through PILT, and a 10 percent cut would significantly affect their ability to provide critical services to their communities, like education, law enforcement, and healthcare systems. Do you believe these cuts are fair to rural areas? How would you address critical cuts to this program if the President's budget is implemented by Congress?**

**Response:** The FY 2018 request budgets responsibly for the PILT program. The request for PILT is about 12 percent below the 2016 enacted level, commensurate with the overall reduction for Interior programs in the FY 2018 Budget. The \$397 million in discretionary funding requested for PILT reflects this Administration's support to the communities neighboring our public lands without assuming enactment of separate authorizing legislation.

**Question 5: Your agency, like so many others within the federal government, have dealt with continued shortfalls in budgetary funding, which has hurt our government's ability to partner effectively with private industry and have inflicted negative impacts on our nation's parks, forests and wildlife conservation programs. Do you believe more funding would allow the Interior Department to be a better partner to industry and the taxpayer?**

**Response:** This Administration has committed to making the tough decisions that will lead to a balanced budget. Most of the cuts in this budget reflect duplication, a shift in priority or they are activities where partners can step in. In addition, we are prioritizing our assets and personnel in the field and are currently going through a process to determine how to shift resources from Washington, D.C. to the units in the field and how public private partnerships can best benefit our public lands.

**Question 6: Do you believe budgetary and staff cuts have contributed to permitting delays that have caused concern for mining interests and other industries in Nevada?**

**Response:** As part of my review of the Department and its 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, and as necessary to accomplish this important work.

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**Question 7: As you know, Secretary Zinke, I have voiced my concern about the executive order that requires a review of many national monuments across the country, including Gold Butte and Basin and Range in my state of Nevada. I submitted a comment letter to emphasize the economic and environmental benefits as well as the widespread support of both of these monuments. Will you take into consideration the economic benefit and widespread support of Nevada's monuments before making a decision?**

**Response:** Yes, public comment is an essential component of Interior's process to develop recommendations on monuments currently under review, and thank you for your letter stating your position on the monuments under review in Nevada. In this review, we have sought input on multiple levels, from locals on the ground and county commissioners to Governors, tribal leaders, and Members of Congress, and took all this information into consideration before making a recommendation. A draft report was submitted to the President on August 24, 2017.

**Question 8: If the Administration's proposed budget cuts were implemented, how would they impact the review process moving forward?**

**Response:** The proposed budget would not impact the current review process.

**Question 9: Will the budget cuts affect the Department's partnership with the Resource Advisory Councils or other opportunities for the public to weigh in?**

**Response:** As I have said before, it is important for local stakeholders to have a voice in the decision-making process. Public participation will remain a critical way to ensure local residents who actually live near the land and deal directly with the consequences of land use decisions are heard before those decisions are made.

**Question 10: How will we maintain visitation as sites like Gold Butte and Basin and Range when the Administration's budget aims to cut over 1200 staff positions?**

**Response:** Across the Department, 2018 funding for land management operations is reduced by approximately seven percent, which will impact staffing levels. However, the budget also prioritizes funding non-recurring infrastructure projects that will help address the deferred maintenance backlog. In the long run, this will create a better experience for visitors and staff by ensuring that facilities are safe, functional, and can be operated more efficiently.

**Question 11: As you know, Nevada's public lands are critical to the character and economy of my state. Outdoor recreation brings \$14.9 billion in consumer spending to Nevada, with**



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well over half the population recreating outside each year. At Lake Mead alone, visitors spent over \$312 million in 2016. Without question, parks are a boon to local economies with over 330 million visits and nearly \$35 billion to the national economy last year. Despite this growth, and the need for federal support, I see that the administration's budget slashes funding for the National Park Service. Why cut funding when parks are so clearly beneficial to our national economy?

**Response:** I am a strong supporter of the National Parks. 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 our maintenance backlog and focuses on taking care of the assets we currently own.

**Question 12: How long do you think the current infrastructure will last with an increased number of visitors?**

**Response:** National parks are a national treasure, and providing access to these federal lands for a range of activities is of critical importance to the Administration. I believe that it is important to get our children and grandchildren out to our parks and public lands to experience our collective heritage. By focusing on priorities to ensure that we take care of the assets we currently own, as this budget does, we make sure that these lands will be maintained and available for future generations.

**Question 13: Currently, 80% of trail maintenance in Nevada is accomplished by volunteers through organizations such as Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Great Basin Institute. While these partnerships are crucial for maintenance and we appreciate their incredible work, there is widespread concerns that with further cuts, the responsibility of all maintenance will fall on the shoulders on these organizations. Can you address some of those concerns?**

**Response:** It is important that our parks and public lands continue to offer a world-class experience, and I intend to ensure that they are maintained to accomplish that. I believe we can be an efficient manager and a good neighbor at the same time. As mentioned before, we are prioritizing our assets and personnel in the field and are currently going through a process to determine how to shift resources from Washington, D.C. to the units in the field and how public private partnerships can best benefit our public lands.

**Question 14: For nearly 40 years, LWCF has funded land acquisition, conserved threatened and endangered species, and provided critical grants to states. Just in Clark**

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County, Nevada, there are 89 projects that received 13 million dollars of LWCF funding and have improved our natural areas and local economies, including conservation of recreation areas, local trails, and wildlife refuges. The Administration's budget proposes a cut from \$400 million to \$64 million – that's a decrease of more than 80 percent for a fund that has benefitted conservation and recreation in every state. Do you believe these cuts will destabilize conservation and our rural local economies? How would your agency be able to administer this program with these cuts?

**Response:** In recent years, a large portion of the Department's LWCF portfolio has focused on projects to acquire new lands both on federal lands and through grants to states. 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 many maintenance needs have been postponed for too long. Land acquisition is an area where the Department has flexibility to defer expenditures. In addition, as I pointed out in the hearing, the LWCF program is funded by offshore royalties and revenues, which dropped significantly throughout the last administration. In order to support future funding for programs like LWCF, we must prioritize our revenue portfolio as well, which this budget does.

**Question 15:** Nevada is second in the nation in the amount of geothermal power produced and has the country's largest untapped geothermal resources. However, the Administration's budget repeals the 25 percent share of revenue distribution for geothermal royalties that is provided to counties. These royalties provide up to 10% of revenues to counties in Nevada, so the repeal would be harmful to our local economies. This is another example of how the President's budget hurts rural communities so why is the Administration repealing these payments? Can you address these concerns?

**Response:** The budget proposal to eliminate the geothermal revenue payments to counties is intended to restore the historic formula for the disposition of federal geothermal leasing revenues, which is 50 percent to the states and 50 percent to the Treasury.

**Question 16:** [Missing]

**Question 17:** I understand that the Duck Valley Shoshone Paiute Tribe has a strong relationship with the BLM regional office in Idaho where they meet monthly and collaborate effectively to protect cultural resources. However, the Tribe has mentioned to me that they do not have a similar relationship with the BLM office in Nevada. Will the

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**Administration's proposed budget cuts impact BLM's ability to engage with Tribes in a way that satisfies their obligation?**

**Response:** I believe sovereignty must mean something and that self-determination is a priority. The review process that is underway will determine how we shift assets from Washington to the units in the field to ensure relationships with local communities and tribes improve. Our goal is to push assets and personnel where they are needed most so the Department, and its bureaus, can more effectively carry out its mission.

**Question 18: Can you please explain how these cuts will not endanger these communities?**

**Response:** The Administration'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 19: President Trump's proposed budget would eliminate the Interior's National Heritage Areas Program, cutting nearly \$20 million from the program. National Heritage Areas are large lived-in landscapes with strong rooting in rural communities and towns. Since 2012, the Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership in White Pine County, Nevada has provided substantial funding and support to the Ely Renaissance Society, the Ely Shoshone Tribe, the Nevada Northern Railway, the White Pine Public Museum, and others projects totaling \$280,736. Those funds have been matched from local stakeholders with non-federal funding and labor valuing \$1.9 million for White Pine County residents. Why has the Administration proposed to eliminate funding to this program?**

**Response:** 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.

**Question 20: The budget proposes to eliminate appropriations language that prevents the sale and destruction of healthy, unadoptable wild horses, giving BLM the ability to conduct sales without limitation. I believe that we need to engage with all the key stakeholders in Nevada to address this issue before these actions are taken. Will you work with me to**

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**explore a task force to effectively engage with stakeholders and come up with a comprehensive and humane solution to wild horse overpopulation concerns?**

**Response:** The current program is not sustainable, and a new approach is needed. Rangelands are not capable of handling this overpopulation and as a consequence these ecosystems are out of balance. In addition, program costs have more than doubled due to the cost to care for excess horses and burros located off-range. To meet the Department's long-term goal of realigning program costs and animal populations to fulfil our statutory obligation to maintain appropriate herd management levels, BLM must have the necessary tools as provided in the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to manage on-range herds more effectively and humanely.

**Question 21: How will the proposed budget cuts impact the existing conservation measures set forward in the BLM and Forest Service plans for sage grouse? And, how will they impact efforts to replace those conservation measures? What will that process entail?**

**Response:** Like you, my desire is to avoid listing the sage-grouse and I have made a commitment to work with states and other local partners to accomplish this goal. The Budget requests over \$75 million in the Bureau's Wildlife Management program to continue work on the sage landscape, maintaining the Department's commitment to the sage-grouse and its habitat. The interagency team established by my Secretarial Order has carried out its initial review directly in conjunction with states. The recommendations detailed within the report provide a path forward for additional work to be carried out in consultation with states and local communities.

