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THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:09 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. The Committee will come to order.

We are here today to consider the President's budget request for the Department of the Interior for FY'19. This is the first of three budget hearings that we intend to hold this year, so we will be looking forward to hearing from both the Department of Energy and the U.S. Forest Service in the weeks ahead.

Secretary Zinke, welcome back before the Committee, I appreciate you being here this morning with your team. You and I have worked closely to chart a path to greater energy security which, as you have noted, runs right through the State of Alaska. I would like to thank you for all that you have done to help Alaska and the nation this past year.

You made one of your first trips as Secretary up North. And I also thank you for just recently sending Deputy Secretary Bernhardt and Assistant Secretary Balash to the state last week. They were there to engage local communities and stakeholders as the Department of the Interior lays out its framework for responsible exploration and development in the 1002 Area, so thank you for sending them up.

The President's budget request aims to build on the momentum created over the past year. The Department has requested a total of $11.7 billion in discretionary appropriations for Fiscal Year 2019. Overall, that is a reduction of more than $1 billion from the current level, but in line with the Administration's efforts to shift more funding to defense needs.

While I do not agree with everything in this request, I think it is fair to say it is a lot better than we have seen in recent years and I thank you for that. It focuses on taking care of the lands the Federal Government already owns rather than continuing to buy

more, and it will help us increase responsible production of our abundant natural resources, a goal that we both share.

One highlight in that effort is the Department's new draft five-year plan for offshore leasing, which put almost all of the areas on the table, at least from the start. I always emphasize that that was a starting point. Like a lot of members of this Committee, I support a new plan that provides greater access, while protecting the areas where development may perhaps not be right at this time.

This request also reinforces our efforts to improve our nation's mineral security. Both the President and you, Secretary Zinke, have recognized that this is a critical issue. We need to continue to address our mineral security this year through both continued administrative actions and complementary legislation. Within this request, I support the funding proposed for modern geologic mapping, which will greatly contribute to this effort.

During your confirmation hearing, Mr. Secretary, you made a commitment to work on the backlog of deferred maintenance in our national parks. This request reflects that commitment with a legislative proposal to create a new public lands infrastructure fund, which was recently introduced by Senator Alexander. Of course, we are still examining the proposals and the details of that bill. Senator Portman has long been a lead on many of our parks issues and also has a bill which we anticipate that we will be looking at in the weeks ahead. But, Mr. Secretary, I do appreciate your effort in reducing that backlog priority and working with not only the members of this Committee, Senator Portman and Senator Alexander, but others on this.

One thing that we can all agree on is that the Federal Government needs to be a good neighbor to those with federal lands in their states. And on that front, the Administration's proposal to extend and increase the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, I think is a good sign. With regard to our territories, I was pleased that we were able to authorize the 2010 agreement to continue financial assistance to Palau as part of last year's Defense Authorization bill. I would like to fully fund that agreement in the near future and finally meet our obligations to our allies in Palau.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to note some interesting data that the Partnership for Public Service recently sent our way. According to their survey, the Department of the Interior improved on all 10 workplace categories in 2017, from "effective leadership" and "empowerment" and "fairness" to "strategic management" and "support for diversity." I think we know that the Department has not always fared well in these types of surveys, but last year showed some bona fide improvements, so I appreciate your continued work to improve its culture and performance. I think we are seeing that prove out.

Again, Mr. Secretary, I thank you for being here this morning, and I thank you for your leadership. We will all have an opportunity for questions after hearing your statement, but thank you for appearing before the Committee.

With that, Senator Cantwell.

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

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Over the past year, the Trump Administration has overseen an attack on our public lands and on our nation's strong conservation ethic that, I believe, is unprecedented. This budget and Secretary Zinke's actions, I think, represent an abandonment of the Secretary's stewardship responsibility of our public resource.

In 1903, the Supreme Court described the Secretary of the Interior as, "the people's guardian over our public lands." Secretary Zinke assured us during his confirmation hearing that he would manage the Interior Department like a Teddy Roosevelt conservationist. I believe his actions and public policies have been the exact opposite.

In the past year, President Trump and Secretary Zinke have abandoned the responsibility of stewardship of our public lands and undermined the public trust by removing over two million acres of the Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase in Utah. It has proposed opening up drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf waters to oil and gas leasing in places that the United States has previously turned down. It is suggesting allowing trophy hunters to import tusks and other elephant body parts.

Many of these actions are not popular with the public and are being challenged in court. I believe these actions will ultimately be overturned as unlawful exercises of Presidential or Secretarial power. They also show that Secretary Zinke and the Trump Administration have abandoned any pretense of a balanced approach to managing federal lands, instead favoring industry over conservation and the taxpayer. The President's budget proposal for 2019, again, abdicates responsibility for stewardship of our natural resources and public good. The budget guts key conservation programs and favors energy development at any cost.

At a time when the visitation to our national parks is at record levels, the budget proposes cutting management and programs at our national parks instead of maximizing the opportunities for our citizens and for the public. These funding and staffing cuts are made worse by the Secretary's ill-conceived proposal to raise park entrance fees to $70 at some of our nation's most popular national parks, including Mount Rainier National Park and Olympic National Park in my state. This is an almost 300 percent increase. How does that make sense?

The two national parks in my state together have more than 4.8 million visitors a year. Your proposal would increase the park entrance fee and cost visitors to these parks an additional $215 million a year. The impact on these parks impact the livelihood of businesses and communities throughout my state.

Secretary Zinke, while my constituents are hearing about private jet rides and expensive doors, they want to understand why someone is proposing to raise park fees at this level. I have heard from many Washingtonians, and they are concerned that they won't be able to afford going to the national park and feel that these fees are absurd. These increases imposed on American's public lands are also in sharp contrast to the millions of dollars of royalty reduc-

tions that the Secretary is proposing for oil and gas and coal companies.

The staffing and budget cuts at our national parks also, combined with similar budget cuts at virtually all non-energy programs within the Interior, show the Administration's failure to recognize the importance of the outdoor recreation economy. Further proof of the Administration's efforts is that almost all appropriated funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund are cut, one of the most successful programs. In fact, the budget goes further by proposing to rescind previously appropriated Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds.

It also dramatically cuts funding to programs for the management of water in the West. And I can tell you this Committee has dealt effectively with this issue, but a lot more needs to be done. We can't have programs like conservation programs, drought resiliency programs and programs to help fund rural and tribal communities cut leaving farmers, fishermen, tribes, and communities high and dry.

Secretary Zinke's proposal for offshore leasing is also unprecedented, in my opinion. It allows for offshore oil and gas drilling in over 90 percent of the coastal waters, including off the coast of Washington and Oregon. These are things that have been considered in the past and shelved.

Dramatic increases in offshore oil and gas development in our area propose a direct threat to a robust coastal ocean economy. The fishing communities and the recreation communities in my state are opposed to this idea.

Secretary Zinke is also playing a political game in choosing where to site drilling activities. The Secretary's decision on a last-minute exemption for Florida while ignoring opposition from at least 10 other states, I think, has made this process seem very arbitrary and capricious to taxpayers.

On top of that, obviously, there are other safeguards and regulations that are proposed to be rolled back. The President's budget would also gut oil spill and environmental research. This is very important as there are important questions that we don't have answered on oil.

And let me talk for one minute about methane. The Senate and House have upheld important legislation to make sure we have commonsense regulations relating to oil and gas leasing and not unnecessarily flare methane gas. Fortunately, the courts have continued to say that we need to hold this up, making sure that the Administration takes action, but the Administration continues to block the implementation of these important rules.

Last year the Senate spoke on this and defeated an effort to roll back the methane rule using the Congressional Review Act. Senators recognized that wasting $330 million of the public's natural resources every year is a bad idea, and yet those ideas continue to try to move forward in various ways.

I am, Madam Chair, disappointed at this budget proposal and the actions of this Administration as it relates to these important issues.

Yes, I could talk a lot about private planes, helicopters, and doors, but there are also very important public policy issues here that I hope to focus on and get answers for my constituents.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Collins? Cantwell. Yes, I need a little coffee here this morning. [Laughter.]

It is that daylight savings time. We are going to have to do something about that.

Secretary Zinke, welcome back before the Committee. We welcome your opportunity to speak to the FY2019 budget request for the Department of the Interior.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN ZINKE, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member, and Committee members for the opportunity to offer my support for the President's 2019 budget request for the Department of the Interior.

With your permission, I'd like to submit my entire written statement for the record.

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

Secretary ZINKE. The President has made it very clear about his priorities. He has spent the first year in office keeping the promises he has made to the American people, and there are many promises, and there are many promises kept.

This budget is a major step toward keeping another one of the President's promises, rebuilding our infrastructure. The President is a builder and the son of a plumber, as I am. I look forward to working with the President on restoring America's greatness through a historic investment of our public lands infrastructure. This is the largest investment in our public lands infrastructure in our nation's history. Let me repeat that. This is the largest investment in our public lands infrastructure in the history of this country.

Our public lands are our greatest treasures, but they have suffered serious neglect from our nation's leaders over the years from both sides. Our Interior deferred maintenance backlog is $16 billion. $11.6 billion of it can be found in our National Park Service alone. This includes everything from our roads, bridges, tunnels, visitor centers and restrooms.

At the Grand Canyon National Park, as an example, visitors receive water from an obsolete pipeline that has broken more than 80 times since 2010. It has forced emergency rationing, costing millions of dollars to fix over and over again.

The President's budget proposal requires legislation for a new Public Lands Infrastructure Fund to address the deferred maintenance problem—this is a legislative priority. The fund would provide up to $18 billion over 10 years for maintenance and improvements in our national parks, our national wildlife refuges and Bureau of Indian Education funds. Similar to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, it would be funded from energy revenues—all energy, not just oil and gas, all energy from public lands.

The budget also includes $1.3 billion for construction and repairs. Infrastructure is not merely an expense, it is an investment. Improved infrastructure is an economic driver. Our public lands should be for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, as the Roosevelt Arch in Yellowstone National Park so proudly proclaims.

In 2016, 330 million visitors went through our park system, half a billion through Interior lands. It's estimated that those visitors spent $18.4 billion in our parks alone and, overall, recreation is $887 billion in consumer spending and employs 7.6 million people.

All Americans should have the opportunity to enjoy a national park, but without an investment in our infrastructure to go along with a record-setting amount of visitors, we are loving our parks to death.

I was pleased to join Senators Alexander, King, Daines, Heinrich, Gardner, Tillis, and Manchin this week in introducing the National Parks Restoration Act which follows a blueprint set in the Department's budget. It is bipartisan.

Along with being the chief steward of our public lands, I'm also responsible for the education of 48,000 American Indian students that deserve a world-class education. The Public Lands Infrastructure Fund supports 150 Bureau of Indian Education schools in 23 states. The school maintenance backlog stands at about $634 billion.

Also across Indian country, the opioid epidemic is a major problem, along with drugs. With the President's leadership we're cracking down on drug dealers who are selling out to our kids. This budget proposal invests in joint federal efforts, like an opioid taskforce, that we've already conducted.

We are also seeing a great opportunity to reorganize the Department of the Interior for the next 100 years, just as Teddy Roosevelt did a century ago. As a retired Navy Seal commander, I believe in giving more authority at the front lines where it should reside so the decisions can be made at the local level rather than in Washington, DC. Clearly, the one-size-fits-all model has been ineffective.

This budget includes $18 million to begin shifting resources to the front line in the field to establish unified regional boundaries for Interior bureaus. This organization will enable us to achieve our core mission of stewardship.

In planning this organization I've taken into account feedback from Congress, governors, Interior employees, and the stakeholders. It's a reorganization based on science. Watersheds, wildlife corridors, we brought in our SES professionals to look at it, adjust the boundaries to make sure they're practical and I've met with the governors. Like Roosevelt a century ago, we want to achieve the greatest good for the greatest term using best science and best practices.

This budget also recognizes that American strength relies on American energy. Under President Trump we are pursuing an American energy dominance policy. Last year was much about energy. This year is a pivot about conservation, infrastructure, and reorganization.

The President has delivered on his promise of energy. This budget includes $43 million for American energy development to continue our mission. Presently, we stand at 10.6 million barrels a

year in this country. For the first time in 60 years, we're exporting liquid natural gas.

All told, our budget request for Fiscal Year 2019 is $11.7 billion with a proposed transfer, the Department of Defense for Palau Compact, that raises it to $11.8 billion.

This budget clearly lays out top priorities of the Administration and speaks to the priorities of the American people, rebuilding our infrastructure, fixing our schools, achieving energy dominance, and holding the line for fiscal responsibility. Above all, we do it in a responsible manner, understanding that we are the steward of our greatest treasures.

With that, I'm happy to take your questions.

[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 2019 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST
MARCH 13, 2018

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the 2019 President's Budget for the Department of the Interior. The 2019 Budget Request for Interior is $11.7 billion. The President's budget also proposes to transfer $111.0 million of discretionary funding from the Department of Defense to support the 2010 Compact Review Agreement with Palau, increasing Interior's total 2019 request to $11.8 billion.

2019 Budget Priorities

Interior's 2019 budget prioritizes American interests with targeted investments to advance American energy dominance, enhance public access to public lands, and strengthen the economy through infrastructure investment, regulatory relief, and fiscal responsibility. The Department's 2019 budget reflects the Administration's commitment to strike the right balance of development and conservation of America's resources to advance important national objectives.

A major component of the 2019 budget is the Public Lands Infrastructure legislative proposal, which will provide up to $18 billion to address Interior's deferred maintenance backlog in the national parks, national wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools. The investment in the Interior's infrastructure will be funded by federal revenues derived from rents, rights of ways for energy purposes, and royalties collected by the Department of the Interior. The proposal complements the President's national infrastructure investment initiative and recognizes the strategic importance of long-term investment in America's treasures.

GENERATING REVENUE AND UTILIZING NATURAL RESOURCES

Growing America's Economy

Across Interior's diverse mission, the 2019 budget emphasizes the Department's crucial role in promoting economic growth for America. America's lands hold tremendous job-creating assets. Interior supports $254 billion in estimated economic benefit, while direct grants and payments to States, Tribes, and local communities provide an estimated $10 billion in economic benefit. In 2017, the Department collected $9.6 billion from energy, mineral, grazing, and forestry activities on behalf of the American people. Interior also supports the economy by eliminating unnecessary and burdensome Federal regulatory requirements. For example, in 2017, Interior initiated 21 deregulatory actions all with significant associated savings for the taxpayer, once enacted.

The 2019 budget maintains support for Interior programs that play a critical role in encouraging national infrastructure development. The 2019 budget includes $98.8 million for the Fish and

Wildlife Service's planning and consultation activities to support development while avoiding species conflicts. This request enables FWS to meet legal consultation requirements and avoid logjams that could delay infrastructure projects and associated economic benefits to communities, States, Tribes, and companies. The request includes $118.7 million for the Bureau of Reclamation's construction of water delivery systems for Tribes and local communities. In addition, Reclamation continues to explore future water storage opportunities. The budget also includes $48.3 million for the Bureau of Land Management's cadastral program, which maps and surveys the lands and resources needed to permit rights-of-way and other infrastructure project requirements in a timely fashion.

Advancing Energy Dominance

Interior plays a significant role in the Administration's objective to achieve America's energy dominance. The budget proposes $792.0 million in current and permanent funding for energy related programs across the Department. Interior's 2019 budget continues to support an "all-of-the-above" energy development strategy, increasing funding for onshore and offshore oil and gas, expanding coal activities, and sustaining the current pace of renewable energy development.

A large portion of Interior's energy development activities occur on the Outer Continental Shelf. The 2019 request includes support from offsetting collections for a total offshore energy development and safety program of $379.2 million. The budget includes a total of $179.3 million for offshore oil, gas, and renewable energy development activities managed by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. It includes $9.4 million for BOEM to prepare the 2019-2024 National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The request for BOEM also includes $28.1 million for Renewable Energy activities across the Bureau. The 2019 budget includes $199.9 million for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's programs to streamline the permitting process, conduct inspections, evaluate emerging offshore technologies, improve safety, conduct training, and maintain up-to-date policies, standards, and guidelines.

Onshore, the budget includes $176.3 million in current and permanent funding for the BLM oil and gas management program which generated $348.9 million from bonus bids derived from onshore oil and gas lease sales in 2017. The 2019 budget includes $137.2 million in appropriated funds for BLM oil and gas management and oversight, including leasing, permitting, and inspections. This funding will be used to expand areas available for leasing, expedite permitting, and improve various aspects of program management. The budget includes $19.5 million for the BLM coal management program to help reduce processing times, simplify the lease application process, and improve the timeliness to complete lease sale fair market value determinations. The budget includes $16.0 million for BLM to support onshore Renewable Energy development.

An important component of Interior's natural resource programs is the collection and disbursement of receipts from development. The 2019 budget includes $137.5 million for the Office of Natural Resources Revenue. In 2017, Interior held the first meeting of the re-established Royalty Policy Committee, which includes 20 members representing local, tribal, and State governments and other stakeholders. The RPC advises the Secretary on the fair market

value and revenue collection from Federal and Indian mineral and energy leases, including from renewable energy sources.

Increasing Natural Resource Development

Interior manages a wealth of additional natural resource assets that require balanced stewardship and management. Maintaining healthy and productive forests requires active management. The 2019 budget includes $9.5 million for BLM's Public Domain Forestry program and $90.0 million for the Oregon and California grant lands. Both programs support jobs and local economies through timber and timber product sales. The programs also maintain and improve the productivity and resilience of forest and woodland ecosystems through sales and forest development projects such as density management and reforestation.

The BLM actively manages rangeland and grazing activities on public lands in the West which remain a vital part of local western economies. The 2019 budget includes $82.1 million for the Rangeland Management program. The BLM manages nearly 18,000 livestock grazing permits and leases on the public lands.

Another example is the U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Resources program which conducts assessments to identify critical minerals and estimate potential supplies. A recent Secretarial Order directs all Interior bureaus to identify a list of critical minerals, identify domestic sources, and streamline permitting to encourage domestic production of these critical minerals. The 2019 budget for USGS includes $19.1 million to support this Administration priority. With this funding, USGS will accelerate nationwide geological, geophysical, and topographical surveys of the United States to locate domestic critical mineral sources.

CONSERVING OUR LAND AND WATER AND EXPANDING OUTDOOR ACCESS

Interior is the steward of America's public lands and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations. Taking care of the resources we have rather than acquiring new Federal lands continues to be a top priority in the 2019 budget. To administer ongoing projects, the budget for land acquisition programs across the Department is $8.1 million.

The 2019 budget includes $4.6 billion for operating programs in the three primary land management bureaus—BLM, FWS, and the National Park Service. This funding supports the day-to-day management of the natural resources and public amenities of America's national parks, national wildlife refuges, and BLM-managed public areas, including its national conservation lands. Within this request is funding to support visitor services and safety, law enforcement, and maintenance of facilities. Early eradication and control of invasive species is an example of a core stewardship activity shared Department-wide, which is funded through land management operations. Across Interior, the 2019 budget includes a total of $101.1 million for invasive species activities to address significant issues such as the spread of invasive mussels and Asian Carp.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund matching grants provided to States, and through States to local governments, support the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities all across the Nation. The 2019 budget continues a funding shift that began in 2018

for NPS State Assistance grants from discretionary to mandatory funding. Starting in 2009, discretionary LWCF appropriations for the State Assistance program were supplemented by revenues from certain oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico, as authorized by Section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. Under existing law, this permanent funding for NPS State Assistance grants is expected to reach $89.3 million in 2019.

Ensuring the availability of water is central to the Department's resource stewardship mission and is vitally important to communities across the West. The 2019 budget includes $1.0 billion for Reclamation's water resource programs to ensure millions of customers continue to receive the water and power essential for daily life, healthy local economies, and land management. The 2019 budget includes funding to continue the WaterSMART water conservation grants and funds Title XVI water recycling reuse research grants to support local innovation efforts to stretch water supplies.

The 2019 budget maintains an important commitment to Interior's neighboring communities, by including $465.0 million in the discretionary request for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program. The PILT payments offset the loss in property tax revenue for communities with significant Federal lands in their jurisdictions.

FULFILLING OUR TRUST AND INSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department of the Interior upholds the Federal government's unique trust responsibilities by fostering government-to-government relationships between the Federal government and federally recognized Tribes, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The U.S. also has important relationships with the affiliated insular areas including the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Interior administers and oversees Federal assistance to the three Freely Associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

The 2019 budget addresses Federal responsibilities and tribal needs related to education, social services, infrastructure, and stewardship of land, water, and other natural resources. The budget prioritizes support for programs that serve the broadest service population rather than 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 calls for full funding for Contract Support Costs and Tribal Grant Support Costs that Tribes incur from managing Federal Indian programs.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs also undertakes initiatives to promote resilient tribal communities. The 2019 budget includes $2.5 million to address the opioid crisis, which has been particularly devastating in Indian Country. The funding will support BIA participation in intra- and interagency initiatives that support opioid and substance abuse prevention efforts. The BIA liaisons will align, leverage, and coordinate Federal efforts and resources to assist American Indian and Alaska Native communities in achieving their goals to reduce the supply of drugs, provide opioid addiction prevention assistance, and otherwise combat the opioid crisis, which is an Administration priority.

The 2019 budget includes $173.0 million across the Department to honor Indian land and water Settlement commitments. This includes $127.3 million in Reclamation and $45.6 million in BIA. The budget continues to meet Federal responsibilities outlined in enacted land and water rights claim settlements with Indian Tribes to ensure they have access to land and water to meet domestic, economic, and cultural needs.

In 2019, the Office of Insular Affairs will continue to execute activities which bolster healthcare capacity, strengthen island economies, and fulfill U.S. compact obligations. The proposed 2019 OIA budget is $608.0 million, with $84.1 million in current appropriations. The President's budget also proposes $111.0 million in discretionary Department of Defense appropriations as a transfer to the Department of the Interior to fund the 2010 Compact Review Agreement with Palau.

PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE AND THE BORDER

A key component of Interior's land stewardship and public safety goals is management of wildland fire. The 2019 budget provides $388.1 million for wildfire suppression. The budget responsibly funds 100 percent of the rolling 10-year average cost for wildfire suppression in the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior within discretionary budget caps, and proposes a separate annual cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations to ensure adequate resource availability during severe fire seasons.

Over 12.5 million acres under Interior's jurisdiction are within 50 miles of the United States-Mexico border. More than 40 percent of the border, or 820 linear miles, is managed by Interior's land management agencies and the U.S. Forest Service. Interior is engaged with the Department of Homeland Security to increase security on the Southwest border, including 74 border miles on tribal lands primarily made up of lands located on and managed by the Tohono O'odham Nation in Arizona. The budget includes $1.8 million to continue implementation of the Department's Southwest Border Radio Demonstration Project, which is an example of the coordination which occurs to help protect our border. The project was developed in cooperation with BLM, FWS, NPS, and the U.S. Forest Service in the Southwest border region to address Office of Inspector General-identified material deficiencies in the land mobile radio program and infrastructure, and ensure continuity of communications essential for safety, law enforcement, and resource management in the area.

Interior also plays an important role in preparation for and addressing the aftermath of natural hazard events. The 2019 budget includes $117.3 million for the USGS Natural Hazards programs to maintain important nationwide monitoring networks, including volcano and earthquake networks, which provide vital scientific information to emergency managers.

MODERNIZING OUR ORGANIZATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS

Infrastructure Management

Interior manages an infrastructure asset portfolio with a replacement value exceeding $300 billion, ranging from elementary and secondary schools serving Indian children in the West, to

highways and bridges serving the daily commuting needs of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Many of these assets are deteriorating, with older assets becoming more expensive to repair and maintain in good condition. Taking care of this significant asset portfolio is a persistent challenge.

Interior's deferred maintenance backlog has grown to over $16 billion in 2017 of which over $11 billion belongs to NPS. In addition to funding proposed in the Administration's Public Lands Infrastructure Fund, the 2019 budget for NPS includes $256.5 million in current funding for construction and deferred maintenance projects. Construction and maintenance funding across the Department totals over $1.3 billion in 2019, excluding Reclamation.

Management and Reforms

During the peak summer seasons, the Department of the Interior has nearly 70,000 employees in 2,400 locations across the United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories, and Freely Associated States. Interior is also taking bold steps to better position itself for the next 100 years. In response to the President's *Executive Order on a Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch*, Interior is working to reorganize its operating structure to establish unified regional boundaries to provide better coordination across the Department to improve mission delivery and focus resources in the field. The 2019 budget includes a total of $17.5 million for this effort. The budget also proposes additional shifts to better align functions within the Department and respond to Congressional direction related to the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians. The Department is continuing to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of BOEM and BSEE being separate organizations with the understanding that revenue collection activities need to be separate from safety.

The Department annually spends nearly $3 billion to procure goods and services, over $1 billion on information technology, and over $300 million to administer acquisition and human resources services. In 2019, Interior will work to achieve cost savings of $52.7 million across the Department, through more aggressive use of shared services and use of multiagency "Best in Class" procurement vehicles, such as shared contracting with other bureaus and Federal agencies.

Bureau Highlights

Bureau of Land Management – The 2019 budget request for BLM is $1.0 billion. The budget proposes $930.6 million for the Management of Lands and Resources appropriation and $90.0 million for the Oregon and California Grant Lands appropriation – BLM's two operating accounts. The BLM budget proposes to restructure several budget lines to provide greater management flexibility and improve coordination of program activities.

Through BLM's multiple-use mandate, the 2019 budget advances energy resource development which generates revenues for Federal and State treasuries and local economies. The budget includes $137.2 million in Oil and Gas appropriated programs to strengthen overall program capacity, improve management, and expedite permitting to facilitate increased environmentally responsible energy development. Within the total, $9.5 million will establish a competitive

leasing program in the 1002 Area of the Alaska North Slope, as required by the recently enacted Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and bolster BLM's capacity for permitting activities in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The budget also includes $19.5 million to strengthen BLM's Coal Management program and $16.0 million to meet anticipated market demand in the Renewable Energy program.

To maintain the BLM's land stewardship responsibilities, the budget includes $82.1 million for Rangeland Management and $66.7 million for the Wild Horse and Burro Management program. The budget also proposes $53.2 million for Recreation Resources Management and $26.3 million to continue support for the National Conservation Land areas.

The budget includes $90.0 million for the Oregon and California Grant Lands programs. At this level, the BLM will focus resources on timber harvests as it pursues the timber sale targets specified in the 2016 resource management plans.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – The 2019 budget request for BOEM is $179.3 million, including $129.5 million in current appropriations and $49.8 million in offsetting collections from rental receipts and cost recoveries. The budget proposes to offset a decline in offsetting collections with an increase in direct appropriations. The 2019 budget includes $9.4 million to facilitate the development of a new National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement – The 2019 budget request for BSEE is $199.9 million, including $132.1 million in current appropriations and $67.9 million in offsetting collections from rental receipts, cost recoveries, and inspection fees. The budget proposes to offset the decline in offsetting collections with an increase in direct appropriations. The budget proposes $12.7 million for Oil Spill Research.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement – The 2019 budget request for OSMRE is $121.7 million in current appropriations. The budget includes $52.4 million for State and tribal regulatory grants, a level consistent with anticipated State and tribal program obligations.

Bureau of Reclamation – The 2019 budget includes $1.0 billion for Reclamation's water resource programs to ensure millions of customers continue to receive water and power essential for daily life, healthy local economies, and land management.

The 2019 budget includes a total of $447.0 million for construction, planning, and management of water and energy projects and programs. Funding for these activities supports water supply, drought preparedness and response, land management including recreation areas, and promotes water reliability by addressing the impacts of Reclamation projects on fish and wildlife. The budget also provides a total of $444.0 million for water and power facility operations, maintenance, and rehabilitation activities. Reclamation emphasizes safe, efficient, economic, and reliable operation of facilities, ensuring systems and safety measures are in place to protect the facilities, Reclamation's employees, and the public.

The 2019 budget continues support to address America's water reliability and availability by investing to modernize existing water infrastructure. The 2019 budget includes $10.0 million to continue the WaterSMART water conservation grants and $3.0 million for Title XVI water recycling reuse research grants that support local innovation efforts to stretch water supplies. The 2019 budget continues to support water technology innovation by incentivizing research through Reclamation's Water and Power Technology Prize Competitions. Reclamation's prize competitions target difficult scientific and technological problems related to infrastructure, water availability, and environmental compliance that affects water delivery and hydropower generation. The budget also includes $7.6 million for Reclamation to proactively stop the spread of invasive mussels in the West, including preventing the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into the Columbia River Basin.

U.S. Geological Survey – The 2019 budget request for the USGS is $859.7 million. The budget includes $72.9 million for satellite operations, which includes $31.9 million to continue development of the Landsat 9 ground system component for launch in 2021.

The request emphasizes science to inform energy and mineral development with $84.1 million for the Energy and Minerals Mission Area, including $19.1 million to locate domestic critical mineral sources. These commodities are those minerals with important uses particularly in technology, and no viable substitutes, yet face potential disruption in supply. This funding will support the Administration's initiative to spur critical mineral resource development in the United States.

The budget for Natural Hazards is $117.3 million to support essential hazards monitoring, and provide scientific information needed by resource managers and policy makers. The budget maintains support for nationwide networks of more than 8,200 streamgages and nearly 3,000 earthquake sensors. The 2019 budget includes $96.1 million for Ecosystems programs, focusing on nationally significant priorities, including detecting and responding to invasive species and wildlife disease, research supporting the conservation and recovery of species at-risk or protected by law, and science supporting biological resource management. The budget provides for continued collection of high-resolution elevation and hydrography data for the Nation, including modernizing maps for Alaska and complete national lidar coverage by 2033.

Fish and Wildlife Service – The 2019 President's budget requests $1.2 billion for FWS programs of which $1.1 billion supports FWS operations. The budget prioritizes funding to maintain operations and maintenance for the National Wildlife Refuge System at $473.1 million and includes $50.0 million for the National Fish Hatchery System.

Ecological Services programs are funded at $211.8 million and the budget prioritizes funding for Planning and Consultation and species Recovery activities. The budget is $74.8 million for FWS conservation grants including $31.3 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, $33.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, $6.0 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, and $3.9 million for Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation. The budget proposes $7.0 million for FWS land acquisition activities, which includes $12.0 million in new budget authority and a $5.0 million proposed cancellation of prior year balances.

National Park Service – The 2019 budget request for NPS is $2.7 billion which includes $299.0 million provided in the Budget Policy Addendum for 2019.
The budget proposes $2.4 billion for NPS operations. Within this account funding is prioritized for the care and maintenance of existing resources, including repair and rehabilitation projects, which addresses the deferred maintenance backlog, and cyclic maintenance projects, which ensure maintenance is conducted in a timely fashion to avoid increasing the deferred maintenance backlog. The budget proposes $241.3 million for the Construction account, which includes $157.0 million for line-item construction activities.

The request provides $32.2 million for National Recreation and Preservation programs to support local community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. The 2019 budget includes $32.7 million for the Historic Preservation Fund core grants-in-aid programs. The budget assumes funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Grants shift from discretionary to mandatory funding from offshore oil and gas receipts, estimated to support an $89.3 million program. The budget requests $8.8 million to administer both ongoing Federal land acquisition projects and American Battlefield Protection grants, and includes a $10.0 million cancellation in available prior year balances, for a net total of -$1.2 million for Land Acquisition and State Assistance.

Indian Affairs – The 2019 budget request for Indian Affairs is $2.4 billion. Funding for Operation of Indian Programs totals $2.0 billion. In 2019, priority is given to programs serving the broadest audience rather than initiatives or pilots. Within this total is $741.9 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 $350.1 million for Public Safety and Justice programs including $2.5 million to address the opioid crisis which has been particularly devastating in Indian Country. The budget includes $258.9 million for Trust Services programs to fulfill key fiduciary trust responsibilities.

The budget fully funds Contract Support Costs at $231.0 million, which will cover all anticipated tribal program administration requirements at the requested program funding level. The budget requests $133.3 million for Construction programs and 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 improvement and repair of existing facilities. The budget also includes $45.6 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 2019 budget request for Departmental Operations is $134.7 million. The budget reflects the proposed transfer of $140.5 million associated with the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to a new appropriation within Department-wide Programs.

Office of Insular Affairs – The 2019 budget request for OIA is $84.1 million of which $81.0 million is for Assistance to Territories and $3.1 million is for Compact of Free Association programs. Separately, the President's budget proposes to transfer $111.0 million from the Department of Defense to support the enacted 2010 Compact Agreement with Palau.

Office of the Solicitor – The 2019 budget proposes $65.7 million for the Office of the Solicitor 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 2019 budget proposes $52.5 million for the Office of Inspector General to continue support for audit and investigations across the Department. The budget supports the need for case management system maintenance, OPM security clearances, continuous data monitoring, and information technology systems assistance.

Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians – The 2018 budget requests $107.1 million for OST. The budget proposes several organizational changes including to realign OST under the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs; to shift Land Buy Back Program for Tribal Nations to OST; and proposes OST assume coordination of certain functions of the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation.

Department-wide Programs

Payments in Lieu of Taxes – The 2019 budget proposes $465.0 million in discretionary funding for PILT. This amount includes $68.1 million provided in the Budget Policy Addendum for 2019.

Office of Natural Resources Revenue – The 2019 budget request includes $137.5 million for ONRR's receipts management programs as a separate appropriation to increase transparency of the program. The request includes $3.7 million for anticipated contract cost increases to maintain the Minerals Revenue Management Support System.

Central Hazardous Materials Fund – The 2019 budget requests $2.0 million for the Central Hazardous Materials Fund to support program management and legal staff. The program will fund highest priority remediation projects based on the availability of recoveries and focus resources on remediation projects with potentially responsible parties.

Wildland Fire Management – The 2019 budget request for the Wildland Fire Management Program is $870.4 million. The request provides $388.1 million for Suppression Operations to fully fund the 10-year average. Separately the Administration proposes an annual cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations during severe fire seasons. The budget includes $322.2 million for wildland fire Preparedness activities to support Interior's firefighting capabilities. To maintain proper stewardship of public lands and address wildfire risk, Fuels Management activities the budget includes $150.6 million. The budget includes $9.5 million to support high priority restoration of public lands damaged by wildfire.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration – The 2019 request for NRDAR is $4.6 million. The budget includes funding needed for ongoing damage assessments and restoration activities.

Working Capital Fund – The 2019 budget proposes $56.7 million for the appropriated portion of the Department's Working Capital Fund. The request includes $46.8 million for the Financial and Business Management System and $9.9 million for Department-wide Cybersecurity needs.

Legislative Proposals

Public Lands Infrastructure Fund – The 2019 budget launches the Administration's Public Lands Infrastructure Fund (PLIF) to address repairs and improvements in national parks, national wildlife refuges, and BIE-funded schools. The PLIF would dedicate 50 percent of the Department's incoming, unallocated energy development revenues that exceed the 2018 budget baseline estimates, for the National Park Service, Fish Wildlife Service and Bureau of Indian Education infrastructure needs. These revenues will be deposited into the Fund for 10 years and will be capped at a total of $18.0 billion.

Bureau of Reclamation Title Transfer – The Administration has recently submitted to the Congress a proposal to better facilitate title transfer of Reclamation facilities to non-Federal entities when such transfers are beneficial. 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 three years. This would redirect a portion of 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.

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.

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, set to expire in September 2019. As a precaution, appropriations language is also submitted proposing a two-year extension through September 2021. The revenues collected by Interior from these recreation fees – nearly $318.8 million in 2017 – 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.

Wildland Fire Suppression Disaster Cap Adjustment – The budget responsibly funds 100 percent of the rolling 10-year average cost of wildfire suppression in the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior within discretionary budget caps, and proposes a separate annual cap adjustment for

wildfire suppression operations in severe fire seasons, similar to how unanticipated funding needs for other natural disasters are addressed.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the President's 2019 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior. This budget maintains core functions important to the American people and supports transformation the Department needs to accomplish more effective management over the next 100 years. It reflects tough choices to prioritize and focus limited resources where investments have the most impact while continuing to deliver access and services that are critical to Americans. Achieving success in all of Interior's important responsibilities for the American people is the Department's primary focus and Interior is committed to take action to better accomplish our mission. Thank you again for your continued support of the Department's mission. This concludes my written statement and I look forward to your questions on this budget.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Again, I will repeat my thanks for your focus on the energy side of the business that you and the President clearly addressed last year. We have, I think, a great deal to do to fulfill what was begun, but we have made considerable progress and I look forward to even more of that.

I am going to keep my questions this morning relatively parochial to Alaska, as I know members will have questions about the parks' backlog and the reorganization and I will go broader into that in the second round.

Let me first begin, Mr. Secretary, with the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan. As you know, this came down in the last few days of the Obama Administration. One of those plans, in particular—this is the Fortymile District—turned a management regime that had worked for decades, just literally turned it on its head.

In addition, we have our placer gold miners in the Fortymile District that have had some real trouble working out standards for revegetation, and this has really been quite problematic. The question for you this morning is whether or not we have any administrative options to address some of the very valid concerns that exist with regards to this Fortymile plan, if you are willing to work with us to help restore balance to that plan, and then specific to the revegetation standards, if we can find a solution to help our miners out in that area?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you for that question.

And restoring trust and being a good partner is what Interior should be. A government should not be an adversary. And that's been clear across the states, that in some policies have been not willing to be developed where you listen to the local populations.

I did have the Deputy Secretary and our senior leadership team up there talking to the Fortymile miners. There are some administrative procedures we can do. We're looking at streamlining it.

Reclamation and mining, as a geologist, the fair proposition is that if you're going to develop on federal land, there needs to be a reclamation plan to make sure it's returned to as good or better condition than what you found it. There are a number of advanced technologies in reclamation that we need to incorporate into our regulatory framework to ensure that happens. Oftentimes, our regulations do not take into account innovation. They don't take into account science or best practices. So when our regulatory framework becomes punitive on an industry and the local population views it as targeting, then there's a breach of trust. So we are aware of it and we look forward to working with you and the good folks up there to make sure we have a path forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I thank you for the willingness to work with us.

Again, these are, some of them are the smallest of the small gold miners that are operating out there and, again, in an area and in a manner that is certainly sensitive to the environment. They have been able to make it work well for decades. We want to be able to return it to that. But we need some working with the Administration on this.

Another effort in rural Alaska is the Ambler Road which would help to facilitate not only minerals but jobs in the region, and there is an issue that is coming up right now with regards to permits and approval for Ambler Road. One issue is whether or not the Park Service can complete its ANILCA assessment prior to the completion of the NEPA and the EIS that comes within it. It has been one of these situations where we just cannot seem to get all of the agencies on the same page. All I am asking for this morning is your commitment to work with the Army Corps on this issue so that we can make sure that, basically, our federal agencies are working together, instead of a little bit here and a little bit there. It needs to be more coordinated, and your assistance on this would be appreciated.

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you and I agree with you.

Part of the frustration has been multiple agencies involved in the same project with different objectives, different locations, independently producing multiple biological opinions which results in delay, arbitrary results.

Part of the reorganization at Interior is to address just that, making sure the arms of the government work together to produce the best possible outcome based on science, based on best practices, longest good, greatest term. So we are working, and I'm happy to report that we're going to have a decision on it shortly. We have the lead, and we're working with the Army Corps of Engineers.

The President also has tasked us to look heavily at the Army Corps of Engineers to see if we can't look at streamlining the process with the Army Corps of Engineers which affects a lot of our projects. They're really good people, but the—some of it, the way that the system is set up, doesn't allow them to move forward and this is an example.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, it is an example and I appreciate the focus from within the Department on permitting and some of the regulatory overlap that we just get snarled up with. The effort that has been made to move forward on a permitting perspective has been appreciated. We just need more in that area.

Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, you are asking working Americans to pay higher fees on entering national parks. Is that correct?

Secretary ZINKE. Our proposal looked at multiple options on our parks. One of them was to look at our top 10 parks or so and look at during peak season. And our proposal also looks at our pass.

I've spent a lot of time in a kiosk. And it's amazing in our parks which the maintenance, as you know, is we're far behind. But when you give discounted or free passes to elderly, fourth graders, veterans, disabled and you do it by the carload, there's not a whole lot of people that actually pay at our front door, as well as you have a lot of foreign guests, a lot of population of them.

So we're looking at ways to make sure that we have more revenue in the front door on our parks themselves because when you have a park like Rainier, is that the money they receive coming in the front gate, I want to make sure more of it goes to that Park Superintendent so he has flexibility in how he spends it. Right now, much of it comes back to Washington, DC, and the super-

intendents don't have enough flexibility, in my opinion, to spend the money.

Park fees does not and will not ever address $11.7 billion. It just won't. But a lot of our parks have record visitation, certainly last year. We expect them to have record visitation again, and we're looking at the proposal of many different options. One of them is during peak season raising the rate. We have not yet concluded and likely we're going to look at it to make sure that there's not any unintended consequences.

Senator CANTWELL. So am I understanding from your statement that you think we should raise them on veterans and fourth graders?

Secretary ZINKE. No, what I'm saying is this, is that we subsidize and we allow, by design, a lot of people to go through. If you're in a car and you have a veteran in the car, everyone, whether they're a veteran or not, is free in that car, same thing with the disabled, same thing with the elderly on passes. Basically, one person with a pass, everyone in that car comes in for free.

Now whether or not that's correct, we're looking at it, but what clearly is the case is we have an $11.7 billion backlog. The greatest bargain in America is the $80 a year pass. I just took my kids to the theater and after going and paying the ticket at the theater and having popcorn, it's more than $80. And this is a pass all year around.

So we're looking at ways to make sure that revenue coming in the door of our principal parks is appropriate, making sure we still have value because American parks belong to the public. They belong to all Americans and everyone should have access.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, we definitely think we should be increasing access, not disincentivizing it.

I want to ask you about this issue regarding the agency spending money on things that may not be in the public's interest. You took a private jet home from Las Vegas. Do you think that was a mistake?

Secretary ZINKE. Well first, insults, innuendos are misleading. I never took a private jet anywhere.

The previous Secretary took 80 trips of just under $1 million. I took three trips. One of them was with the Senator, your Chair, on a prop plane. A second one was with the Governor of the Virgin Islands and the Prime Minister, again, a prop jet in between islands to make sure that we were on time. And the third was to take a King Aire, late at night after traveling all the way across Nevada, giving a PILT speech, to meet an eight o'clock in the morning meeting with a Governor of Montana for the Governor's conference.

So I resent the fact of your insults. I resent the fact they're misleading. I resent the fact of doors. And I'll go through line by line.

And you know what also is, that Sally Jewel, I think she was right. I think her travel patterns, even though she took a private, chartered airplane, was met by helicopter, did a hike. I think she was right because as Interior, she was out hiking and doing what she was supposed to be doing.

So given that a flight from the North Slope down to Anchorage, with the Chair, to allege it's a private jet is inappropriate, ma'am.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, Mr. Secretary, I have given you ample time and I simply asked you a question about the private jet trip to Vegas. I guess we will ask you in writing and maybe we will get an answer.

The IG is looking at this issue, and we are looking at the larger issue of how time and money is spent. And the reason why we are is because our citizens want to know why their park fees are going up and they are reading these stories. I think the IG said that the agency made a mistake when it was trying to use wildfire preparedness money to take helicopter tours in Nevada when that wasn't the purpose. What we want is to see the answers and transparency within the agency, so we will ask you again for the written record and, hopefully, we will get a more succinct answer.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary, for being here. It is great to see you again.

I appreciate your testimony and acknowledgement that there are many issues facing the Department that are requiring immediate attention. Last year during the hearing we spoke about the several-billion-dollar problems facing the Department: wild horse and burrow management, deferred maintenance backlog, and over the last several months the Department has offered a series of proposals for raising additional revenue.

I just want to ask if you could talk a little bit about how you envision these programs would work together to deliver funds on the ground.

Secretary ZINKE. We face a number of challenges in Interior. One of them is we have multiple bureaus with different regions. We have, the regions are not based on equal systems, watersheds, so structurally, as it is very difficult for an old Department, like Interior, to work together.

I give the example of a fish and trout in the same stream. Upstream we have a dam, downstream we have irrigation, and that stream goes by a Forest Service holding. The salmon are managed by bureau, or by Commerce, through NMFS. The fish are a Fish and Wildlife by me. Upstream watersheds or temperatures are generally Army Corps of Engineers. Downstream irrigation is Bureau of Reclamation. A Forest Service holding, surface Department of Ag, subsurface is BLM. Same stream. Same issue. You can have multiple biological opinions produced independently with different results, some of them non-reconcilable. So I think we should look at making things like recreation, permitting, and NEPA to do it jointly, to rearrange our regions to be unified based on watersheds and science. That will be enormously helpful. Recreation—our trail systems should connect. Our NEPA system—we should be on the same page in the original scope at the end. And permitting, NEPA and permitting need to be separate because there's a conflict of interest, but permitting also should be joint. All stakeholders, including the states, should be there in the beginning.

The Department of Defense went through a Reorganization Act in 1983, as you know. We fight forest fires this way, jointly, but when we manage our lands, we're not in a joint scenario which, I

think, is the—will be the biggest help in eliminating some of the bureaucracy.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

On January 26th of this year the BLM issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Converse County Oil and Gas Project. It is a project for Wyoming. The BLM estimates that this project is going to bring 8,000 jobs and as much as $28 billion in economic activity to the state.

I have concerns that the BLM's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) needs to be revised to maximize the success of the project. Specifically, the draft EIS does not include clear guidance for year-round drilling and it does not fully acknowledge the ongoing work by the State of Wyoming, specifically, to implement our guidance on the greater sage-grouse core area of protection. The timely correction of these errors and completion of the environmental review for this project is critical to the state's economy and our nation's energy security.

So I ask you, Mr. Secretary, if you will work to ensure that the BLM will complete the final EIS in a timely manner and issue a record of decision that is consistent with the Administration's commitment to achieving energy dominance?

Secretary ZINKE. We certainly will commit to working with you and making sure the EIS is fair and make sure it takes into consideration the stewardship responsibilities as well as the President's energy dominance policy.

As you know, Secretary of the Interior, it's really two sides. Even Roosevelt said that conservation is as much development as it is protection. And as Interior, I have responsibilities on both sides. So I am not oil and gas centric. I'm American energy centric. And there are places where drilling for oil is absolutely appropriate and there are places that are not. And so that's why we have NEPA. That's why the process of NEPA has been the backbone of what, I think, is strong and appropriate policy in this country.

Weighing into it, we'll—our commitment is to get the EIS out, make sure it's done fairly, make sure it's done based on science and then from there, we'll make the best determination we can.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thanks.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, last year when you testified before the Committee on the Department's budget, I asked you to take steps to ensure that the BLM field offices, like the one in Casper, have sufficient resources to process the new oil and gas permit applications and to clear the sizable backlog.

I am encouraged by the progress that the Department has made on the issue. I am also encouraged by the attention that both you and Deputy Secretary Bernhardt have paid to input from our stakeholders in Wyoming on this and on a variety of other issues from sage-grouse to cooperation among the agencies that you oversee. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to resolve the lingering concerns with the Department's proposed action for the Moose-Wilson Road in the Grand Teton National Park, and I urge you to continue to listen to stakeholders across the West as we move forward with your ambitious proposals to reorganize the Department.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Senator Wyden.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, during your confirmation hearing you mentioned Teddy Roosevelt nine times. Oregonians have a strong appreciation for Teddy Roosevelt as a conservationist and as a President. With his signature he created the Crater Lake National Park and it is the deepest lake in the United States, known for its beautiful blue water. Teddy Roosevelt understood that when you sell off or exploit your public lands, you don't get them back. Mr. Secretary, that is something you don't seem to understand at all.

First, you pushed the largest reduction of conserved, treasured public lands in American history, two million acres sacrificed for private exploitation.

Second, you proposed opening America's precious coast to offshore oil drilling, only to walk it back in one state where it seemed there was a potential Republican Senate candidate who opposed it. I can tell you in our state, Oregonians don't want to look out over Haystack Rock and see oil derricks.

Third, during the most expensive wildfire season in recorded history, you played a shell game with a wildfire account at Interior to pay for an unrelated helicopter ride, and this is another matter that the Inspector General is looking at.

My first question, Mr. Secretary, is: would Teddy Roosevelt be sitting where you are today, advocating the virtual elimination of the Land and Water Conservation Fund?

Secretary ZINKE. Mr. Senator, I challenge you to give me one square inch——

Senator WYDEN. I would like a response to the question, Mr. Secretary. Time is short.

Secretary ZINKE. It is short and I challenge you to give me one square inch of land that has been removed from federal protection. One square inch.

In the case of Bears Ears, as you stated, Bears Ears, after I restored 400,000 acres of wilderness, after I restored almost an entire national forest, the boundary of the revised Bears Ears is still larger than Zion and Bryce Canyon combined.

What I did do is increase public access and traditional rights. Under the Trump Administration at Interior, we've actually increased wilderness last year, specifically in New Mexico. And I worked with the delegation in Utah because Utah, where Bears Ears and Staircase is, the entire Congressional delegation, including your colleagues and the Governor, wanted it rescinded. I didn't rescind it, so we revised the boundaries.

Senator WYDEN. Mr. Secretary, you've used up now almost half my time.

Could you give me a reason or explanation for whether Teddy Roosevelt, sitting where you are, would advocate a budget that virtually eliminates the Land and Water Conservation Fund?

Secretary ZINKE. I believe that the Land and Water Conservation makes $122 million available. It does not add more property into the federal estate, but our budget also has the largest investment in the history of this country on three critical areas. One is maintenance backlog of our park system; two, maintenance backlog of our

wildlife refuge system which Teddy Roosevelt initiated; and thirdly, making sure that we meet the treaty obligations of 48,000 American Native kids. That's the largest investment in the history of this country. So I believe Teddy Roosevelt would be proud of the focus on preserving, protecting and maintaining our treasures.

Senator WYDEN. What I asked you, though, because it is in your budget, is whether he would support something that is so fundamental to what you said in your prepared statement, which is increasing access to public lands. I am quite certain that Teddy Roosevelt would not be here defending the virtual elimination of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I want to close on a personal note. Mr. Secretary, you and I talked a lot before your confirmation. I felt, in an attempt to build a bridge to work with you, particularly in a state where the Federal Government owns most of the land, I would support your nomination. And I did. I voted for your nomination. I will tell you right now, as of today, it is one of the biggest regrets of my time in public service.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Secretary Zinke, thanks for joining us again today. It is good to see you.

We have talked about our shared passion for the national parks on a number of occasions, including Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the number 11th visited park in the country, and also, Ohio is home to other great national park sites, including the Dayton Heritage National Historical Park where the Wright Brothers' great work is preserved.

Like you, I am very concerned about the $12 billion maintenance backlog at our parks and that is why I am pleased that, with the help of Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell, we were able to pass the National Park Service Centennial Act.

Now this was at the end of 2016, as you may recall. That has worked in the sense that it provides funding that is then matched and we think that about $65 million from the Federal Government that has gone into this challenge project has resulted in about $500 million in non-federal funds. A lot of it comes, of course, from the National Park Foundation and they have raised $460 million since 2016.

So that is helping. And again, I thank Chairman Murkowski for ensuring that the Centennial Challenge part of this, which is the part that can leverage so much private sector funding, was included in the FY'17 Omnibus bill, $20 million in '17, $15 million in '16.

My question for you is, how can we ensure we have a stable level of funding for that Centennial Challenge?

As you know, in the legislation which codified something that Congress had already done by appropriations, we also included a funding source and that was to be sure that the Senior Pass was reformed so that we would receive some funding on an annual basis to be deposited into the Centennial Challenge.

My question for you is, how much has the Centennial Challenge Fund received, if you can tell us today, as a result of the Senior Pass, and how much do you expect to be deposited into the Centennial Challenge Fund in '18 and '19, FY'18 and '19, as a result of the Senior Pass increase?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you for your question and in the budget is $15 million for the Centennial Park Challenge Fund. I have talked to the National Park Foundation. They've done a wonderful job. Their target actually of raising private funds is just under $1 billion this year, and I believe they'll make it. We have a good board.

As you know, when you're addressing an $11.7 billion backlog, even though the Centennial was a great program, it did not meet the requirement of our funding of our parks. The last great effort was really Mission 66, back from '56 to '66, which was a great effort and much of our buildings today are a reflection of that program.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes.

Mr. Secretary, let me just interrupt you for a second. As I look at the FY'19 budget from you all, I do not see any funding for the Centennial Challenge, with the exception of the Senior Pass. Again, we fought hard to get this funding into the appropriations bills and the CRs and now under the Omnibus and again, Chair Murkowski, who is here, has been a leader on that.

Secretary ZINKE. I have $15 million in it.

Senator PORTMAN. In what? In the FY'19 budget?

Secretary ZINKE. In mandatory funding at $15 million in 2019.

Senator PORTMAN. Is that from the Senior Pass? Can you——

Secretary ZINKE. That's from the—I'll figure out whether it's from the Senior Pass, but it's offsetting collections, which I believe it is.

Senator PORTMAN. The Senior Pass? Okay.

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah.

Senator PORTMAN. That's my——

Secretary ZINKE. I'll check that, but it should be.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. That would be a historical level and if that happens, great, but I guess what I am asking you is whether you would be willing to work with us on ensuring we have the appropriations to be able to continue this important part of the overall effort to deal with the maintenance backlog. I agree with you, it is not enough, but it is absolutely critical that we have it.

A broader question is, how do you get at this $12 billion in a more significant way?

As you know, I have introduced legislation I've worked on the last couple years with Senator Warner. It is called the National Park Legacy Act. It provides funds from oil and gas revenues for maintenance backlog projects.

My question to you there is, can you commit to working with us on the Legacy Act to be sure that we can take these oil and gas revenues and provide a funding source to deal with the deferred maintenance backlog?

Secretary ZINKE. I certainly can.

And to be clear, the proposal that's in the budget is capped at $18 billion. The proposal that I do support is taking and addressing, how do you get to $18 billion and have the revenue?

And I think it's a fair proposition that if you look at energy across the board, whether it's wind, solar, mining, any energy, then I think if you're going to gain a resource and wealth from public lands then a fair proposition is you should also contribute to the maintenance backlog and preservation of those lands. So that's where the $18 billion comes from. We think that we can get there in eight years given the scale of what's occurred, especially if Alaska comes online. So——

Senator PORTMAN. We would love to work with you on that, and I hope you will work with us.

Your proposal, as we look at it, does not have guaranteed funding because you are assuming that the Treasury has an estimate of what is going to come in and anything over that estimate would be provided for maintenance backlog.

Our legislation is a little different. It provides for that funding as a secure source. In other words, it is guaranteed. I know you worked with other Senators, apparently, on another proposal, but you know, we have been at this a while. We think we have a good proposal. It is bipartisan. I hope you would be willing to work with us on this proposal as well.

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely. You have my commitment I'll work with you because I think we both share the same issue, is that we have to address long-term, so 10 years from now we don't look back and we're still behind. So I think it's a long-term solution. I do think we're similar on energy. I'm more inclusive. I include wind and everything that is on federal land, but I would love to work with you on it.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you.

I have another few questions for the record for you, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for being here today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Smith.

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Secretary Zinke, it is nice to meet you.

I would like to ask you about the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System which, as I am sure you know, is a critically needed water project that serves South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota.

Our states have been awaiting federal funding from the Bureau of Reclamation to complete this project, which was authorized about 18 years ago. When it is finally finished, it is going to be a vital source of drinking water and also a very important economic development driver in our three states and the southern part of Minnesota, where there is actually a real shortage of water. The federal funding for this has been delayed and, of course, as you know how this goes, that ultimately means that it ends up costing more. The estimate is that, at current funding levels, we would complete this project by 2048 costing the taxpayers an additional $55 million. In the meantime, the states, including my state, have been filling this gap so that the project can continue.

My question is this: in the President's budget there is $100,000 for this project, which is clearly not a serious number. Would you agree with that?

Secretary ZINKE. Overall, the budget includes about $34 million and the President's infrastructure has a significant, I think 25 percent, is in rural.

But you're right, is at the end of the day, the budget is difficult on the Bureau of Reclamation. We think there's some flexibility in infrastructure, particularly when it looks at Bureau of Reclamation holdings.

You know, I'm from Montana, and there's a saying that's as true is that, "Whiskey is for drinking. Water is for fighting." And Montana, too, on the east side, has a number of these legacy projects from Bureau of Reclamation that need federal assistance. The grand bargain, though, when Bureau of Reclamation was put in place, was the Federal Government would come in and invest and then over time the land users, the water users, would pay for it and that title would be transferred.

And so, we have an enormous amount of holdings that we have not transferred title, even though the water districts have now paid for the projects, but we still are responsible for maintaining them. And I think in the budget also, we asked for some authority, if those projects now are in a good place to transfer so we can be relieved of the maintenance responsibilities, that will allow us additional funding to do what the Bureau of Reclamation was intended to do.

Senator SMITH. I appreciate you agreeing with that, and I would just ask for your commitment to continue to work on this. I think it is extremely important to all three of our states. Coming from, originally from New Mexico, I understand the vital importance of water. So thanks for that. It sounds like you are willing to work with us on that.

Secretary ZINKE. I'm committed to work. I think rural water is so important for a number of reasons, but I've always—and I've had the best guys, as far as Brenda and Alan Mickelson, in the Bureau of Reclamation team. And they're from rural places and they're committed. And I'm committed to work with you on this project.

Senator SMITH. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I was going to touch on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but I think that Senator Wyden has covered that for us.

So in just the few minutes that I have left, I would like to highlight something which I think is important to Minnesota that is in the budget, which is the important PILT program.

Of course, in Northern Minnesota, where we have lots of forest land and lots of federal land, that means that our huge northern counties suffer because of a lack of property tax base. And so, I hear about this from our county commissioners all the time and just really appreciate how important the Payment In Lieu of Taxes program is for, not only Minnesota, but many Western states as well. I just wanted to see if you had any more comment on that important strategy.

Secretary ZINKE. We appropriated $600 or—$465 million which was the same level.

And again, I'm from Montana, you know, a timber town at one time, but it would be nice if the Federal Government would be better partners so our federal lands could be used in a responsible manner. But Minnesota, you know, one time we had a lot smaller timber mills out there where people could gain some land and some wealth off the land. It's challenged when the Federal Government is the biggest land holder and there's no economic, you know, viable business there.

So with PILT, we understand and we raised it to the '17 level. We heard, clearly, from the West last time on PILT, so we remain committed to it.

Senator SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Smith.

Senator Cassidy.

Senator CASSIDY. Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your leadership. The Chair of the Committee mentioned at the outset over the last year morale has improved, diversity has improved. Not bad for a Navy Seal Commander, man. Good for you. Let me thank you for being here.

Hey, thanks for visiting South Louisiana. Our coastline is vanishing. We have had a hard time getting permits to repair our delta. By the time we get the permit, the delta is gone. So thank you for your commitment to make that work, and thank you for the decision under the proposed budget to retain GOMESA payments to the Gulf states. We need that money to rebuild our coastline. For us, it is existential.

Let me just get a couple things straight. They are giving you heck for taking a private plane from the North Slope to where, Madam Chair?

Secretary ZINKE. Anchorage.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we went to Fairbanks.

Senator CASSIDY. If you had driven that, is it one, possible, and how many miles is it from one to the other?

The CHAIRMAN. Well, from where we began, it was not possible to fly. We were up in the fields.

Senator CASSIDY. So did you drive?

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me, it was not possible to drive, so we had to fly. There is a haul road for the pipeline.

Senator CASSIDY. But how many miles is that?

The CHAIRMAN. To Fairbanks? It is 400, 350 miles.

Senator CASSIDY. But there is no road? And they are giving you heck for that?

Well, Mr. Secretary, you should take that heck because if you have to see the North Slope and there is no road to get back to where you need to be, you have to get there somehow.

Secretary ZINKE. Senator, I've been shot at before. I'm very comfortable with it.

Senator CASSIDY. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. Do right, fear no man, do the best you can. Everything I do is scrutinized, and I'm willing to take attacks on myself. I don't like attacks on my family, my kids, which I get raked all the time. But we're pretty tough. We're a military family. We're pretty tough about it. Do right. Fear no man. Wake up and make

sure we're accountable. Everything I do is looked at through the whole legal team, Office of Ethics. It is what it is.

Senator CASSIDY. Well, let me congratulate you for being so gracious regarding your predecessor, Secretary Jewell, who, I guess you point out that she took trips totaling $1 million in cost. Again, that was very gracious of you. I think you recognize your presence would be very important to somebody in Las Vegas if they are going over an Interior issue.

One more thing. We in Louisiana have recognized that you cannot be pro-environmental unless you are pro-business and you cannot be pro-business unless you are pro-environmental because the one sustains the other.

Now I see that the Interior Department has spoken of decreasing the royalty rate for offshore oil and gas for leases sold later this year from 18.75 to 12.5. I get that. There has been a real difficulty in jump-starting development out there. Without the development there won't be money for GOMESA. There won't be money for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. So there is a national interest in that. But let me say, my questions relate to this. How does Interior's analysis project GOMESA revenues would be impacted if the recommendation is accepted?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, certainly, the Advisory Board is just that, an Advisory Board, and they made several recommendations, as you point out. One of the recommendations was to remove or lower the royalty rates.

On the Gulf, we are due to put up for lease the largest acreage in the history of this country in the Central and Western Gulf. It will be interesting to see what the level of interest—we think the interest is good on that.

Senator CASSIDY. Now is the interest sparked by the lower end of the royalty?

Secretary ZINKE. The data is—I would say you could go either way in the data. Lowering the rate, the supply and demand, lowering the rate one could say, well, it increases the production. What we're seeing though is more production onshore than offshore. We saw companies like Exxon, $50 billion in the Permian–Wolfcamp onshore. Still, offshore is more risky and it's more expensive.

The Gulf has an advantage that you have subsea infrastructure. So the Gulf has advantages as opposed to both the East and the West Coast. I think this lease sale will be a bellwether on offshore, probably in the next 10 years.

Senator CASSIDY. So in the one sense you could have increased revenue if you have more production to offset the lower royalty rates. Any modeling of that or, somehow—obviously, we in Louisiana are concerned because GOMESA funding to rebuild our coastline is linked to that and those who get money for the Land and Water Conservation Fund are likewise concerned. So any modeling on that?

Secretary ZINKE. We do have modeling. We'll share with you what we have. Again, it's a supply and demand model. You'll lower the royalties, you make it more attractive, production increases and revenue, in some cases, can increase.

So what you want to do is make sure your royalties are fair, appropriate, don't penalize production, incentivize overall energy

dominance, but make sure that you also incentivize reliable, incorporate innovation into a regulatory scheme.

What I'm hearing from the industry is regulation that incorporates innovation, best science, and best practices. It's not punitive, it is as much of an economic driver as royalty rates.

Senator CASSIDY. Got it.

I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cassidy.

Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

Secretary Zinke, it is good to see you again.

I want to start with renewable energy. I know we have had this conversation. In the State of Nevada, 87 percent of the land is owned by the Federal Government, so our partnership is key. The interaction that we have with all of the federal agencies is important to the State of Nevada.

One of the areas that we have been focused on is renewables and responsible development of wind, solar, and geothermal energy on public lands. It has long had broad bipartisan support, including from you during your time in Congress as a co-sponsor of the Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act, and it has played a growing role in our economy. Solar now supports more jobs than natural gas and over twice the jobs in coal, according to a 2017 Department of Energy report. Yet, for the second year in a row, the Administration's proposed budget looks at cutting DOI renewable programs by almost half, a proposed 50 percent cut for Fiscal Year '18 and a 40 percent cut for Fiscal Year '19.

Looking at these numbers, it appears that renewable energy development is not an important part of the Department's charge. If this Administration is committed to what I have heard you say time and again, an all-of-the-above energy strategy, then why is renewable energy the only energy program that is proposed to be cut?

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you for the question, and that is a great question.

We looked at the expected demand and expected demand by all our modeling was about $73 million and that's what we funded it at. It's down from 20.

With solar, there's some projects out West, particularly in California, that are proposing 338,000 acres of a solar field on federal land—that's 500 square miles.

So every energy, as you know, every energy source has its consequences. Wind chops up birds. I was criticized for saying 750,000. I have the study that says about, let's see, 800,000, over 800,000 bats and 573,000 birds. That's a study from the USGS. So wind chops up a lot of birds.

Solar, when you put a solar field in, it's single use. You're not going to hunt on it, you're not going to recreate on it, and it's tough for habitat.

But our policy is all-the-above. There are appropriate places for wind, there's an appropriate place for solar, we just have to make sure that we understand the consequences and have a national dialogue. It is better to produce energy in this country under reasonable regulation than watch it get produced overseas with none.

Energy is core to our economic well-being and, quite frankly, morally, to produce energy in this country is morally right because I don't want to see your kids ever have to go overseas and see what I've seen.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. So can I just clarify my understanding? Your concern is the environmental impacts that solar and wind have and that is why you have taken a look at cutting this budget for these areas? That is what I have heard——

Secretary ZINKE. No, it meets the—our budget reflects the expected demand. There was great demand in solar early. Solar demand——

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Did I not just hear you say in offshore oil drilling there is low demand, yet you are increasing the budget in those areas? I am just confused with the whole, overall energy policy.

Secretary ZINKE. No, what I'm saying, what I said in offshore is—no, what I said was, in offshore, we'll see. The lease is about in March. I think it's going to be a bellwether of interest offshore vice onshore. There's no question that offshore oil and gas is riskier than onshore. Secondly is the shale plays onshore significantly.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Riskier in what sense? Environmental impact or the fact that nobody will come out because it doesn't pencil out and is cost prohibitive?

Secretary ZINKE. It's riskier for a number of reasons. One is environmentally.

When BP—it's well over $20 or $30 billion BP has paid.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. But yet the budget has increased for that. Let me move on because we will submit these for the record.

The reorganization—you and I have talked about this, and I so appreciate this is a tough thing to do. I have talked to you about the fact that the Duck Valley Indian Tribal Reservation is both on Idaho and Nevada state land. The line straddles that, right? And so, BLM in Idaho treats them differently than the BLM in Nevada. Yet, what I am looking at now on your map is cutting Nevada in half for your BLM regions. I don't quite understand that.

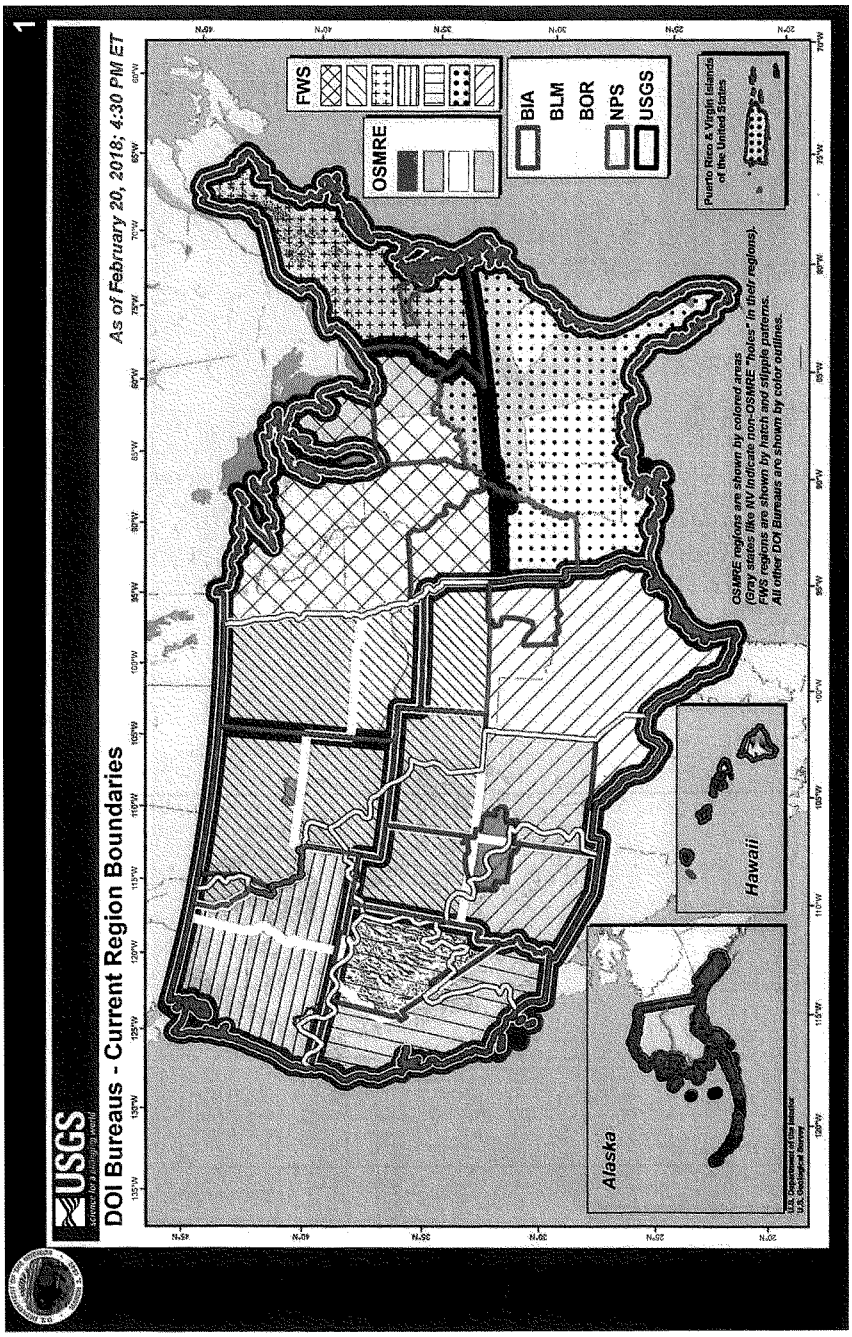
What I am asking for is a commitment from you and DOI to work with the stakeholders, the Governor, and the State of Nevada to address our concerns. Will you be committed to doing just that?

Secretary ZINKE. I am. I have talked to the Governor, and now I understand he is in support of our plan.

If—you have a map in front of you. Nevada is already divided in multiple regions. We're going to, our plan as of right now is keeping the BLM directors because almost all the states that have BLM enjoy the relationship with having a BLM director, a state director.

But our larger issue is trying to bring BOR, BIA, Park Service, the different bureaus within Interior and realigning to make sure we're on unified districts, unified regions based on watershed and science. And you can see them. The map on the right is our current organization.

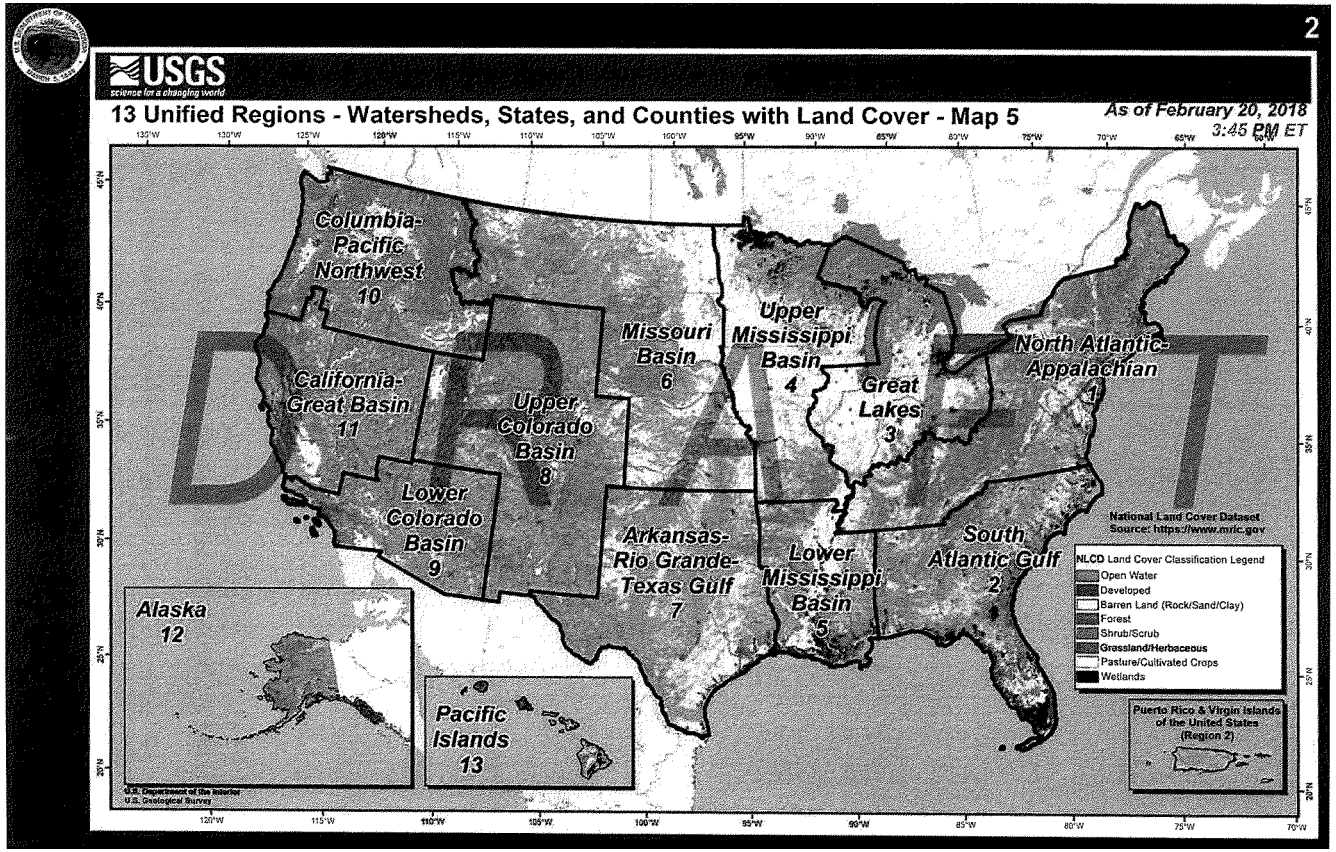
[The information referred to follows:]


1
USGS
science for a changing world
DOI Bureaus - Current Region Boundaries
As of February 20, 2018; 4:30 PM ET
FWS
OSMRE
BIA
BLM
BOR
NPS
USGS
Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands of the United States
OSMRE regions are shown by colored areas (Gray states like NV indicate non-OSMRE "holes" in their regions).
FWS regions are shown by hatch and stipple patterns.
All other DOI Bureaus are shown by color outlines.
Alaska
Hawaii
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Secretary ZINKE. And you look at Nevada, Nevada is carved up, probably seven or eight different lines.

And the map on the left is how our proposal——

[The information referred to follows:]


2
USGS
science for a changing world
13 Unified Regions - Watersheds, States, and Counties with Land Cover - Map 5
As of February 20, 2018
3:45 PM ET
Columbia-Pacific Northwest 10
California-Great Basin 11
Upper Colorado Basin 8
Lower Colorado Basin 9
Missouri Basin 6
Upper Mississippi Basin 4
Great Lakes 3
North Atlantic-Appalachian 1
Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf 7
Lower Mississippi Basin 5
South Atlantic Gulf 2
Alaska 12
Pacific Islands 13
National Land Cover Dataset
Source: https://www.mrlc.gov
NLCD Land Cover Classification Legend
Open Water
Developed
Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
Forest
Shrub/Scrub
Grassland/Herbaceous
Pasture/Cultivated Crops
Wetlands
Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands of the United States (Region 2)
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Secretary ZINKE. What we've done is we looked at science, watersheds, wildlife corridors, about 13 variables, equal systems, then we brought our SESs in, and these are career professionals.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Career professionals.

My time is running out and I don't want to get into anybody else's.

The CHAIRMAN. Your time is up.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Yes.

Can I just ask for a commitment that you come back to us and go through this and be willing to talk to us more about what is going on here, because we have not had the opportunity to explore this with you and your staff as well?

Secretary ZINKE. Absolutely.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

Secretary ZINKE. Congress has a critical role in this, and that's why it says "DRAFT." So we're introducing it to you. We'll go through—I've just, kind of, outlined the steps we've taken thus far.

We are to the draft of where we are but both the House and the Senate have an enormous amount of say in this and we think we need to reorganize and unify districts. We're willing to work with it and mortar board it out. If there's some adjustment that needs to be made, great.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I think these are issues on this reorganization that we will all be learning more about, but the opportunity to have the one-on-ones I do think is important.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Secretary Zinke, for your time and service today. Thanks to your investment in our public lands. Thanks for your support of the National Park Restoration Act, I truly appreciate it. That is going to make a huge difference as we get and deal with this backlog of maintenance in our National Park System.

Enos Mills, who was the idea behind Rocky Mountain National Park that you visited—I am grateful for your visit this last year—said, "Within National Parks is room—glorious room—room in which to find ourselves, in which to think and hope, to dream and plan, to rest and resolve." I thank you for the resolve that you are showing to address the backlog and other issues facing our public lands.

Secretary Zinke, I want to talk a little bit about the Arkansas Valley Conduit, more of a comment than anything.

The Arkansas Valley Conduit Project is in Southeastern Colorado. Authorized in the 1960s, President Kennedy signed the Arkansas Valley Conduit into law. Since then, we have had a number of people providing resources, dollars, to this pipeline from Pueblo, Colorado, out toward Lamar, Colorado. Hundreds plus miles of pipeline providing clean, abundant, affordable water to some of the most economically distressed areas of our state. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has committed $60 million to this project. I know you are very well aware of this, in rural Southeastern Colorado 50,000 people depend on it, would be dependent on it, for their drinking water.

We have had previous conversations with Administration officials and—this Administration as well as previous Administrations—the Southeastern Water Conservancy District and State of Colorado have joined together in working on this. I just would thank you for your commitment to working with us as we work through the needs of the Arkansas Valley Conduit and just to thank you for that commitment, Secretary Zinke, to work with us on that.

Also, thank you as well on the BLM reorganization, headquarters relocation. The Federal Government owns roughly 47 percent of the land out West. The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for administering 245 million acres of federal service lands and all but 100,000 acres of those, of that number, are located mostly in the 11 Western states, 11 Westernmost states, and Alaska.

At the beginning of this Congress I introduced the BLM Headquarters Relocation Act, the sole purpose of which is to relocate the headquarters of the agency so that the people who work there are among the lands they manage. We already have a number of field officials, field personnel, out in the states where the 245 million acres reside but we can get those headquarter agents, headquarter employees there, as well, because I believe decisions are better made when they are made by those communities, within those communities, that are most affected by their decisions.

I am certainly pleased to see within the budget request Interior's planning at modernization of the organization for the next 100 years and at the top of the list, I think it should be relocating the BLM headquarters out West. And I would like to plug, personally, Grand Junction, Colorado. Some others may have different ideas, but I think it is a uniquely qualified location to host it.

I just wanted a brief update, if you could, on the agency's reorganization, relocation process.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you.

You'll be happy to know that Anvil Points, which has been languishing for decades, has been resolved. The check is in the mail.

Senator GARDNER. That is damn big news, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, it is. It is big.

Reorganization——

Senator GARDNER. Wait, if you don't mind, let me just speak on that for a little bit. That is a big deal.

Secretary ZINKE. It is a big deal.

Senator GARDNER. And I want to thank you for that.

Secretary ZINKE. Swain County in North Carolina and for those—there were commitments made that money was in the account but never distributed, and you had Swain County in North Carolina, you had Anvil Points, and the money was being held but never released for some issue.

So we have looked at it; we resolved it. So the payment, my understanding, has been made or is in the process of being made. The government check is in the mail.

Senator GARDNER. Secretary Zinke, just for the information of the Committee, this is something that has been a broken record. Scott Tipton, myself, others in the Colorado delegation have been talking to you and to previous Administrations about this. Secretary Salazar, Senator Udall and gosh, Senator Salazar, everybody

has been involved in this. This is $18 million to the people of Western Colorado. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for that.

Secretary ZINKE. My expert has said the payment is going to be made March 28th, so the end of the month. So the check is really not in the mail, but it's coming.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Secretary, thank you for that.

Secretary ZINKE. Oh——

Senator GARDNER. I am just going to yield back my time, and call the county commissioners out there who are going to be doing some handstands right now.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, on the reorganization, real quickly. Sixteen percent of Interior is retirement age today. In five years, 40 percent of Interior is at retirement age. And so, looking at a replacement as people retire, looking at pushing more assets out West, it makes a difference if you're a GS5, a GS7, where you live. San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, DC, are very expensive cities and, quite frankly, the quality of life if you're a GS7, GS5, entry level, it's difficult for a number of reasons.

We are looking at smaller communities out West because remember the organization there's three areas that we're focused on: recreation, permitting, and NEPA. And we think we're going to do those jointly and all those don't have to be co-located, but the recreation has to be co-located, the NEPA has to be co-located, and the permitting has to be co-located.

We have 2,600 sites in Interior. But we are looking at smaller communities, particularly in areas like BLM, and in these different regions where Interior folks, entry level, can enjoy a quality of life, have a chance to buy a house, have a chance to, you know, have good schools or good hospitals.

We haven't determined where. We think we'll probably have three candidates within the different regions for that and then work with Congress, get a metric applied to it so we do it by best practices and science. But certainly the smaller towns across the West, and there are many in everyone's district, is kind of where we're centered on at the moment.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Gardner. Congratulations on your good news.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Madam Chair.

A couple of quick questions on this royalty issue. Has the decision been made, or is this a proposal to go down by 35 percent in the royalties in offshore?

Secretary ZINKE. No, the decision has not been made. The——

Senator KING. And are there data to support this change? Is there an economic analysis that shows the current rate is impairing the ability to lease these properties?

Secretary ZINKE. There is data. There are recommendations.

Senator KING. From whom?

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, but to be clear, where are we in our energy?

The President signed an EO, an Executive Order, tasking me to look at energy and to prepare this.

Senator KING. I am sorry, Mr. Secretary, I have very limited time. Are there data to support a 35 percent reduction in the offshore drill that indicates that this is somehow an impediment to the execution of leases? Yes or no?

Secretary ZINKE. I would say there's an argument.

Senator KING. Argument is not data. In other words, there has been no economic analysis to justify this massive cut? These are resources that belong to the people of the United States. We are taking money out of the pockets of taxpayers.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I agree with you.

And so, I haven't made the decision because I have not looked at it in detail. There's an argument. There's an argument on the other side, too. And the data is not conclusive, although I have not looked at it in detail. I've just looked at the broad brush——

Senator KING. Has any analysis been made of what the cost to the taxpayers would be from this reduction?

Secretary ZINKE. There is no doubt that there—when they present the recommendations to me, the supporting data will be there.

Senator KING. They, being the Royalty Policy Committee?

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, the Royalty Committee, which is an advisory board.

Senator KING. Could you supply for the Committee the names and affiliations of the members of that Committee, please?

Secretary ZINKE. Sure.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Secretary ZINKE. But I can tell you that I think the industry, the energy industry, oil and gas, is doing very well.

Senator KING. I would——

Secretary ZINKE. So at current rates they're doing very well.

Senator KING. Well, you just made my argument.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, and I'll share it, but I have not made a decision, but when you're producing as a country 10.6 million barrels a day, first time in 60 years we're exporting liquid natural gas, the oil and gas industry is doing very well.

Senator KING. Fine. I appreciate that, and I hope you will apply that analysis to this rather significant change.

Second question, you made a proposal, or the Department has made a proposal, on offshore drilling. I hope you will take into consideration the interests of the states involved. In Maine, during a Northeaster last week, a Nor'easter, we had a turnout at a public meeting. I asked my office, I said, I bet it was 95 percent opposed. They said, no, you are wrong, Senator. It was 100 percent opposed. Our legislature has opposed it unanimously. Our delegation is unanimously in opposition to it, and the coastal economy of Maine is enormously dependent upon fisheries, lobsters, and visitors throughout the year. I hope that will be taken into consideration, because the benefit we see is minimal and the cost, the potential cost, is enormous.

Secretary ZINKE. This is what I did.

The last Administration took about 94 percent off. What I did is zero-based. So I put everything on for discussion.

Senator KING. And I know——

Secretary ZINKE. Knowing——

Senator KING. You took Florida off, and I am just suggesting I hope you will do the same for Maine——

Secretary ZINKE. Well, by putting everything on we had a discussion.

Now Florida is different for three reasons. One is that every member, both sides of the aisle, wrote me an immediate letter and said we don't want it.

Senator KING. That is true of Maine as well, by the way, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary ZINKE. Second is your governor, the Governor of Maine, is for it. And third, Florida has a federal moratorium in place until 2022 which no other state has, a federal moratorium. So had I left Florida off in the beginning, it would have been arbitrary and capricious.

Senator KING. Well, I am not——

Secretary ZINKE. So I put Florida on, but Florida is still in the process.

Senator KING. I am not arguing that you made the wrong decision in Florida. I am just arguing for a similar decision in Maine based upon our circumstances.

Next, a different area. Park fees, a significant increase.

I agree with you that we need to look at park fees. I think they should be looked at, and it should be part of the analysis. My problem is the park fee proposal. The increases are so significant, and I wondered if there has been an economic elasticity analysis to determine whether we could end up losing more money than we gain by increasing, for example, for a person from $12 to $30, and a vehicle from $25 to $70? Those are really significant increases, and there could be two results: a reduction in visitation, and also a closing off of the parks to the people of America who we want to have access.

Secretary ZINKE. I agree. We have several proposals, and we have not made a decision yet because of the data.

But you're right. One of the proposals on the table was, you look at the peak season on our top 10 parks and that's where the significant increase is.

Still, the greatest bargain is $80 for a year pass. That's the greatest bargain in America.

Senator KING. No, the greatest bargain used to be the Senior Pass which I have which was $10 for life.

Secretary ZINKE. For life.

Yes, and now it's $80 for life.

Senator KING. That is the greatest bargain.

Secretary ZINKE. But part of the value of entrance fees is what we want to do is push more flexibility to the park itself, the Superintendent. So, we're very aware. We haven't made a decision yet. Clearly, it's on both sides of the issue. We want to make sure that the parks remain a value and accessible for America. That's the promise this country made, and that's the promise that we'll keep. We have not made a decision. I am aware that an increase hurts some families and the intention is not to hurt families.

Senator KING. It is the magnitude of the increase.

Of course, motorcycles went from $20 to $50. Now for me, I'm just kidding, but when you see a motorcycle change, that gets my attention.

I think your answer to summarize on all of these issues that we have been talking about today is, data will be collected, data will be made available, final decisions have not been made, and you will listen to the views of the people of the states involved. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary ZINKE. As well as I'll listen to this Committee on it.

So you know, about half our parks don't charge. So there's also, we're inconsistent across-the-board on what we charge. A lot of our parks either don't charge or there is a tier system that they're not adhering to. That's part of the issue.

And then what represents the best value and how do we do it? Some of our parks, when you have Yosemite which is the experience—the visitor experience is a parking lot, it is so crowded—Yosemite, Yellowstone, some of our principal parks, we'll love them to death.

So also we look at how do we manage people, traffic? Do we go to a transporter, a public transportation system? Because it is untenable, unsupportable, unsustainable, the way we're doing, we're managing our parks, let alone the backlog. So all these require discussion.

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to move on.

Senator KING. I just hope it will be done over time, systematically and data-driven.

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I want to thank you, in particular, for your leadership and for the President's leadership in addressing the concerns expressed by people in Utah, particularly in Southern and Southeastern Utah, issues related to the designation of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and the Bears Ears National Monument. I note that some criticism has come your way and the President's way over this, but what you did was courageous and it was the right thing to do.

Let's take, for example, the people of San Juan County, Utah. This is Utah's poorest county. It is our poorest county, in part, because nearly all of the land is owned by the Federal Government. That was the case before the Bears Ears National Monument was designated on December 28, 2016, and it remains the case since then. It also was the case before President Trump made the modifications to it, and it remains the case now.

What changed with the monument designation was that people in San Juan County, the people of Utah, particularly those closest to the monument, were even further put outside of any process that might determine how that land can be used, how they can access that land, sometimes for recreational reasons, many times for religious purposes, as the land is considered sacred by the Native American tribes residing in San Juan County, Utah.

This was a big move that was made and a move that was much appreciated by people across the political spectrum in communities throughout Utah, especially Southern Utah. I appreciate and applaud you for doing that.

Secretary Zinke, I would like to talk to you a little bit about a topic that I know you and I have discussed a little bit in the past that deals with BLM law enforcement. As you know, BLM law enforcement has earned something of a poor reputation throughout much of the West, and this is particularly true in rural Utah because of the agency's history, particularly through certain personnel, of intimidation, of heavy-handed tactics and a flagrant and, in some cases, well-documented abuses of authority. One major problem has been BLM's sometimes blatant disregard for state and local law enforcement.

During the last Administration, for instance, BLM allowed 8 of 12 cooperative agreements with local law enforcement agencies to expire. This flies directly in the face of statutory guidance from FLPMA that directs BLM to achieve "maximum feasible reliance upon local law enforcement officials."

Logic and the law dictates that this is important and its logic certainly dictates that minimal help from local law enforcement means maximum strain on the Department's resources and that also is going to lead to maximum strain with states and with local communities affected by these vast swaths of land over which the BLM has charge. This is certainly the case in many places in Southern Utah where trust between local residents and BLM law enforcement officials has completely deteriorated.

I wanted to ask you about what you are doing as the Secretary of the Interior and what you look forward to doing to change the culture of BLM law enforcement and to maximize reliance on local law enforcement within the West?

Secretary ZINKE. Great question.

I have great respect for law enforcement. It's difficult, especially, sometimes, when you're the only guy out there, isolated duty stations, a long ways away from help and there is a lot of activity that's not good on federal lands. This covers BIA. It covers BLM.

But I am in support of cooperative agreements because when you see a BLM truck, the first thing that I would like the public to think about is land management. And when you see a BLM light go on behind you, I would like the public to think about maybe there's a lost kid out there, have you seen a grizzly bear, have you seen that—and not getting a ticket on a county road.

We have fired four, to readdress, and it's about public trust. Law enforcement individuals have a higher responsibility because they have a badge. Because they have a badge they also have to make sure that the power that is given them is exercised correctly. Heavy-handedness has led to a breach of trust, especially out West, and we are very aware of it. We have taken action to restore trust. We think the cooperative agreements are good.

When there is an issue, and there's been several issues recently out West, I think your first line of defense or first action is probably call the local sheriff. He knows the people. He's an elected official. He's not an appointed federal agent and there's goodness of

having an elected official take the action and be the face of enforcement. And that certainly is the direction that Interior is headed.

Senator LEE. Wonderful, I appreciate that.

My time has expired. I appreciate your insight into this and I would add to that just that, that is one of the reasons why we have a long, proud tradition of local law enforcement in this country for precisely the reasons you described. When we allow the law to be enforced by people who are accountable at the local level, good things happen. Correspondingly, bad things happen when we have people who are accountable only to someone 2,000 miles away. I appreciate your leadership in this.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lee.

Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, you noted several times that providing up to $18 billion to address the maintenance backlog in our parks and refuges and to support Indian education schools is the largest commitment ever made. It is the largest investment in these three areas ever made, but it isn't an investment unless the money actually materializes.

What is the Department's estimate of how much funding this proposal would generate on an annual basis for deferred maintenance for the next eight years? Because you also testified that you think we can get there in eight years.

Secretary ZINKE. If you go back—good question.

If you go back to 2008, Interior was the number two generator of revenue in this country behind the IRS. It was a banner year, but we made, just in offshore oil and gas, the revenue was about $18 billion a year.

When we first took office, it atrophied down to about $2.6 billion. Some was market conditions, some was not. Given our growth, our projected income, especially if Alaska comes online, given that, we'll see what the interest is. We think we can do it, within eight years is our best guess of $18 billion. We think we can recover the $18 billion in eight years——

Senator HIRONO. This is based on projections of the revenues from new energy projects?

Secretary ZINKE. For new energy.

And what we did is we took a baseline—well, again, Congress has to have—the Executive doesn't have the power. It's in the budget, but it has to have a companion bill to it. What we did is we looked at in the budget of taking a baseline of what we had on in 2017, about $2.6.

New energy is all-the-above, but also includes wind, solar——

Senator HIRONO. Do you believe that it is quite certain that you will be able to raise at least $2.25 billion every year in basically new money for maintenance and that this is something that can be relied upon so that the NPS employees will know how much funding to expect for deferred maintenance purposes?

Secretary ZINKE. I would say it's a better bet than funding LWCF or our Park System at the moment because the reason why we have $11.7 billion in backlog is that we, as a country, have not been able to address a backlog that we all know is there.

I don't give criticism of the House and the Senate. I was a member of, obviously, the House. But our current system doesn't provide any assurity either, so we think it's the better bet.

Senator HIRONO. Well, there is a bill that Senator Portman mentioned that would guarantee this kind of funding and I think that is probably, possibly, a better way to go.

You mentioned several times that your organization bases decisions on, among other things, science. So do you believe that science and scientists within your Department should feel free and unafraid of political interference to present their science, even if it includes the words "climate change"?

Secretary ZINKE. I believe, I'm a strong believer of science. And quite frankly, I was criticized because I, as my right as Interior, to look at a USGS document as it pertained to Alaska prior to publication. I didn't change a comma, but I did want to know this, given the same data why were the energy resources so radically different between one study and a study that was done just a few years prior? What methodology did they use as a geologist, what methodology did they use for making sure those resources are recoverable?

Senator HIRONO. So there was a review. You referred to a USGS report wherein the report stated that, "Global climate change drives sea level rise, increasing the frequency of coastal flooding." This was a scientific study that was done by USGS, and your Department released the press release on this report, but it excluded the reference to global climate change driving sea level rise. This is why I asked the question that reports that use the terms "climate change," do you edit those out? Do you censor that kind of language?

Secretary ZINKE. I don't believe the report itself that you're speaking of was edited at all.

Senator HIRONO. No——

Secretary ZINKE. The press release could have been interpreted because it is a press release and not the report, but any reference and any allegation that one of the reports——

Senator HIRONO. Excuse me, I have to correct you, Mr. Secretary, because the paper's abstract did have that sentence which you excluded from your press release.

Now, this is not the first time that the issue of whether or not this Administration actually believes that climate change is science-based has come up. This is why we have some concerns about what the policy of your Department is and whether your scientists are able to make certain statements based on their science that includes the term "climate change." If you are sitting here telling me that you do not censor or edit out references to climate change, great. Please answer, yes or no?

Secretary ZINKE. So are you suggesting that we changed the document itself?

Senator HIRONO. I am asking you whether the words "climate change" are somehow not acceptable in your Department and your various releases and your preference would be, within your Department, not to refer to climate change?

Secretary ZINKE. I don't have a problem with climate change.

Senator HIRONO. Great.

Secretary ZINKE. I've always said three things: the climate is changing as it always has; it's changing in ways we don't understand; and man has been an influencer on this. I don't think those are in dispute at the Department of the Interior.

Senator HIRONO. Good.

So you would not be sitting here editing out those kinds of references in various publications that you——

Secretary ZINKE. There is no incident, no incident at all, that I know that we ever changed a comma on a document itself. Now, we may have on a press release, this is how we announce it, but I don't know of any document we have changed. And I challenge you, any member, to find a document that we've actually changed on a report and I read them all. I don't change a comma on them, but I can tell you as Secretary of the Interior, I think I have, I know I have the right, because they work for me, to read it prior to and I have questions on it. I'm a geologist. Why did they come up with this conclusion? I think I have a right to know. And your staff, your staff, would do the same thing.

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Secretary, based on everything we know about this Administration's views on climate change, it would comport with the view that words such as "climate change" would not be included in press releases from your Department.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Secretary Zinke, I think you were pretty clear in terms of your views on climate and the fact that within the Department, you are not altering the reports that are coming out from the agencies.

Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Secretary Zinke, always an honor to have you before this Committee.

I want to first start by thanking you for working with me and others on and off this Committee in introducing the National Parks Restoration Act.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, as a fellow Montanan, Secretary Zinke, we did not get to pick where we got to grow up, but I am so grateful both of us got to grow up in Montana. I also want to tell you, I am very proud that you are the first Montanan to ever serve on a President's Cabinet in our state's history. I am proud of that.

We both grew up in the shadows of two of our National Park System's crown jewels. Secretary Zinke, you grew up in the shadows of Glacier National Park. I grew up close to Yellowstone National Park. I know addressing the maintenance backlog in our National Parks has been a priority for both of us.

I also want to stress the importance of addressing the issues of sexual harassment and workforce environment issues that I know you are working on at the Department of the Interior. With the recent reports of other federal agencies and, more particularly, the U.S. Forest Service, there is a strong need to take this head-on across the federal agencies.

I also want to thank you for being a strong ally in the forest management space.

Secretary Zinke, you have been a strong supporter of my legislation to essentially reverse the 9th Circuit Courts disastrous Cotton-

wood decision. This decision was so disastrous, the Obama Administration supported us and we have had bipartisan support to reverse its decision. As you know, this decision imposes unnecessary red tape on federal agencies that the Obama Administration said, and I quote that Administration, "has the potential to cripple federal land management." Secretary Zinke, can you elaborate why the Department of the Interior and the Fish and Wildlife Service believe the Cottonwood decision will needlessly slow down land management?

Secretary ZINKE. Thank you.

The Cottonwood Decision. What it essentially does is it halts land management plans when there's a change in species status. That's unworkable at the ground level.

And we have a lot of challenges out West. And thank you for your support of, you know, of making sure that our parks, the maintenance and infrastructure and the backlog is addressed because no one loves public land more than we do.

But we have to also look at active management. And when decisions are made in the court that prevents our professionals from managing the land, from reducing dead and dying timber, from removing protections of a species as it recovered. We should be applauding when species have recovered and we take them off the endangered and threatened list because they've recovered. We should applaud that the system has worked and then divert those assets to another species that is threatened that needs some help.

But the courts have been tough lately about, what I think, they're legislating from the bench a lot of times and it's hurting our ability to manage and it has a consequence and effect on our ability to be stewards of our great treasures, both wildlife and the land itself.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Secretary Zinke.

Given that we had the Obama Administration supporting us on this Cottonwood fix and now the Trump Administration supporting us, I hope we get the fix completed here in this Omnibus negotiation.

Secretary Zinke, I want to turn toward this issue of workplace environment. Can you update me on what the Department is doing to address sexual harassment and other workplace environment issues?

Secretary ZINKE. Well Senator, I fired four. I'll fire 400 if necessary because I, as a former Navy Seal Commander, I think you just should have a work environment that is free of harassment, free of intimidation.

It was amazing to me, the lack of process, the lack of commitment, the lack of priority about an issue that is a virus, it's a cancer that will bring down any organization. So we put processes in place. All my leadership team meets and talks about it regularly to make sure we're addressing it. I think we've made great progress on it.

I had an advisory board that resigned and one of the members stated that they knew about sexual harassment, but it wasn't my job to say anything. I'm not sure what type of advisory board that is. If I would have known about it, I would have fired them before they resigned because that type of attitude, when you see sexual

harassment, when you see intimidation and turn a cheek and don't say anything, that's exactly what's happened across this country, you know, starting with the Hollywood group. I'm glad Hollywood has addressed the problem. I'm glad this country is addressing the problem because it's not right. But "when you see something, say something" is the policy in the Department of the Interior.

Senator DAINES. Secretary Zinke, thank you for your leadership. It does start at the top, and I appreciate your leadership in that important area.

I am out of time. I am going to submit for the record additional questions, Chair Murkowski, regarding the maintenance backlog, as well as the Blackfeet Water Settlement funding.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Daines.

Just a few more questions here this morning.

The issue of the advisory committees you just raised, Mr. Secretary, I know that with regard to the various advisory boards, various advisory councils out there, you had conducted a review of the same.

I hear from people in the state, they want a process that allows for their input. Yesterday a report came out announcing that BLM has renewed the charters of 21 BLM Resource Advisory Councils which had temporarily been suspended. Can you give us just a quick update here on your national review process for both these internal and external panels and give us some sense, in terms of timeline, as to what folks might be expecting getting back to regular meeting schedules?

Secretary ZINKE. When I assumed the position—I have over 200 advisory boards, 200. And so, here's what I asked. I said, tell me who is on your board, tell me what you've done the last two years, tell me what your expectations are in the next two years, tell me what your mission statement is and your budget.

The CHAIRMAN. Reasonable so far.

Secretary ZINKE. And what I did is I suspended everyone until they could provide that little information because I want to know, because I think a lot of these boards are meaningful and those that did not provide that, were in suspension. We contacted everyone. As of, where we are today is that they can meet again. But I think it was a reasonable expectation to ask people on some of these boards, you know, what do you do? Who is on your board? What are your goals?

To one, to give me, if they need assistance, and a lot of these boards are volunteers. We do pay about $10 million a year, I guess, in administrative costs, but a lot of the boards require an enormous amount of commitment, you know, time.

One is I wanted to know who is on it and what can I do, as the Secretary, to help them. And if they can't answer those five questions, maybe we need to review what the leadership is on those boards or review whether their boards are important or not, if they're not doing anything.

And as it turns out, I think, we're pretty good of the boards we have now and we're issuing our reports and they're coming back to us with reports as they meet, what are their goals. So I'm pretty comfortable with where we are on our boards.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. It certainly seems reasonable to do an analysis every while and again to just, as you say, see who is there and what folks are doing.

I mentioned in my opening statement mineral security and my appreciation, not only for the Executive Order from President Trump, but also your Secretarial Order on mineral security.

You have $19 million within your budget. I know that we need an awful lot more to just map out the country here. But given that you are putting this priority within the budget, how do you see a process for these funds and what steps are you taking within the Department to address some of the mineral supply chain issues that we have been raising here?

Secretary ZINKE. Well, thank you for the question.

As you know, the USGS delivered a critical minerals report.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. America should read it because we are——

The CHAIRMAN. They would find out how vulnerable we are.

Secretary ZINKE. We really are and, as a former SEAL, the number of components that a modern warrior has that we rely on overseas for a lot of it, is a national security issue.

And also, the USGS hasn't prioritized and focused on basic field mapping in a long time. We think we can get there using new and modern technology, UAVs, magnetometers. So the, you know, 20 years ago when you set out to field map a lot of areas, it was labor intensive, it's going to be a long time.

Modern technology, modern techniques, particularly UAVs, we can catch up quickly, but the USGS has to prioritize this. It is in their national interest to do so. And some of the techniques, quite frankly, are flying over with magnetometers because the best field geologists won't be able to see what's below the surface.

So as a geologist I'm pretty confident that we can catch up, and we're going to focus on the areas that we think are the best value and the greatest potential. It will be a long time remapping the United States.

What I can tell you when you look at our current mapping in North America, Canada has done a pretty good job and when it gets to the border, it stops.

We also have to look at critical minerals and make sure we do our part of mapping the Lower 48 and Alaska and there's great opportunity there, but again it's innovation, best science, best practices, greatest good, longer-term.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. I think we have heard in this Committee that we have actually helped other countries do their mapping so that they have a better understanding and yet we are still deficient here in this country. So I appreciate the prioritization.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Secretary, thank you for joining us today, and I wanted to follow up on that point. I serve on the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, and I commend you on focusing on the critical minerals issue because it is a serious national security issue. The first thing we need to know is what we have and what we don't have and how to proceed because I just think, as I say, this is a long-

term national security issue and a very important role for your Department. So thank you for bringing new focus to that.

Secondly, I also want to thank you for the work on the backlog bill and addressing it in a serious way. As you may know, I am a co-sponsor of the bill with Senator Alexander. I think it is a creative response. It does not guarantee the funding, but it makes it likely and basically, I am for anything that will seriously deal with the park backlog. So I appreciate that.

Finally, just a detail question on the leases. I think you mentioned that there is a lease offering going out later this month or fairly soon. I presume that RFP, if you will, will be based upon the existing royalty rate, not the new proposed rate. Is that correct?

Secretary ZINKE. Yeah, the lease that we're offering, it's the largest lease in the history of this country offshore. It's primarily Central and Western Gulf.

The leasing is a little different than the royalty rate on it because when you lease it takes about three years to go into production on there. But again, the lease, to me, is a bellwether of where the market is going which is incredibly important.

Senator KING. Yes, that was what I was going to suggest. So at least the people who are bidding are, I would assume, assuming current levels, which would be an indication of a data point as to whether or not this lease level needs to be changed.

Secretary ZINKE. Yes, sir. I'd categorize that, absolutely, as you put it.

They're, I think they're leasing it without anticipation one way or the other, whether there will be an adjustment in the royalty, as they should.

Senator KING. Yes.

Secretary ZINKE. Their leasing should be on the basis of what the royalty rate is today and not a perceived direction shift.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Final point on the park fees. I think, as I mentioned, some adjustments are almost certainly necessary, but I would hope that perhaps you could step back and do a more comprehensive view. Do some economic analysis, maybe slow down and not impose them this visitation season and have a more thorough analysis.

Again, I don't want to end up with fewer people in the parks, lower revenues, and limited access for people that we, all Americans, should have to our parks.

Secretary ZINKE. You have my commitment that, believe me, Interior is not going to do anything unless it's well thought out because there's unintended consequences, sometimes, of actions.

Senator KING. Exactly.

Secretary ZINKE. And one of the main reasons we're getting more visitors is because there's less—people don't travel overseas as much. They've, kind of, found your park, a great program. And so, we want to make sure that what we do doesn't have any unintended consequences.

The other thing on a broader scale, we also are looking at ways to innovate our park fee collection system.

Senator KING. Well, one of the things that I have been pressing for three years is an app. There is a pilot with, I think, five parks that has worked very effectively at Acadia in Maine. A very signifi-

cant percentage of the fees were done online and that is another way to increase fees, collect from those who probably are not even paying them.

Secretary ZINKE. We're looking at kiosks and going online and doing it, you know, having lane 1, the standard ranger because there's a lot of people that enjoy the visitation of the ranger, the greeting, the map, but lane 2, 3, 4 maybe a fast track to go through for frequent visitors. So we're looking at different innovative ways to use technology and integrate into that system. We're not there, but we're also not there on a decision.

Senator KING. Good.

Secretary ZINKE. So, and no doubt, this Committee has an enormous amount of passion in our park fees and should we go forward, this Committee will be notified first and in advance. So if you have comments we'll take them into consideration.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Secretary ZINKE. But I would say this season is going to be a lot like last season except it's going to be, probably, greater visitation.

Senator KING. I believe that is right, and that is a testament to how wonderful the parks are.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Madam.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator King.

Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Sorry I had to step out for other things.

Secretary Zinke, I wanted to go back to the rural water issue. In your budget, there are cuts to the rural water programs and projects for communities with a population of less than 50,000 people.

The reason I bring that up is there is so much of my state that are in these smaller communities who are being impacted by drought and are working very diligently to try to come up with ways—I think there are actually three projects in Montana that are going to be impacted by this as well.

It is a 60 percent cut. Why cut at a time when water is becoming such a major focus for us on the kinds of resiliency programs that are helping our Western states deal with the impact?

Secretary ZINKE. I share your concern.

From a kid who grew up in Montana, especially the Eastern side, water is the economic driver. In Eastern Washington there's a number of districts that are solely underfunded.

Part of the re-looking at BOR, is when Bureau of Reclamation came in, is that the agreement was federal investment would be repaid over a period of time by the water users. We have a lot of holdings that have never, the title has never been transferred, even though the water districts have repaid over time. That is eating our maintenance budget and a lot of Bureau of Reclamation projects.

In the President's infrastructure bill which is, should be bipartisan, 25 percent of that bill specifically looks at rural, parts of it, in infrastructure and rural, oftentimes, is the water.

But I share your concerns on the water and I'll work with you on it, because I understand how important water is, especially in Eastern Washington.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, I think the thing that I would say deserves a major infrastructure investment is anything that can take the existing sources of water and use them more resiliently.

I think that is what you are seeing some communities try to do, but when you are the Odessa Aquifer or something that small, you need a little bit of help and support in doing so in, I would assume, these smaller communities.

On the oil drilling, will you consider taking the comment period and expanding it another 60 days? I think this is something we have written to you and asked about.

Secretary ZINKE. On the oil and gas, you should know off the coast of Oregon, Washington, most of California, there are no known resources of any weight. And again, I put everything on so we could have a dialogue and then take what's appropriate off.

I think I'm going to mark down Washington as opposed to oil and gas drilling. And I know where every state is, every governor, every member of Congress across the board.

So the comment period has closed. I know where people are and I certainly know where the State of Washington is. The State of Washington is deeply, passionately opposed to oil and gas drilling off their coast.

And I've committed, and the President is committed, to make sure that our plan which will be finished—our first draft, and you'll get another bite of it, will probably be late Fall on our proposal and our proposal will have the interest of Washington reflected in that plan, as well as Florida, the Gulf States and where there is enormous opposition.

Senator KING. Maine, Maine.

Secretary ZINKE. We'll do that.

Maine, also, does not have any resources off the coast. So, you can—I'll show you the same maps we have, as far as the geology goes, where the areas of interest are and where the areas of interest are not.

Senator CANTWELL. So, Mr. Secretary, will that include doing no analysis of those opportunities for the future? Because one of the things that the communities on the coast are worried about, our fishing communities, specifically, is some sort of seismic testing that would be done to discover if there were new undiscovered sources. The communities are very concerned about that.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, a seismic, for many, they've used seismic as a predecessor to oil and gas. But seismic also is required for wind. Seismic should be required, in many cases is, for mining. And the argument is that seismic is destructive. A lot of the coast, particularly on the East Coast and the Gulf, rely heavily on Reclamation done by offshore mining on federal land. I can tell you as a geologist, offshore mining of sand is enormously destructive environmentally in comparison to seismic. So seismic is not necessarily a precursor of oil and gas.

The other side of it is, I'm pretty confident that we have oil and gas reserves onshore to meet our country's needs. I'm pretty confident we do. But also, part of my responsibilities of Interior is we

should know what our reserves are as a country. And seismic, using best science, I think, is appropriate.

There are places where seismic is not in the interest of taxpayer expenditures, particularly if the geology would suggest there is no oil and gas. And so, then you would point to seismic if you're going to put a wind field out there given that the design of a wind field also affects fishing, so we've got to be smarter about how we put our wind apparatuses and our fields out there so it doesn't adversely affect.

Senator CANTWELL. I am over my time and I so appreciate the Chair allowing me to go.

I did want to file something for the record. Maybe it is something the Secretary and I can dialogue more on, but I do believe that when you removed part of Utah's monument that is now going to be open to ideas of mining claims and uranium development and off-road ATV, you did take an inch of public land out of that use.

So you and I can dialogue on it.

But again, thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cantwell.

Mr. Secretary, I appreciate the time that you have given to the Committee, how you have worked to respond to, not only very local interests, whether it is what I raised with our Fortymile placer miners or Senator Gardner's news that he received that, I think it was Anvil Points, is going to have a good day today, but also to the broader picture of reorganization that you are proposing within the Department, the impacts there on the respective regions, how we ensure that we do right by our national parks with a focus on the maintenance and the backlog.

Because this is the first FY'19 budget hearing that I have participated in, and it's going to be a long couple months between my role on this Committee and as an appropriator, but at every Committee as long as I can remember, when we have budget requests that come before us, I have to ask the question and I will ask the question of you.

In terms of what, when you look at your budget for Department of the Interior, where do you see this Administration's priority and focus on the Arctic and Arctic-related activity because I am sitting here with my co-chair of the Arctic Caucus, Senator King, and we have, I think, worked hard and will continue to work hard to raise the interest, the awareness and the priority of not only this Administration, but Administrations that have preceded you in focusing on the Arctic as a place of considerable opportunity, but also challenges as we recognize that we have much that is lacking by way of infrastructure and how we are able to take full opportunity of a changing and of an evolving Arctic.

That is a long lead up for you, but I put it out there to you and everybody else who is going to come before any of the Committees that I sit on, that we are going to be continuing to ask about the Administration's Arctic priorities to ensure that this does continue to be viewed as an area of focus, not only from the budget perspective, but in terms of national priorities.

Secretary ZINKE. Well, I would think three things. One is the Arctic is a national security interest; it is imperative. Secondly, energy dominance is not possible unless Alaska's resources come to

bear. Thirdly is the Alaska Natives. I think we need to do better being partners, particularly with our wildlife management. I don't, you know, the folks I've met up there, whether it's about whaling or seals or walruses, no one knows better how to manage those species than our native Alaskans.

And so, I think there's a lot of room of looking at ways we can be better partners, co-managing areas, typically, you know, they're so much more knowledgeable than we are at doing it.

So I think the Arctic area, again from national security, from oil and gas production, as you know, there's an enormous amount of gas on the North Shore and we've talked about different approaches on how to recover that gas. And overall, I think, liquid natural gas is probably our bridge fuel. Some would argue with that. That's my gut feeling on it, but to look at how to bring our natural gas resources to bear, certainly you have to talk about Alaska on that.

So, actually I'm very bullish on the Arctic. I don't think there's ever been an Interior that has focused more on the State of Alaska, certainly in my memory with it. A lot of my staff, as you know, we spend a lot of time in Alaska for a number of reasons that I've outlined.

So I think the relationship between Interior and this Committee on Alaska will only grow.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that.

And you mentioned that you feel that this Administration has focused more attention on Alaska. We have received a lot of attention in previous Administrations, but most of the attention has been on how we can, basically, lock up more of Alaska, rather than allow the people to work, to not only access our resources, but to do so in a balance with a pretty special environment, pretty special opportunities that we have up there.

So we appreciate you working with us to allow us to achieve that level of independence that any state would want, an independence to be able to provide for your people and take care of your land. We feel like we do a pretty good job.

I thank you for your focus on the opportunities that we have up there and, in particular, recognizing the great benefit, the great value that our indigenous peoples can provide whether it is in operations of co-management or just consultation, true, true, consultation.

We have not really had much discussion here today in this Committee about your role within Interior with regards to the various agencies that have oversight, whether it is through BIA, particularly through BIA. We need to get that position filled and we are working with you and we are looking forward to seeing that Assistant Secretary advance quickly.

You have a big job in front of you. We have moved several of the men and women that you need to help run the Department and several of them, unfortunately, have been held through a process that is frustrating on all ends.

My goal is to make sure that you have the team in place that you need to do not only execution of this budget that is being laid down but really to focus on the public assets, the public resources that you are charged with, as well as the people, our native people.

It is a big job. We appreciate the job that you are doing and I, particularly, appreciate the positive relationship that you have built and the trust that you are working to restore with the people of Alaska. It is appreciated, it is noticed, and we will welcome you back anytime.

With that, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:17 p.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

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Question from Chairman Murkowski

Question: Given the concerns about travel policy, specifically the use of non-commercial flights by the Secretary of the Interior, please provide a copy of the Department's policy and guidelines relating to the Secretary's use of government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft. Please also provide the use and cost of travel taken with government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft by the Secretary of the Interior since January 20, 2009.

Response: Documents related to Secretarial travel have been collected in response to a number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and made available in the Office of the Secretary's FOIA library at: https://www.doi.gov/foia/os/os-foia-library-travel-records.

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Questions from Ranking Member Cantwell

Question 1: At the budget hearing, I asked you about the potential misuse of public taxpayer funds for travel.

Please provide the following documentation and information regarding your travel on June 26-27, 2017:

- **Detailed itinerary for your activities on June 26 and June 27, including identification and explanation of activities and events carried out as part of your official duties as Secretary of the Interior.**
- **Documentation for your travel from Nevada to Montana during that timeframe, including aircraft manifest (including all passenger names and purpose), destinations, costs, and sources of payment for the trip.**
- **Documentation of travel alternatives considered, including commercial flights, and the costs, schedules, and routes of these alternatives.**
- **Explanation of why each alternative was rejected.**
- **Explanation of why you determined travel had to occur within these time constraints.**
- **Official documentation and all correspondence before and after the trip from agency ethics officials.**
- **Information regarding reimbursement to taxpayers for any part of the trip and any plans to provide reimbursement.**

In addition, please provide the following information regarding the Department's travel activities more broadly:

- **Identify each use of a government-owned aircraft by a non-career official at the Department of the Interior since January 20, 2017. For each use please provide the aircraft manifest (including all passenger names), destinations, dates of use, purpose, cost of each trip, and other travel alternatives considered.**
- **Identify each use of a private, non-commercial aircraft by a non-career official at the Department of the Interior, including charter service, lease, or other arrangement through Commercial Aviation Services providers since January 20, 2017. Provide the aircraft manifest (including all passenger names), destinations,**

dates of use, purpose, cost of each trip, the source of payment for the trip, and other travel alternatives considered.

- **Procedures in place or under review at the Department of the Interior to comply with Director Mulvaney's guidance on Secretarial travel (M-17-32) to require all travel on government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft receive prior approval from the White House Chief of Staff.**

Response: Documents related to Secretarial travel have been collected in response to a number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and made available in the Office of the Secretary's FOIA library at: https://www.doi.gov/foia/os/os-foia-library-travel-records.

Question 2: At the budget hearing, you issued a challenge to Senator Wyden "to give me one square inch of land that has been removed from federal protection."

Presidential proclamation 9558 establishing the Bears Ears National Monument included language that "all federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of the monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, locations, selection, sale, or other disposition under the public land laws or laws applicable to the U.S. Forest Service, from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument."

President Trump's proclamation 9681 modifying the boundary of the Bears Ears National Monument includes the following provision:

"At 9:00 a.m. eastern standard time, on the date that is 60 days after the date of this proclamation, subject to valid existing rights, the provisions of existing withdrawals, and the requirements of applicable law, the public and National Forest System lands excluded from the monument reservation shall be open to:
"(1) entry, location, selection, sale, or other disposition under the public land laws and laws applicable to the U.S. Forest Service;
"(2) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing; and
"(3) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws."

Similar language was included in Presidential proclamation 6920 establishing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and Presidential proclamation 9682 modifying the boundary of the monument.

The protective appropriation and withdrawal language that was removed in President Trump's proclamations affected over 2 million acres of lands that were within the original national monument boundaries. Under the terms of the proclamations, these lands are now

open to potential sale or other disposition, to mineral and geothermal leasing, and to the location of mining claims.

Please explain how removing lands from national monument protection and removing the withdrawal against potential disposal or development is consistent with your statement that not one square inch had been removed from federal protection?

Response: As it did before monument designation, the Federal government continues to manage the public lands that were included within the original boundaries of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. No lands have been sold or transferred out of Federal ownership, and the Department continues to manage these lands in accordance with environmental and public land laws passed by Congress protecting natural and cultural resources.

Question 3: President Trump's proclamation 9681 modifying the boundary of the Bears Ears National Monument states that "it is in the public interest to modify the boundaries of the monument to exclude from its designation and reservation approximately 1,150,860 acres of land that [the President] finds unnecessary for the care and management of the objects to be protected within the monument."

A few weeks ago it was reported that one of the largest and most complete finds of Triassic period fossils in the world — dating back over 200 million years — was discovered in an area that was removed from the original Bears Ears National Monument boundary.

- **Were you aware of this fossil discovery when you made the recommendation to remove this area from the national monument boundary? If so, why did you exclude this area if you knew it contained world-class fossil resources?**
- **Will you be recommending that the monument boundary be modified to add back in lands with known significant fossil resources? Please explain.**

Response: The Department will continue to manage lands in accordance with laws passed by Congress, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Native American Graves Repatriation Act, National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, among others. This will ensure the appropriate protection of fossils and other items identified.

Question 4: Earlier this year, the Committee held a hearing on the threat of geologic hazards to the public, and the role of the USGS in the science that helps to understand and protect our communities. Despite the clear need for these life-saving programs, the Fiscal Year 2019 request eliminated funding for several hazards programs including:

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- **the Early Earthquake Warning System,**
- **the National Volcano Early Warning and Lahar monitoring system, and**
- **the landslides program.**

Understanding the science behind these geologic hazards, and applying the science through these programs, help to save lives.

What is the Administration's justification for cutting funding for these life-saving programs?

Most of these systems involve many stakeholders and partners. What impact would eliminating federal funding have on these working relationships?

If funding for these programs is cut, how do you plan to address the resulting shortcoming of the science of understanding these hazards?

Response: For 2019, the Administration identified areas where the federal government could reduce spending and also areas for investment, such as addressing the maintenance backlog across the national park system and increasing domestic energy production on federal lands. The 2019 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; and to revise the national volcano threat level assessment. The budget maintains support for robust national and regional earthquake monitoring and reporting.

Question 5: **The BLM held public listening sessions across the country to hear from all sides as it prepared the 2016 Methane and Waste Prevention Rule ("2016 Rule"). For example, the BLM held four public meetings in 2014 before drafting the rule. The BLM then held another four public meetings in 2016 after finishing the draft. In its proposed new rule currently taking public comment, the BLM has not planned a single public meeting.**

Will you commit to meeting the same standard of public outreach set in the drafting of the 2016 Rule and hold four public meetings in affected communities on the new draft rule as well as extend the comment period by sufficient time to allow these hearings to take place?

Response: The Department is committed to following the law and to providing opportunity for public input as revisions to the rule are considered.

Question 6: **The BLM released a scoping report on March 2, 2018, detailing public comments the agency received regarding its plan to revise the sage grouse conservation**

plans. Shortly after the document was released, reports surfaced that a large number of public comments – potentially up to 100,000 – were not included in the scoping report. I understand that the lapse was due to technology issues, but I'm concerned that public comments of this volume could have been misplaced.

Given the tremendous public interest in this issue and the importance of making sure all voices are heard, can you please provide a detailed explanation of how you will rectify missing these comments and ensure that no other comments or public input has been excluded from your review of the sage grouse plans?

In addition, how will you ensure, going forward, that all public comments are effectively and transparently received and considered by the Department?

Response: BLM has verified that comments not initially included in the scoping report were incorporated into the review. While BLM does not know at this time where the technical glitch occurred, it has determined the web and email systems involved did not malfunction internally during sage-grouse public scoping. The BLM's email and ePlanning site remain open and ready to receive and record future comments submitted on the Draft EISes.

As part of our commitment to improving the trust among American taxpayers, the Department places a high value on public involvement and will continue to do so throughout the sage-grouse planning effort and all processes in which public comments are collected.

Question 7: **At your confirmation hearing last year, we talked about the risky practice of self-bonding for coal mine clean-up. Montana, for example, does not allow self-bonding. But many states still do. The Department has since pulled back from reforms, including guidance, begun under Secretary Jewell. But you did commit to me last year that you would review a pending GAO audit of self-bonding.**

Are you still committed to considering GAO's recommendations when they come out and reducing any risks to taxpayers?

Response: The Department appreciates the importance of adequate financial assurances for coal mine cleanup to ensure that the cost of required reclamation is covered. We are currently reviewing the GAO findings and considering appropriate next steps.

Question 8: **The Fiscal Year 2019 budget request includes a 15% reduction of funding for oil spill research at the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.**

At a time when the Department of the Interior is promoting and expanding offshore oil and gas development and therefore increasing the likelihood of an oil spill, how do you justify shrinking research funding for oil spill response and recovery?

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Response: BSEE has developed the capability to conduct research projects with the Oil Spill Preparedness Division engineering staff by leading much of the research on traditional, alternative, and emerging spill response technologies at the Ohmsett facility. Through enhancement and operationalization of response technologies, spill cleanups can be done more effectively and efficiently resulting in safer field oil recovery and treatment activities, with less impact to the environment, and a quicker return of platforms to production operations. BSEE will focus on priority research activities that align with the OCS safety and environmental risk reduction goals and objectives of the Administration.

Question 9: **The Fiscal Year 2019 budget request includes a $1 billion reduction of funding for the Environmental Studies Program at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.**

At a time when the Department of the Interior is promoting and expanding offshore oil and gas development and therefore increasing the likelihood of environmental impacts, how do you justify reducing funding for scientific knowledge about the nation's marine and coastal environment?

Response: Environmental studies support and inform BOEM's science and policy decisions. BOEM also utilizes the information collected to inform environmental reviews and consultations with tribes, states, and natural resource agencies. In FY 2019, BOEM will utilize less funding for general studies within the Environmental Studies Program in order to offset the additional funding for specific scientific research and environmental assessments needed to support the new National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Question 10: **The Fiscal Year 2019 budget request includes a 13% reduction of funding for offshore renewable energy. The budget documents speak of "advancing energy dominance" and "sustaining the current pace of renewable energy development."**

How will that occur if you cut the funding for offshore renewable energy?

Response: Renewable energy, like offshore wind, is one tool in the all-of-the-above toolbox that will help power America with domestic energy, securing energy independence, and bolstering the economy. In recognition of the role renewable energy can play in securing the Nation's energy independence and supporting economic growth, BOEM will continue to advance renewable energy through its leasing program and by streamlining its permitting and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes.

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Questions from Senator Barrasso

Question 1: The Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative (WPCI) is a first-of-its-kind pipeline right-of-way network on federal lands designed to connect sources of carbon dioxide to existing oil fields for enhanced oil recovery. By establishing the WPCI, companies that wish to build carbon dioxide pipelines within the right of way network will be able to do so on much shorter time tables. The WPCI represents a tremendous economic and environmental opportunity. It will grow Wyoming's economy, create vital jobs in rural communities, and serve as a model for the expansion of carbon capture, utilization, and storage technology across our country. Governor Mead and I have both written letters urging the BLM to begin the environmental review process for WPCI. To my knowledge, this has not happened.

Mr. Secretary, when does the Department plan to begin the review process for the WPCI?

Response: The Department is committed to strengthening America's energy infrastructure by responsibly permitting transmission and pipeline development plans that bring power to growing communities. The Bureau of Land Management's Wyoming State Office has completed a number of necessary pre-planning steps and is continuing progress toward a final review of the proposal.

Question 2: I have heard from landowners in Wyoming that the BLM does not fully take into account their perspectives when permitting for subsurface federal minerals development. For example, the Pumpkin Buttes area of Campbell County, Wyoming has a three-mile "view shed" protection requirement. So, if a private landowner near the Pumpkin Buttes seeks to develop federally-owned minerals under the surface of their property, the BLM may deny or impose conditions on the private development on the basis that it impacts the view shed. These landowners are concerned that the BLM does not have a clear policy for determining impact on view shed.

Mr. Secretary, please explain your vision for how the BLM should balance landowner rights with other interests when permitting energy development on private land

Response: The Department strongly supports restoring collaboration, coordination, and trust with local communities and making the Department a better neighbor. The BLM Buffalo Field Office has been working to develop a Programmatic Agreement with several Tribes to discuss the Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) that overlaps an area of active development in the Pumpkin Buttes area. In order to maximize engagement with private landowners in the area, the BLM has put the Programmatic Agreement on hold while the Buffalo Field Office visits with local landowners and elected officials.

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Questions from Senator Wyden

Question 1: On February 28, 2018, Deputy Secretary Bernhardt wrote you a memo regarding the BLM's 2015 sage-grouse plans. On page 4 of that memo, he wrote, "Going forward, the President's budget proposes significant resources for efforts that are expected to benefit the sage grouse, albeit at a reduced rate."

What would this reduced rate be?

And why, given all of the efforts entered into by farmers and ranchers throughout the West for the successful survival of the sage grouse, would the President's budget decrease support?

Response: The budget request for Sage Grouse activities includes $51 million across Interior's bureaus, most of which is within the Bureau of Land Management. The Department's approach to managing sage grouse is consistent with the Secretary's priority and commitment to working closely with states to craft solutions. The Department continues to work with states and stakeholders closest to the lands managed by the Department on how best to strike a balance between development and conservation.

Question 2: The President's budget request proposes to consolidate the Wildlife Management and Threatened & Endangered Species Management programs.

Under your proposed consolidation, how will the BLM continue to further the missions of the two original programs for Wildlife Management and the Threatened & Endangered Species Management Program?

What specific allocations within this new program would be dedicated to sage grouse?

What other impacts would this consolidation have on sage-grouse conservation?

Response: The proposed new Wildlife Habitat Management subactivity will include Threatened and Endangered Species programs that will support highest priority efforts to aid federally-listed species recovery, while pursuing conservation and other preemptive actions as necessary. The proposed consolidation allows for better management and greater flexibility in managing resources and responding to emerging needs on BLM lands and in neighboring communities.With regard to sagebrush habitat, BLM plans to focus on monitoring of priority habitat areas, maintaining data sets and geospatial information to meet the assessment & monitoring commitments made in the land use plans, providing information to State partners and the public, increasing transparency to ensure strategic implementation of restoration actions, travel and transportation planning, partnership development, and training. Work to promote

habitat resiliency and connectivity will be directed to the highest priority areas where our partners are available to leverage and increase capacity.

Question 3: December 27, 2017, the BLM revised a policy related to oil and gas drilling on sage-grouse habitat.

How many leases have been offered for sale by the Trump administration that are located within Priority Habitat Management Areas?

How many Applications for Permits to Drill have been granted?

What due diligence is done before an Application for Permit to Drill is granted?

Response: Since publishing its revised policy on oil and gas drilling in sage-grouse habitat on December 27, 2017, BLM has offered 124 parcels for lease and approved seven APDs within Priority Habitat Management Areas.

Prior to approval, APDs undergo a rigorous evaluation process. Initially BLM reviews APDs to ensure administrative completeness, after which technical surface and downhole reviews take place.

The surface review includes an onsite visit to the proposed well location to evaluate site suitability and site specific NEPA, which evaluates locally relevant resources. The BLM also ensures that the approval of an APD is consistent with the BLM's approved land use plan and any other applicable management decisions, while appropriately coordinating with other government agencies, tribes, local landowners, and other interested parties. The downhole review ensures that the APD adequately protects aquifers, that the proposed equipment is sufficient for the operation, and that appropriate safety measures are in place.

Question 4: During the hearing, you acknowledged to my colleague, Senator Cantwell, that the state of Washington is "deeply, passionately opposed to oil and gas drilling off their coast."

Do you acknowledge that the state of Oregon is similarly opposed to oil and gas drilling off our coast?

Response: I believe I know where every state is with regard to the potential for oil and gas development off their respective coasts. This includes the state of Oregon. Furthermore, I have committed that the interests of states will be reflected in the Administration's proposed program.

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Question 5: Every year visitors spend $1.8 billion on the Oregon coast and Fisheries generate over $150 million in revenues. Like Florida, Oregon's economy is reliant on tourism, recreation, and the fishing industry. Offshore oil drilling endangers this and many other components of Oregon's coastal economy.

What actions will the Department of the Interior take to prevent damage to Oregon's coast and economies, and all the coasts of the United States?

Response: The 2019 BSEE budget fully supports the safe and environmentally responsible development of the Nation's vast offshore energy resources. Funds will be used to support and recruit expert engineers, geoscientists, inspectors, and oil spill planning, prevention, and response specialists to support the development of strong scientific information and the timely and thorough review of permits. BSEE will continue to fulfill its mission through a well-developed and measured application of its programs including efficient permitting, appropriate standards and regulations, effective compliance monitoring and enforcement, technical assessments, inspections, and incident investigations, resource conservation, and preparedness planning.

Question 6: During the hearing today, you said that oil and gas industries are doing very well. And yet royalty reductions are still on the table.

What was the rationale for the oil industry to continue receiving significant public subsidy dollars every year, at the same time Interior is proposing to increase the entrance fee at National Parks across the country, making the enjoyment of our public lands more costly for hardworking families?

Response: The Department recently announced that, due to the success of the President's America-First energy strategy and the positive market conditions that have accompanied it, royalty rates for future offshore oil and gas lease sales would not be lowered at this time. The Department is committed to investing in our parks, wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Indian Education schools and supports the use of additional energy revenue to address their backlog issues.

Question 7: In today's hearing you spoke about advancing America's Energy Dominance, speaking highly about oil and natural gas production being at 10.6 million barrels a day. You also noted an "all of the above" approach, increasing funding for oil and gas, expanding coal, whereas the renewable energy program is the only energy program facing budget cuts.

What is the economic justification for a reduction in renewable energy funds when the solar industry alone is creating US jobs at 17 times the rate of the national economy?

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How does reduced funding of renewable energy in the proposed budget impact America's energy security?

Response: Interior plays a significant role in the Administration's objective to achieve America's energy dominance, and it is unlocking America's domestic energy resources to advance both the Nation's economic and national security position by reducing dependence on other nations for energy. The Department is the steward and manager of America's natural resources including oil, gas, coal, and hydropower and renewable energy sources. Paired with policies that foster growth and local input, American energy resources create jobs and generate significant revenue for the U.S. Treasury, States, and local economies. Renewable energy is one tool in the all-of-the-above toolbox that will help power America with domestic energy, securing energy dominance, and bolstering the economy. The 2019 Budget proposes $792 million in current and permanent funding for energy related programs across the Department. Interior's 2019 Budget continues to support an "all-of-the-above" energy development strategy, one that supports a level playing field for all sources of energy.

Question 8: The 2019 Interior budget proposes cuts the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) by over $450 million, or a roughly 15 percent decrease, including cuts to programs for forestry and education. This affects tribal sovereignty and self sufficiency.

Which tribes, if any, did you consult prior to pushing significant cuts to BIA? Please list the specific tribes with which you consulted.

Response: During the budget process, the Department worked with the Tribal Interior Budget Council and others to inform the annual budget requests for Indian Affairs programs. The 2019 budget addresses federal responsibilities and tribal needs related to education, social services, infrastructure, and stewardship of land, water, and other natural resources, and it prioritizes support for programs that serve the broadest service population rather than initiatives that are more narrowly focused.

Question 9: On SRS, I expect you to be engaged and helpful in reauthorizing this important program. As you know, I authored the original Secure Rural Schools bill because counties were struggling, and it is just as important today as it was then. Faced with continued budget shortfalls, rural counties are forced to make difficult cuts to libraries, schools, and infrastructure projects, and do more with less. I understand that many of my colleagues will need to see forest management reforms as part of any long term SRS solution. I want to be clear that I take a back seat to no one when it comes to tackling tough forestry issues, including increasing timber harvest, which is what my O&C bill did. But it must be done in a sustainable way that does not stomp on our bedrock environmental laws. Tying the well-being of rural economies to unsustainable logging levels is a dead-end, leading the counties to exactly the same position they're facing now, while depleting our nation's forests.

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Secretary Zinke, short term reauthorizations of SRS are simply not adequate for rural counties working to manage budgets each year. Will you commit to working with Congress towards a long term solution for SRS?

Response: The Department is committed to working with Congress to achieve meaningful forest management reforms.

Question 10: In September 2017, Senator Merkley and I wrote to the Secretary of Interior about the Sagebrush in Prisons project, a contract that allows prison inmates to grow sagebrush seed for habitat restoration. We have yet to receive a response to this letter. In February, we, again, wrote a letter following up on our original request. Fire on rangeland habitat is one of the key risks for the bird, and yet the administration is withholding funds. I would like to know the process and timeline for ensuring that critical restoration work is occurring on the ground.

Response: The Bureau of Land Management, on behalf of Secretary Zinke, responded to your September 22, 2017, letter on December 20, 2017. A copy of that letter is attached to these responses.

Question 11: Why has DOI been so reluctant and slow to respond to information requests from the public regarding reorganization and staff reassignments?

Response: The Department has responded to numerous questions about the proposed reorganization at several hearings on the hill over the past year, including a hearing before this Committee on July 19, 2018. With regard to the Senior Executive Service reassignments, information has been collected in response to a number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and made available in the Office of the Secretary's FOIA library at: https://www.doi.gov/foia/os/ses-reassignments

Question 12: Are DOI scientists free to attend conferences and talk about their work? Do they enjoy the freedoms expressed explicitly in the DOI scientific integrity policy?

Response: Secretary Zinke and the senior staff at the Department of the Interior have been clear in their strong support of and respect for scientific integrity and the work that our scientists carry out at the Department of the Interior.

Question 13: Have there been any DOI scientific integrity complaints from or to DOI staff since this administration took over? How many? How were they resolved? Will you ensure transparency going forward?
Response: Secretary Zinke and the senior staff at the Department of the Interior have respect for scientific integrity and are strong supporters of the Department's scientists and the work that they carry out at the Department of the Interior. The Department's scientific integrity web page, found here: https://www.doi.gov/scientificintegrity/, contains a searchable database of

summaries of closed matters in which formal complaints alleging scientific misconduct or loss of scientific integrity were filed pursuant to the Department's Scientific and Scholarly Integrity Policy.

Question 14: I believe it's absolutely crucial to get the ShakeAlert West Coast early warning system up and running. In his written testimony at a January Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing, USGS Associate Director Applegate said, "an earthquake early warning system would be able to provide an additional layer of safety from inevitable large earthquakes." This program could save lives. However, the President's budget request cuts the ShakeAlert program again, for the second year in a row.

Are you willing to work with members of Congress and the West Coast Delegation to get the ShakeAlert system up and running?

Response: The President's Fiscal Year 2019 budget did not request continued funding for ShakeAlert. The Administration's request includes $51 million for earthquake hazards, which aims to preserve core USGS functions, including critical monitoring capabilities and heavily used public information products. The USGS has always worked with Congress to address concerns about our mission and budget priorities, and USGS will maintain that commitment going forward, including working to determine the appropriate federal, state and local cost share associated with any future ShakeAlert developments.

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Questions from Senator Sanders

Renewable Energy

Question 1: During your nomination hearing, you told me that you were committed to an "all of the above" strategy on energy, and you would "absolutely encourage" renewable sources of power like wind and solar. You have also stated "I am not oil and gas centric, I am American energy centric."
In your FY 2019 proposed budget, renewable energy is the only energy program that is facing cuts despite the fact that the cost of new solar and wind power has dropped by 70 and 25 percent, respectively, since 2010. Additionally, solar energy is now responsible for one in every 50 new jobs created in the United States. Since renewable sources of energy are clearly successful sources of "American energy," how are your proposed budget cuts consistent with your claim of being "American energy centric"?

Response: Interior plays a significant role in the Administration's objective to achieve America's energy dominance, and it is unlocking America's domestic energy resources to advance both the Nation's economic and national security position by reducing dependence on other nations for energy. The Department is the steward and manager of many of America's natural resources including oil, gas, coal, and hydropower and renewable energy sources. Paired with policies that foster growth and local input, American energy resources create jobs and generate significant revenue for the U.S. Treasury, States, and local economies. Renewable energy is one tool in the all-of-the-above toolbox that will help power America with domestic energy, securing energy dominance, and bolstering the economy. The 2019 Budget proposes $792 million in current and permanent funding for energy related programs across the Department. Interior's 2019 Budget continues to support an "all-of-the-above" energy development strategy, one that supports a level playing field for all sources of energy.

Question 2: You have claimed that wind energy has a significant carbon footprint, when in reality, wind's carbon footprint is less than 3% of the emissions from coal and less than 7% of the emissions from natural gas. Since your statement is inconsistent with mainstream science on the carbon emissions of wind power relative to all fossil fuel sources, please explain your plan, including a timeline, for publically rescinding your statement.

Response: This Administration's energy policy relies on both conventional and renewable sources of energy. We recognize that there are consequences and impacts from development of all sources of energy, including wind, and believe that we have to have a national dialogue and an understanding of these impacts to determine where energy development on public land of any kind is appropriate.

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Native Rights

Question 3: During your address to the National Congress of American Indians 2017 Mid Year Conference and Marketplace on June 13th, 2017, you made the following statement:

> ***Sovereignty has to mean something, it has to be more than a name, it has to be that tribes decide for themselves what is right. Not only should the (Department of Interior) meet our treaty obligations, but exceed our treaty obligations. I'm honored to be your champion.***

The Gwich'in People in Alaska have been very clear that drilling for oil in the "1002 area" of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a clear violation of not only their sovereignty, but also their tribal treaty rights. Since you claim to be a champion of indigenous sovereignty, please explain your plan, including a timeline, for abandoning plans to open the 1002 area for oil extraction.

Response: The Tax Act directs the Department to implement an oil and gas development program in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Deputy Secretary Bernhardt and Assistant Secretary Balash were recently in the State to engage local communities, Alaska Natives, and stakeholders as the Department begins to lay out its framework for responsible exploration and development in the 1002 Area. The Department hosted multiple public scoping meetings to get public input—including that from Alaska Natives—to inform the BLM's preparation draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the leasing program. The scoping period ended in June and BLM has prepared a scoping report of the comments received.

Question 4: During a press call on June 12th, 2017 regarding the proposal to slash the boundaries of the Bears Ears National Monument, you stated:

> ***I've met with the tribes, I've talked to tribes…I think, talking to tribes, they're very happy (with the proposal to roll back the Bears Ears National Monument)…(I've) talked to all parties, and they're pretty happy and willing to work with us.***

Please list the individuals and their tribal affiliation with which you met regarding the decision to slash the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument prior to President Trump's executive order regarding national monuments.

Since the Hopi, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indian tribes oppose this plan, and you failed to talk to those tribes, please explain your plan, including a timeline, for consulting those tribes. Should you find, after talking to these tribes, that they do oppose any plan to shrink or in any way alter the Bears Ears monument, will you commit to abandoning your proposal to alter the Bears Ears monument?

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Response: Secretary Zinke has indicated that he listened to all sides throughout the review of national monument designations. With regard to the Intertribal Coalition, he had meetings with the coalition as a whole and with multiple members, both here in Washington and in the field, and Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason held follow-up meetings with the Bears Ears Commission, the InterTribal Coalition, and individual tribes.

Public Lands

Question 5: In your nomination hearing on January 17th, 2017, you and I discussed your philosophy on public lands:

> ***Sen. Sanders: Some of my conservative friends believe that the day should come when we privatize our national park system. What's your feeling on that?***
>
> ***Mr. Zinke: I want to be clear on this point: I am absolutely against transfer or sale of public land.***
>
> ***Sen. Sanders: Good, that's a clear answer.***
>
> ***Mr. Zinke: I can't be any more clear.***
>
> ***Sen. Sanders: No you can't, thank you.***

Unfortunately, contrary to your statements to me, you instead conducted the largest rollback of federal land protection in our nation's history by proposing to slash the boundaries of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments by more than two million acres. You have proposed to open up the majority of U.S. coastal waters to oil and gas drilling in the largest offshore lease sale ever. You ordered the largest ever lease sale of the National Petroleum Reserve. And, you approved a land swap deal that will allow a controversial road to be built through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

In light of your decision to go against what you told me you would do to protect public lands, do you believe it is appropriate for cabinet nominees to lie to United States Senators during their constitutionally-mandated confirmation process?

Would you like to, for the Congressional Record, alter your testimony from during your nomination hearing?

If you do not wish to alter your testimony, please outline your plan, including a timeline, to uphold your promise to me by revising your efforts to transfer, sell, or lease lands which were previously part of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments.

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Please also detail your plans, including a timeline, to cancel the lease sales of U.S. coastal waters and publically oppose any future proposals to transfer, sell or lease any part of these waters.

Furthermore, please outline your plans, including a timeline, to cancel the lease sales of the Natural Petroleum Reserve and publically oppose any future proposals to transfer, sell, or lease any part of these public lands.

Finally, please detail your plans, including a timeline, to cancel the land swap deal that would allow a controversial road to be built through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and publically oppose any future proposals to transfer, sell or lease any land in this refuge.

Response: My position of keeping federal lands federal has not changed. Determining the most appropriate management of these lands, including where monument boundaries lie, to ensure public access to these lands is my priority. A centerpiece of the budget request is a historic proposal to dedicate up to $18 billion of the revenues the Department collects from all forms of energy development to address the multi-billion deferred maintenance backlog for national parks, national wildlife refuges and Indian schools to meet our treaty obligations to 48,000 Native American children. This proposal reflects my view that energy production on federal lands should produce benefits for these national treasures.

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Questions from Senator Lee

Question 1: I am concerned with the National Park Service's proposal to increase entry fees at 17 national parks, including four in Utah, because it continues the unfair and inefficient practice of redistributing funds from parks that could use the additional funds to address their massive maintenance backlogs to parks that either aren't increasing their fees or charge no fees at all. To me, it makes little sense to hike fees at Zion National Park—which has a maintenance backlog of over $70 million—only to send 20 percent of the revenue elsewhere. Has the National Park Service considered other proposals to address the inequitable park fee structure or make the National Park System more self-sufficient, such as by establishing entry fees at sites that do not currently charge fees?

Response: After carefully considering the public comments provided on the National Park Service's 2017 fee proposal, the National Park Service revised its proposal and developed a balanced plan that implements modest increases at the 117 fee-charging parks as opposed to larger increases proposed for 17 highly-visited national parks. As you know, under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) each of these fee-charging parks will keep 80 percent of the revenue collected, which means those dollars will be spent at the park to enhance and preserve the visitor experience. The $11.6 billion maintenance backlog is not going to be solved overnight and will require a multi-tiered approach as we work to provide badly needed revenue to repair infrastructure.

Question 2: Lake Powell became infested with quagga mussels in 2013 and inspections of exiting watercraft have largely been performed by the state of Utah, with assistance from the National Park Service. Utah funds about two-thirds of the work despite Lake Powell being a federally-managed waterbody. The "Safeguarding the West" initiative spearheaded by the Department of Interior has directed federal agencies to become more engaged in mussel prevention efforts. What actions has the department taken so far to support states like Utah in their efforts to eradicate invasive mussels in federally managed waters?

Response: In Fiscal Year 2017, Interior spent $8.6 million to address invasive mussels nationwide. This includes an additional $1 million for the Bureau of Reclamation to establish watercraft decontamination stations, provide educational materials, and continue monitoring efforts. Interior is currently working on more than four dozen actions to address invasive mussels including preventing the spread of the species to uninfested waters, such as those in the Columbia River Basin in the Pacific Northwest, and containing and controlling them where they are established, such as in Lake Powell and the Lower Colorado River region.
On February 28th, the Department released a report highlighting the progress made in the fight against invasive zebra and quagga mussels. This report can be viewed at the following link: https:www.doi.govsitesdoi.govfilesuploadssafeguarding_the_west_progress_report_february_2018_final.pdf. This is progress, but there is more work to do and we are committed to continuing these efforts and the Administration's budget proposal supports these goals. For FY19, the

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Administration is requesting $103 million across Interior for invasive species work and $12 million to address invasive mussels specifically.

Question 3: **Utah is home to only about six percent of the greater sage-grouse population but the state has poured millions of dollars into a highly successful conservation strategy. The Obama administration regrettably discarded Utah's plan in favor of its own unworkable plan. Needless to say, the state of Utah is eager to work with you to align the federal sage-grouse RMPs more closely with the state's plan. Will you commit to continue working closely with Utah resolve inconsistencies between the federal and state plans?**

Response: The Department is committed to continue working closely with Utah, as well as other Western states, and with interested organizations regarding the sage grouse planning effort.

Question 4: **Will you commit to defend the conclusions of Solicitor's Opinion M-37051 which states that lands within the former Uncompahgre Reservation are not available for restoration and are subject to all public land laws?**

Response: Yes, we commit to defend the conclusions of this opinion, which concludes that section 3 of the Indian Reorganization Act does not provide authority to transfer the lands in question to be held in trust for the Tribe.

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Questions from Senator Stabenow

Question 1: The Forest Service is a joint land manager, with the BLM, of the Bears Ears National Monument which included 289,000 acres of the Manti-La Sal National Forest upon the monument's establishment on December 28, 2016. On December 4, 2017, a Presidential Proclamation reduced the Bears Ears National Monument by nearly 85% of its total area, including a reduction of much of the original Forest Service acreage. During last year's Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee's consideration of Stephen Vaden's nomination to be General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mr. Vaden stated that in the course of USDA's role in your national monument review, "no specific (Forest Service) acres were recommended for removal."

If USDA's Forest Service – the manager of the land in question – didn't recommend removing Forest Service acreage from the Bears Ears National Monument, then why did you recommend to the President that significant amount of Forest Service acreage be removed anyway?

Response: The final report outlining the Secretary's recommendations was made in accordance with the President's Executive Order 13792, which directed the Secretary to review and provide recommendations of all monuments designated from 1996 to present that (1) are 100,000 acres or greater in size or (2) were made without adequate public consultation. The recommendations were submitted to the President with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Commerce, as detailed in the final report.

Question 2: You mentioned in your testimony that conservation is a key emphasis in the Fiscal Year 2019 budget request, and when you appeared before the Committee in 2017 and when we met in my office prior to your confirmation hearing, you expressed strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Over the past 50 years, the LWCF has benefited nearly every county in the nation and over 42,000 projects – ranging from local recreation centers to hunting, fishing, and hiking projects on federal lands. In Michigan, we've used LWCF to protect Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and our beautiful national forests as well as private working forests, endangered species habitat, and many state and local park projects. Moreover, investments from LWCF have been vital to improving public access to the outdoors, which is critical to Michigan's outdoor economy that generates $26 billion in consumer spending each year and supports over 230,000 jobs in my state.

Can you please explain how you can express support for the LWCF program publically and in our private meeting, and then turn around and support a budget that requests draconian cuts to LWCF funding?

Response: The President's budget supports the LWCF and calls for its reauthorization. The budget did not request funding for new Federal land acquisition projects because the Department places a high priority on taking care of the land and assets that we currently manage rather than

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adding to the federal estate. However, the budget does include State-side funding derived from the LWCF to ensure that States continue their implementation of LWCF programs.

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Questions from Senator Manchin

Question 1: President Trump's budget called for discretionary funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program at $465 million. Since 1977, the Department of the Interior has distributed over $7.5 billion in PILT payments. The FY2018 budget proposal requested $397 million in discretionary funding, a reduction of $68 million dollars. Counties have flexibility to use the payments for any governmental purpose, which is determined by the state. In West Virginia, we have numerous counties such as Pocahontas and Hardy County, whose representatives have written me letters imploring me to help them ensure that their modest budgets are not gutted because of reductions to PILT. West Virginia is a largely rural state and the expiration of these programs will have a huge impact on these communities - specifically West Virginia has 1.2 million acres of PILT eligible land.

Secretary Zinke, what are your thoughts on securing mandatory sources of funds for PILT?

Question 2: Would the Department support such a proposal?

Response to Q. 1 and 2: The FY 2019 Budget supports this important program while balancing Departmental-funding priorities in a constrained budget environment. The proposed $465 million proposed for PILT, including $68.1 million provided in the Budget Policy Addendum for 2019, which is not reflected in the 2019 President's Budget documents.

Question 3: The President's budget proposes eliminating the Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Development Pilot Program - a part of the POWER Initiative. I was disappointed to see this because these funds go towards economic revitalization in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky to support education for unemployed miners, investing in new infrastructure and advancing business development. A shining example of how successful this program can be is Refresh Appalachia in southern West Virginia – the area hit the hardest by the downturn in coal production. Refresh Appalachia is developing an aquaponics facility in Mingo County. The project will use solar and geothermal energy from a reclaimed abandoned coal mine to power its aquaponics facility. So you get sustainable fish and vegetables for local customers and employment and training opportunities for out of work miners. Furthermore, the remediation of the land, the construction of the facility and the solar installation supports on the job training and creates jobs. These Power Plus initiatives – although still in their infancy - are working and giving hope to out-of-work coal miners and their communities. But they are additive to AML grants. I introduced the RECLAIM Act to accelerate the deployment of AML funds for abandoned mine clean-up. The RECLAIM Act and the Power Plus Initiative together would help Appalachia even more in clean up of abandoned mines with an eye towards job creation and economic development.

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In that context, can you explained the proposed elimination of this successful program?
Response: This Administration has made it a priority to put our miners back to work and has lifted the moratorium on federal coal leasing. The pilot program overlaps with the existing mandatory AML grants, but the budget proposes to maintain important Abandoned Mine Land funding to coal country, expected to be $328 million in 2019, thus fulfilling the AML Reclamation Program's statutory goal.

Question 4: Will you commit to working with me to find ways to promote the economic revitalization of West Virginia?

Response: Yes.

Question 5: Secretary Zinke, in Tucker County, West Virginia, we have the Canaan National Wildlife Refuge, a 17,000 acre wildlife refuge that was established in 1994. In fact, it was the 500th established Wildlife Refuge. The headquarters of the Refuge is a 7,000 square foot facility originally constructed in 1975. The building used to be a complex containing a restaurant and apartments, and was converted to be used as the Refuge headquarters after it was acquired in 1999. The building is in subpar condition to serve as an adequate headquarters building for the Refuge—it even experienced a fire sometime before the building was acquired and is not up to current codes. The building has undergone an assessment to determine the cost and scale of the work needed to rehabilitate the building so that it is up to code. But, after reviewing the assessment and seeing the building in person, it is clear that a new building is the best option that will be cheaper for taxpayers. You have shown your commitment to addressing the issues of deferred maintenance in the Interior Department, and I mostly want to take this moment to remind you that this is a shovel ready project and the longer we drag this out the more it will cost taxpayers.

I would love to hear your thoughts on what can be done, can you please tell me what you might have in mind?

Response: The construction of a new headquarters building at Canaan Valley NWR is one of the Service's highest priority projects. The Department is aware of the language in the FY18 omnibus report and we are working to determine the most efficient path forward for the project.

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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. The third was due last month. In response to my inquiry last year you stated, "the BLM is now in the process of developing and finalizing the reports." When will the department comply with the law and provide the long-overdue reports to Congress?

Response: The reports are in development and will be submitted to Congress once they are complete.

Question 2: I was grateful to hear the news that the BLM will defer leasing on lands in the Greater Chaco region in northwestern New Mexico. However, I continue to hear from worried constituents with questions about what is next in this process. Now that these leases have been deferred, can you explain the process you expect from here on out? Will you commit to working with affected tribes to complete cultural surveys before making any decision about future leases?

Response: The BLM continues to work through the process of tribal consultation, completion of a cultural resources report, and outreach to all consulting parties. The BLM is committed to tribal consultation and compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it completes the process for determining the ultimate disposition of the deferred lease parcels.

Question 3: Are the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education included in your reorganization plans for the department? What is the tribal consultation schedule for the reorganization? How will multi-state tribes, like the Navajo Nation, be handled in the reorganization? Do you plan to abolish the Navajo Region of the BIA?

Response: The Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs has been leading a process of consultation with Indian tribes regarding this proposed reorganization. Consultation sessions have been scheduled at various locations throughout this summer, and tribes are being asked for their input on our internal reorganization and whether Indian Country should "opt in" by making changes to the existing Indian Affairs regions. At the end of this process, the Department will review the information that tribes provide to determine the appropriate level of involvement of Indian Affairs programs. More information about this process, including the updated schedule with dates and locations, can be found here: https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/raca/doi-reorganization.

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Question 4: In 2016, the Bureau of Indian Affairs adopted new regulations regarding rights of way on Indian land. The regulations require a county to obtain a bond before conducting road maintenance on roads that cross tribal lands. Over the past ten months, McKinley County has sent four letters to the BIA requesting waivers on several priority projects that will use FEMA funds to repair flood-damaged roads. To date, the county has not received a response from the BIA. Can you assure me that the BIA will contact McKinley County and work to resolve this matter?

Response: Yes.

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Questions from Senator Hirono

Question 1: It is my understanding that many or all grant programs within DOI are currently under additional review. For example, historically USGS grants totaling over $1,000,000 required a review at the Department level. Then, last year, the requirement was changed to grants totaling over $100,000. Then, again this year, the requirement was changed to grants totaling over $50,000. This review creates significant delays to non-federal partners, such as universities and state agencies.

Why is the Department requiring additional reviews? Who within DOI is conducting these reviews? What timeline has your Department put in place for these reviews, and what percentage of all DOI grants warrant additional review?

Response: Interior distributes over $5.5 billion in grants and cooperative agreements every year. Secretary Zinke's review of the Department's financial assistance programs, which included examination of 83 audits by the Department's Inspector General over the last 5 years, illustrated over $88 million in questionable disbursements. The IG also made 419 recommendations for corrective action. In addition to these audits, numerous IG investigations were conducted revealing waste, fraud, and abuse in these programs, including the lack of a competitive process, conflict of interest abuses, and the lack of adequate processes related to the acquisition of federal interests in lands with financial assistance, among other things. In addition, there was no Department-wide system in place to manage these awards.

To ensure proper management and implementation, guidance was provided to bureaus setting forth an approval process for discretionary financial assistance programs, and a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget was tasked to work with each Bureau to set clear expectations and develop an organized implementation plan. We are prioritizing the review of mission critical grants and cooperative agreements where taxpayers' money is used most efficiently to accomplish our priorities and missions, and we are paying overdue attention to high-risk grant making.

Guidance provides that the review process may be simplified to address programs that demonstrate sound management. We are regularly adapting our process to strengthen grants review while still protecting the public interest. It is important to note, however, that the Department's reviews and guidance do not apply to mandatory grant programs; we are fully committed to implementing the laws passed by Congress.

Question 2: Last year, the Department of the Interior was undergoing a Department-wide review of its youth programs. These programs include the National Park Service's Junior Ranger program, which last year alone provided training for 59 youth at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and also provided important support through the Youth Conservation Corps to groups in Hawaii, such as Kupu.

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Is that review complete? If so, what are the results? If not, when does the Department expect to complete its review of youth programs?

The FY19 budget proposes cuts to every youth program within the department. Examples include a $5,000,000 cut, half of the FY17 enacted level, to the Park Service's Youth Partnership Program, and a cut of $2 million and 11 positions from Fish and Wildlife Service's Youth and Careers in Nature Program. The Department's justification for these cuts is that "The Service is not requesting funding for this activity in order to support higher priorities."

Do you consider educating our youth to become the next generation of stewards for our land to be a priority of the department?

Response: Yes, 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 3: **The FY18 budget proposal sought to cut funding to the USGS Climate Science Centers and consolidate the existing 8 regional centers, one of which is located at the University of Hawaii, down to 4. At that time, I asked you if the Pacific Island regional center at the University of Hawaii would close, and your response was "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."**
The FY19 budget again seeks to cut funding to the USGS Climate Science Centers and now consolidates the existing 8 regional centers down to 3. I assume that there is some specific motivation for the department to consolidate from 8, to 4, to 3, since to an outsider, these numbers seem arbitrary.

Once again, which centers does the Department envision closing? Also, can you clarify what you mean in your response by "competition"?

The Department's reorganization plan places a heavy emphasis on more regional representation for the different bureaus, and you have made multiple mentions of moving assets to the front lines. Does consolidating the USGS Climate Science Centers from 8 to 3 run counter to that plan?

Response: The FY 2019 budget includes $12.989 million in funding for the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers. The Climate Science Centers (CSCs) were established to conduct research to address challenges resulting from climate and land-use changes and to work regionally with resource managers to provide science and information for adaptation planning. The budget proposal continues this work, while realigning the CSCs to

refocus resources on the highest priority needs of Interior bureaus and other stakeholders. As you noted in your question, the USGS has not made any final determination on which centers may be consolidated, but each CSC will be evaluated as part of this determination.

Question 4: Last year, I asked you about the Department's proposal to defund US Fish and Wildlife Service's "State of the Birds" program, which has helped to bring back some of Hawaii's most critically endangered bird species from the brink of extinction. In your written response, you indicated that "Preventing extinction and achieving recovery of listed species has always been, and will continue to be, one of FWS' highest priorities."

In FY2019, the Department again proposes eliminating funding for the State of the Birds program "in order to support higher priorities", but that "Staff will continue collaborating to promote species recovery."

How does the Department intend to bring species like the Hawaiian Crow, or Alala, from extinction given that the bird only exists in captivity, in facilities supported by the State of the Birds program? Moreover, how will Department staff continue to work collaboratively to support species recovery when the Department proposes zeroing out funding for programs like the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund?

Response: Conservation success stories almost always involve partnerships between the Service and others – states, tribes, territories, local governments, private landowners, and other Federal agencies. Partnership efforts guided by the FWS have led to several recent decisions to delist species due to recovery. The Administration's budget proposal represents a fiscally responsible budget that focuses resources on the Department's core mission. The Budget proposes to eliminate the Cooperative Endangered Species grants program because most of these grants have supported land acquisition, which is not a departmental priority due to our deferred maintenance backlog. Our ability to succeed in conservation efforts is also dependent on our people on the ground, who need to have the skills and ability to work with landowners and agencies on solutions that serve the needs of both the species and the landowners. Our Partners for Fish and Wildlife program and Joint Ventures programs have been great models for that approach, and we would like to see those kinds of relationships with landowners and local communities reflected more broadly throughout the Department.

Question 5: The President's FY2019 budget again proposes cutting the USGS Natural Hazards Program by more than $27 million over the FY17 enacted level. This cut specifically removes $5.8 million from the Volcano Hazards Program.

Will you commit that these proposed cuts to the Volcano Hazards Program will not impact USGS' ability to warning and forecast capabilities for volcanic activity on Mauna Loa and Kilauea?

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Response: For 2019, the Administration identified areas where the federal government could reduce spending and also areas for investment, such as addressing the maintenance backlog across the national park system and increasing domestic energy production on federal lands. In regards to volcano hazards, the 2019 budget request focuses on core USGS capabilities to provide forecasts and warnings of hazardous volcanic activity with current monitoring networks, including Hawaii; produce updated hazard assessments for high-threat volcanoes; and to revise the national volcano threat level assessment. The budget maintains support for robust national and regional earthquake monitoring and reporting, including Hawaii.

Question 6: The President's FY2019 Budget proposes eliminating funding for Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants, and Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition to States. 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. Ultimately, these grants enable Hawaii to prevent delays in mitigation and conservation action for imperiled species.

Last year, I asked you about the President's FY2018 proposal to cut Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants by 30%. You responded that the cut was justified as a result of fluctuating demand for habitat conservation plans, and that the FY2018 level aligned with anticipated demand.

Could you provide further information on the fluctuating demand for Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants in recent years?

The FY2019 budget proposal states that these programs will be eliminated so that FWS can focus on supporting higher priorities. Has the Department conducted any analysis on how eliminating funds for these programs will impact the ability of local governments and private entities to acquire necessary permits when making land use decisions, and obtaining permits for projects that would otherwise result in the taking of endangered or threatened species?

Response: The Administration's budget proposal represents a fiscally responsible budget that focuses resources on the Department's core mission. The Budget proposes to eliminate the Cooperative Endangered Species grant program because most of these grants s have supported land acquisition, which is not a priority given the deferred maintenance backlog . My focus is on directing resources to identifying and preserving wildlife corridors, protecting watersheds and expanding public access where appropriate.

Question 7: 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. I am disappointed to see that the Administration has yet again proposed eliminating funding for the National Park Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites

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Grant Program, which has helped to tell the story of Japanese internment during World War II at sites like Honouliuli.

How will the Department continue to preserve historic Japanese American confinement sites and the history behind them given the Administration's proposal to eliminate funds for the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant program?

Response: The National Park Service is a tireless steward of the natural, cultural and historic sites that the agency is charged with preserving. The FY19 budget request includes funding for the management of the Japanese American Internment sites that are either independent or part of larger parks. Sites such as Tule Lake National Monument, Minidoka National Historic Site, and Manzanar National Historic Site will continue to interpret the stories and impacts of this significant period of our history. Visitors will continue to receive high quality interpretive experiences while on site and collaboration with local schools will ensure that new generations of Americans have the opportunity to learn about their history through class trips. In addition, on April 13, 2018, the National Park Service awarded $1.3 million in grants for preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites.

Question 8: I wanted to follow up on my question to you during the hearing regarding the Department's Public Lands Infrastructure Fund proposal. In our exchange you noted that you believed, as a best guess, that the Department could generate $18 billion over 8 years on new energy receipts. However, in the FY19 budget proposal, the Department indicated that while the fund would be capped at $18 billion, that "The budget estimates this initiative will result in $6.8 billion in expenditures from the Fund over 10 years." Based on the budget proposal, the expected energy receipts would generate roughly $680 million per year for the fund, while your statement during the hearing would mean roughly $2.25 billion per year would be placed into the fund. These figures are very different.

To help me and other members of this committee better understand your rationale and expectation for this fund, I ask that you provide: 1. The calculations used by the Department to arrive at the $6.8 billion and $18 billion figures, 2. The rationale behind these estimates as a funding source for deferred maintenance on our public lands, 3. An outline, in both technical and laymen's terms, illustrating the reliability of these funds on an annual basis, and 4. How construction projects, which often require multi-year funding due to the time required for procurement and contracting, could rely on this funding source that is based on annual projections.

Response: The proposal caps the funds that could be deposited into the Public Lands Infrastructure Fund at $18 billion. The Budget estimated that there would be $6.8 billion in expenditures from the Fund over the course of that 10 years. However, the fund is not limited to $6.8 billion. The cap of $18 billion roughly mirrors the Department's backlog needs. Importantly, because the deposited funds would be available without further appropriation, this

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fund would be consequential for facilities that currently must rely on annual appropriations to address the maintenance backlog at national parks, wildlife refuges and BIE schools.

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Question from Senator King

Question: Under this budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2019, you are proposing to essentially eliminate the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a program that you have been an outspoken supporter of in the past. In fact, it was a major topic of discussion during your confirmation hearing, where you assured myself and members of this Committee of your position. This is a critical program for land conservation across the country and in Maine where it has supported $183 million of conservation and recreation projects in local communities. Can you explain these cuts and your position on the future of the LWCF?

Response: The President's budget supports the LWCF and calls for its reauthorization. The budget did not request funding for new Federal land acquisition projects because the Department places a high priority on taking care of the land and assets that we currently manage rather than adding to the federal estate. However, the budget does include State-side funding derived from the LWCF to ensure that States continue their implementation of LWCF programs.

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Questions from Senator Hoeven

Question 1: Under the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in partnership with individual states, is tasked with regulating air quality, which includes methane emissions. In fact, states like my state of North Dakota, currently have a regulatory system in place to govern oil and gas emissions.

The North Dakota Industrial Commission has put in place flaring requirements that have successfully reduced the flaring rate from 36 percent to 15 percent in January (the most recent data available).

Still, more work needs to be done, especially on the Fort Berthold Reservation, where the natural gas flaring has increased over the last several months. In January, the rate was 19 percent – with 22 percent on Trust lands.

North Dakota is looking for help to permit gas gathering lines on the Fort Berthold Reservation.

- **Will you commit to working with us to help streamline the rights-of-way permitting process on the reservation?**
- **What is the status of BLM's Methane Rule review?**

Response: Permitting rights-of-way for gathering lines and related infrastructure is important to reduce natural gas flaring. The Department is committed to improving the permitting process so that natural gas can be captured and transported for beneficial use.

The BLM published the draft "Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties and Resource Conservation: Rescission or Revision of Certain Requirements" rule on February 22, 2018. The 60 day public comment period ended on April 23 and the comments received are under review. Litigation of the Waste Prevention Rule in the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming has been stayed pending finalization or withdrawal of the BLM's proposed revision rule.

Question 2: The President's 2019 Budget request for the U.S. Geological Survey totals $859.7 million, with $84.1 million directed to the Energy and Minerals Mission Area. This division is dedicated to conducting research and assessments on the location, quantity, and quality of mineral and energy resources – along with the economic and environmental effects of resource extraction and use.

I have asked USGS to update their Bakken resource estimate. Last week, I received assurances from both Dr. James Reilly, the nominee for Director of USGS, as well as from Acting Director William Werkheiser, when I invited him to Bismarck last August, that USGS will work with state officials and industry to gather the latest resource data.

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The good work of the Interior Department and USGS in compiling these resource estimates has been instrumental in providing the state, industry, residents, and other stakeholders a better picture of the resource potential of our state.

- **Can I also receive your assurance that Interior and USGS will conduct a new comprehensive, broad-based resource estimate for the Williston Basin?**

Response: USGS science plays a vital role in serving to underpin the responsible development of our domestic resources. The Energy Resources Program assesses oil and gas resource potential through in-depth studies of geology and resources in various petroleum provinces throughout the United States. We are looking to update our assessment of the Williston Basin's resources.

Question 3: **You outline in your testimony the administration's legislative proposal to better facilitate the title transfer of Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) facilities to non-Federal entities when such transfers are beneficial.**

I have introduced two conveyance bills that would allow North Dakota homeowners around Lake Patterson and the Jamestown Reservoir to purchase the lots on which their homes stand.

On February 28th Alan Mikkelsen, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Water and Western Resource Issues, said in his testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Water and Power that the Department's title transfer legislative proposal would streamline the transfer process for appropriate title transfers, like the Jamestown Reservoir Bill I introduced.

- **Will the Department continue to work with me on these two pieces of legislation?**

Response: Yes. The Department appreciates the opportunity to work with you and your staff on the Lake Patterson (S. 440) and Jamestown Reservoir (S. 2074) bills, and we look forward to continued engagement to make refinements to both bills. As for the Department's title transfer legislative proposal, absent the development of transfer criteria as required under the legislative proposal, the Department cannot determine with certainty whether the lands described in S. 440 and S. 2074 would be subject to this new authority. However, as a general matter, Reclamation believes that Congress should retain the ability to approve complicated title transfers.

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Questions from Senator Duckworth

Question 1: Although Illinois has not experienced the wildfires that our western neighbors have endured, we have been working to help solve the problems that allow these historic wildfires to persist. Part of this effort has been focused on reviving native plants under the Plant Conservation Program, which is administered by the Department of Interior (DOI).

The Chicago Botanic Garden has been at the forefront of this effort.

I am concerned that despite having been selected for a competitive award for this work, your office is not approving expenditures of these funds. In fact, I am hearing that your office is holding numerous awards.

Secretary Zinke, can you please explain to me what authority you are using to withhold these funds?

Response: The review of grants and cooperative agreements is being carried out so that Department leadership has a better understanding of how funds are being utilized. The grant review process is intended to re-establish accountability and ensure taxpayer money is spent wisely while furthering the Department's mission.

Question 2: The Department of the Interior has been an important partner in my State's efforts to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's work has resulted in 15 populations of native aquatic species becoming self-sustaining in the wild. The U.S. Geological Survey's work in developing targeted piscicides could lead to breakthroughs in detecting and controlling Asian carp and the National Park Service has restored 200 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes and is set to restore and additional 400 acres next year.

All of this work is supported by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a program the Trump Administration proposes to virtually eliminate. Your budget seeks to cut all the agencies that are contributing to our success.

Can you explain what you are doing to make sure the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USGS can maintain their work to protect and restore the Great Lakes?

Response: Interior receives funding through EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, but this program is housed within EPA's budget. In 2017, we received roughly $64 million from EPA for work in the Great Lakes. Interior's budget request includes about $65 million for operations,

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resource management and science in the Great Lakes, including over $13 million to combat Asian Carp, much of which is directed toward preventing carp from reaching the Great Lakes.

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Questions from Senator Cortez Masto

Question 1: The Administration's budget allocates $18 million to begin the process of reorganization of the Department of the Interior along 13 different regional offices, yet the Department has provided little information to Congress and little opportunity for Congressional offices to weigh in on any proposals. Will you commit to providing timely information to this committee in its entirety as well as to the offices of all those states impacted by this decision, regardless of party?

A. **Would you please provide an organizational chart and position descriptions (as well as authorities for those positions)?**

B. **Also, I would like your commitment to personally return to this Committee to provide me and my colleagues a full briefing of the details in your plan. Can I have your personal commitment to do that?**

Response: The Department has responded to numerous questions about the proposed reorganization at several hearings on the hill over the past year, including before this Committee on July 19, 2018. As we have indicated, the Department will listen to all stakeholders, including Members of Congress, as the final plan takes shape.

Question 2: What studies or analyses has been done in order to determine if there are needs for reorganization? Has any analyses been prepared on how the proposed changes will correct identified needs? If so, can you share those with us?

Response: Please see the response to the previous question.

Question 3: When you were a Congressman, you signed a joint letter with your colleagues in May 2015 expressing concerns over the prospect of minimizing state involvement through division of state operations, and for all practical purposes, doing exactly what your reorganization plan now proposes. How do you reconcile your view from just a few years ago where you were opposed to a proposal to consolidate management operations of just one agency within a couple states, to now pushing for a plan that consolidates multi-agency operations within 13 regions throughout the entire country?

Response: As the Secretary has indicated, the goal of this reorganization is to improve coordination across bureaus and other agencies and to shift resources to the field so there is less emphasis on Washington, D.C.

Question 4: Nevada is proposed to be separated into more than one of the joint management areas. How is this division intended to improve important coordination and consultation with the state, given the significant federal management footprint that BLM and other federal agencies have in the state?

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Response: While the proposal is still under review and options are still being evaluated, the Department received input from career senior executives, Governors, Members of Congress, and other stakeholders and revised the proposed boundaries. The current draft map focuses on watersheds and ecosystems but sticks primarily to state and local boundaries. The exceptions are where there are overriding natural resource management benefits from having part of a state in a second region.

Question 5: Your proposal for reorganization and establishment of new administrative boundaries outside of state borders is not being accepted by many states or by stakeholders who will be impacted.

A. **What are your future plans for state and stakeholder consultation on the proposed boundary changes?**

B. **Did Interior evaluate the proposal's impact on the ability of its bureaus to consult and coordinate with those states that are split into multiple management areas?**

Response: As noted in the previous response, while the proposal is still under review and options are still being evaluated, the Department received input from career senior executives, Governors, Members of Congress, and other stakeholders and revised the proposed boundaries. The current draft map focuses on watersheds and ecosystems but sticks primarily to state and local boundaries. The exceptions are where there are overriding natural resource management benefits from having part of a state in a second region.

Question 6: Nevada contains the highest percentage of public lands in the United States, why not give Nevada its own Region instead of pairing it with California and lopping off the bottom?

A. **As you know, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) became law in 1998. It allows BLM to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada. The revenue derived from land sales is split between the State of Nevada General Education Fund (5%), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (10%), and a special account that improves conservation and public land management projects around the State. In a state where 87 percent of the land is managed by federal agencies, it is vital that a program like this exists to help in our land management needs. One issue where this reorganization plan concerns me is that with Nevada being split into multiple management areas, SNPLMA decisions could very well be made in a headquarters outside of the State. Can I have your commitment to reevaluate how Nevada is managed under your plan?**

Response: As indicated at the hearing, the proposal is under review and options are still being evaluated, but the Department will listen to all stakeholders, including Members of Congress, as the final plan takes shape.

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Question 7: Interior's Budget requests a 17 percent cut to BLM, a 7 percent cut to National Parks (while reducing the workforce by 1,800 people), a 20 percent cut to USGS, the scientific arm of the Department (while eliminating 1,200 positions), and a 19 percent cut to the Fish and Wildlife Service. At the same time, you have proposed raising the cost of entrance to many National Parks, and you propose lowering the royalty rates that oil and gas companies pay to drill on public lands.

A. **Wouldn't creating new administrative regions create one more layer of bureaucracy for local governments and stakeholders to navigate, increasing confusion and decision-making backlogs? How will this proposed reorganization ensure that local government and stakeholders have more of a voice in federal land use decisions?**

Response: The goal of this reorganization is to improve coordination across bureaus and other agencies and to shift resources to the field so there is less emphasis on Washington, D.C..

Question 8: The review conducted by Interior on monuments created by the Antiquities Act over the past twenty years and the subsequent Presidential decision to remove protections from large swaths of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments were shrouded in secrecy. Is there active work being done in the Department to pursue your recommendations made in the Monuments Review in regard to Gold Butte, or any other sites that were on your list?

Response: The final report outlining the Secretary's recommendations in accordance with the President's Executive Order 13792 was submitted to the President in December, 2017. Any final decisions on monuments rest solely with the President.

Question 9: Can you clarify what the next steps are for the remaining national monuments (of the 27 identified for "review" under the late April 2017 Executive Order) that have not been "pardoned" or altered?

Response: As noted above, all final decisions on the national monuments rest solely with the President.

Question 10: The public submitted more than 2.8 comments to Interior over the summer during the public comment period for your review of our national monuments. An analysis showed 99.2% of the comments opposed the review – including 92 percent of Nevadans who weighed in. What role did this overwhelming public response play in your decision to initiate the changes that have already been made to some monuments and to make recommended changes to others?

Response: In conducting the review, I visited eight monuments in six different states and personally hosted more than 60 meetings attended by hundreds of local stakeholders. Attendees included individuals and organizations representing all sides of the debate ranging from

environmental organizations like the Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservancy to county commissioners, residents and ranchers who prefer multiple use of the land. In addition, I made it a point to meet with you and your colleagues in Congress as well as Governors and Tribal representatives to receive input. These meetings and the public comments received were considered in formulating the final report submitted to the President in December, 2017.

Question 11: You might have seen that Ryan Bundy, who goes without saying is a very vocal opponent to federal land management and to the creation of Gold Butte National Monument, which neighbors his family's ranch, recently announced his intention to run for Nevada's governor. Do you think it would be proper for this Administration to make any changes to Gold Butte while such a candidate is seeking elected office, knowing that any such changes would personally benefit such a vocal opponent of the monument?

Response: As noted above, any final decisions on national monuments rest solely with the President.

Question 12: Secretary Zinke, as you know, in my home state of Nevada, the federal government manages 87 percent of the land throughout the entire state, the majority of which is land managed by the Department of the Interior. Our population centers are essentially land locked by land managed by federal agencies. My state is also home to a large swatch of unresolved checkerboard lands created in the 1800s that also causes a lot of private and public land management issues.

In order to do any sort of economic expansion, housing development, or land management consolidation, it undoubtedly takes some degree of release of federal property, an act of Congress, and compromise with local and national stakeholders. We have a successful system where any sort of release is accompanied by investments in conservation and public access. This has been very successful in my state, and Nevadans are proud to engage in this process and have such a direct role in the management of their public lands.

Continuing in this tradition, on February 7, 2018, this committee held a legislative hearing that included the Pershing County, Nevada Lands Bill. This is a widely supported bill in my state bringing together local elected leaders, industry leaders, land owners, agriculture interests, and the conservation community. However, DOI released its witness testimony that indicated that you do not personally support "wide-scale sale or transfer of Federal lands," but that "the Department supports the completion of land exchanges and transfers that further the public interest, consolidate ownership of scattered tracts of land to make them more manageable, and advance public policy objectives." This dichotomy seems to indicate that you might not fully understand the history or purpose of specific land conveyance bills, such as those that are particular to the growth and conservation pertaining to the State of Nevada.

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Understanding that more like-minded public lands legislative efforts will undoubtedly be discussed in the future – for the sake of economic growth and conservation efforts in Nevada – would you care to take the opportunity to clarify where you stand on public lands bills that take a very surgical and focused approach to land transfers in relation to a state like my own?

Response: The Secretary has stated on multiple occasions his position that he does not support the large-scale sale or transfer of federal lands. The Department supports the completion of land exchanges and transfers that further the public interest, consolidate ownership of scattered tracts of land to make them more manageable, and advance public policy objectives such as recreational access. The Department strongly supports restoring full collaboration and coordination with local communities and making the Department a better neighbor.

Question 13: SNPLMA is an important program for Nevada that has large bipartisan support throughout the state. Since its enactment, the 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 $230 million in account balances, which I believe is an affront to a state's ability to compromise and improve its economy.

A. **Do you believe the Administration is undermining a successful compromise by Nevadans?**

B. **Otherwise, what is your plan to back-fill the major holes in funding for Nevada's parks and recreation areas important to my constituents?**

Response: The SNPLMA program is not proposed for elimination; the proposal would only reduce a portion of the over $600 million in remaining balances. The reduction will not affect any projects currently identified for support.

Question 14: The U.S. Forest Service (within USDA) is currently undergoing an analysis to respond to an expression of interest to review a proposal to make 54,000 acres of National Forest Lands in the Ruby Mountains in Elko County available to oil and gas leasing, that would be managed by the BLM (in the Interior Department). This area has been referred to as "the Swiss Alps of Nevada," so you can imagine how beloved and beautiful this area of my state is in, particular. The overwhelming majority of people who have submitted comments are opposed to any drilling. Can you tell me whether BLM is actively involved in this review being performed by USFS and its current status?

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Response: On National Forest System lands, the U.S. Forest Service has approval authority for the surface use portion of Federal oil and gas operations. The BLM advises the FS is currently conducting an environmental assessment of the area, and that a decision document is expected in the next several months.

Question 15: After several years, stakeholders from across the spectrum (including Western Governors, sportsmen, ranchers, mining companies, oil and gas companies, local elected officials, conservationists, and local business owners), found common ground in 2015 that kept the west open for business and the sage grouse and the sagebrush ecosystem healthy and robust. The sage grouse plans were an unprecedented collaborative to develop federal and state plans that protect enough habitat and keep the bird from being listed under the Endangered Species Act. Last week, Interior released their scoping report outlining the changes they plan to make to the sage grouse plans. The report claims to summarize the public comments received but ignored almost 100,000 comments that were submitted to BLM. BLM later said the comments were missing due to a "breakdown in technology" and the vast majority of comments were "form letters and e-petitions," and that an addendum would be filed that includes the missing comments.

A. Now that these comments have been found, will this affect your further review of this initiative?

B. How will you ensure this breakdown in technology has not happened before and will not happen in future comment periods?

Response: BLM has verified that comments not initially included in the scoping report were incorporated into the review. While BLM does not know at this time where the technical glitch occurred, it has determined the web and email systems involved did not malfunction internally during sage-grouse public scoping. The BLM's email and ePlanning site remain open and ready to receive and record future comments submitted on the Draft EISes.

As part of our commitment to improving the trust among American taxpayers, the Department places a high value on public involvement and will continue to do so throughout the sage-grouse planning effort, and all processes in which public comments are collected.

Question 16: You previously deferred to the Utah delegation on national monuments, and you previously deferred to Florida Governor Rick Scott when you announced that Florida would be exempt from the OCS drilling plan. However, with the Greater sage-grouse, several western governors, including the Governor of Nevada, have publicly asked you not to make any wholesale changes to BLM's management plans. Will your record of local deference affect whether you reconsider the wholesale changes you've been considering thus far?

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Response: The Department's approach to managing sage grouse has been and is consistent with my priority to work closely with states and tribes to craft durable solutions to land management and conservation challenges. We will continue to engage with states, tribes and all interested stakeholders closest to our lands on how to strike the appropriate balance between development and conservation.

Question 17: The President's Budget includes increased funding for "mineral and energy resources" (increasing to $84.1 million, up from $73.1 million) for USGS, while also proposing a 20 percent cut at the agency overall and eliminating 15 percent (1200 positions) of the workforce. Among the programmatic reductions—some by more than 30 percent—are the ecosystem, water resources, core science systems, natural hazards, and climate science investments. These are very important areas of science. People across the country rely on this science to make decisions that affect people at every level of local government and, in many cases, their professions and livelihood. How do you intend to prioritize these other areas of science?

Response: The President's FY 2019 budget request aims to strike the appropriate balance between maintaining USGS' core capabilities and identifying ways to ensure taxpayer money is spent wisely and efficiently. While certain mission areas experienced a reduction in proposed resources for FY 2019, the Energy and Mineral Resources mission area experienced an increase in proposed funding.

Question 18: With the proposed cuts to these core science programs, how does that fall in line with USGS' mission to protecting the public from natural disasters, assessing water quality, providing geospatial data, and conducting the science necessary to manage the nation's living, mineral and energy resources?

Response: The President's FY 2019 budget request aims to strike the appropriate balance between maintaining USGS' core capabilities and identifying ways to ensure taxpayer money is spent wisely and efficiently. While certain mission areas experienced a reduction in proposed resources for FY 2019, the Energy and Mineral Resources mission area experienced an increase in proposed funding.

Question 19: USGS has well over 200 program offices, laboratories, field stations, and different facilities across the country, with numerous partnerships with universities and other educational institutions. Can you share your thoughts on the important role these partnerships – with universities or otherwise – have on the work and products created by USGS?

Response: USGS relies a vast array of partners throughout the country in order to fulfill its mission. USGS partners with State Geological Surveys and universities to carry out geological mapping, other federal agencies such as NASA to carry out the Sustainable Land Imaging program, federal and state land managers to provide information to sustain recreation

opportunities for the public, universities to monitor natural hazards and state and local governments to maintain and manage the National Streamflow Network. These are just a few examples of the many ways USGS works with its partners to leverage federal investment in USGS activities.

Question 20: Cooperative Research Units (CRU) is a cost-shared program between the U.S. Department of the Interior through USGS, state natural resource agencies, and leading universities across the country. This highly successful, cooperative program was established in the 1930s and has been sustained for more than 60 years. Currently, 39 Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units are located on university campuses in 37 states. Although one does not currently exist in the State of Nevada, I am aware of local interest in working with USGS to create one. However, I am very concerned that the President's Budget request zeroes out this program. Do you not think this collaborative network with scientific institutions is of benefit to the federal government and the decision-makers and resource managers that USGS works with?

Response: As noted in our previous answer, the USGS relies upon partners to meet Interior's mission, key Administration priorities and the needs of the American people. Scientific institutions, along with State geological surveys, universities, municipal governments, other Federal agencies, and foreign governments are critical partners of the USGS. The Cooperative Research Units have had a long history of conservation achievements, serving federal, state, and private interests in this country through research and technical guidance, and developing the conservation workforce of the future. In regards to the Cooperative Research Units, the FY 2019 focuses resources on other Departmental priorities.

Question 21: Natural hazardous events, like earthquakes, landslides, or wildfires can create a lot of damage to our infrastructure, and can have disastrous effects on people's lives and well-being. USGS has an office, the Office of Environmental Health that studies these events on their impacts on people's health in particular, but the Budget proposes to eliminate all funding for this program ($21 million). Can you describe the factors USGS studies in how people's health is effected? Why is this not considered important by the Department?

A. **Couldn't preparedness and response efforts be improved if this kind of study was maintained?**

B. **If preparedness and response could be improved if further study was made before a disaster occurs, don't you think this would be an important area of research for USGS?**

Response: For 2019, the Administration identified areas where the federal government could reduce spending and also areas for investment, such as addressing the maintenance backlog across the national park system and increasing domestic energy production on federal lands.

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The 2019 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; and to revise the national volcano threat level assessment. The budget maintains support for robust national and regional earthquake monitoring and reporting.

Question 22: Just last month, Interior's Royalty Policy Committee recommended that offshore oil and gas royalties be cut by one third. It seems to me that action would have an enormous effect on the budget we are here to talk about today and runs contrary to your stated efforts of raising funds for your Department through oil and gas revenues. Has the Department done any analysis on the fiscal result of such a policy?

Response: The Department recently announced that, due to the success of the President's America-First energy strategy and the positive market conditions that have accompanied it, royalty rates for future offshore oil and gas lease sales would not be lowered at this time. The Department is committed to investing in our parks, wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Indian Education schools and support the use of additional energy revenue to address their backlog issues.

Question 23: The Administration proposes to terminate the 25 percent share of revenue distribution for geothermal royalties that is provided to counties. The result would be 50 percent of revenues going to the state and the remaining 50 percent to the Treasury. This provision would raise $37 million over 10 years. Nevada is second in the nation in the amount of geothermal power produced and has the country's largest untapped geothermal resources. However, for the second year in a row, the Administration's budget repeals revenue share that provides up to 10 revenues to counties in Nevada. This repeal would be harmful to our local economies. Again, 87 percent of my state is made up of public lands managed by federal agencies. Our local governments don't have inherent tax bases available like other parts of the country that contribute toward everyday services. What this really does is hurt rural communities.

A. Why is the Administration repealing these payments?

B. Can you address these concerns that my local county commissioners would face if they were to lose these revenues?

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. In almost all other situations where leasing revenues are generated on Federal lands, the receipts are split between the Federal Government and the affected State. The extra 25 percent in county payments are

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inconsistent with this long standing revenue-sharing approach, and effectively reduce the return to Federal taxpayers from geothermal leases on Federal lands.

Question 24: Your Department has proposed significantly raising the entrance fees for American families to many of our most visited National Parks. I'm concerned about the impact this will have on the local communities that rely on tourism to our parks. Has your Department undertaken any analysis of how this might impact the economies of the gateway communities that surround these parks, many of which are in rural areas that thrive in part to their proximity to nearby parks and attractions?

Response: After carefully considering the public comments provided on the National Park Service's 2017 fee proposal, the National Park Service revised its proposal and developed a balanced plan that implements modest increases at the 117 fee-charging parks as opposed to larger increases proposed for 17 highly-visited national parks. Importantly, under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) each of these fee-charging parks will keep 80 percent of the revenue collected, which means those dollars will be spent at the park to enhance and preserve the visitor experience. The $11.6 billion maintenance backlog is not going to be solved overnight and will require a multi-tiered approach as we work to provide badly needed revenue to repair infrastructure.

Question 25: Outdoor recreation as a whole brings $14.9 billion in consumer spending to Nevada, with 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 by $113,000 and proposes to eliminate 1,800 jobs. Why cut funding when parks are so clearly beneficial to our national economy? At a time when we have an immensely large maintenance backlog, but also see record numbers of visitors, is it not more advantageous to invest more in our parks and the people that work for them?

Response: As demonstrated in the President's budget, it is important that we take care of the assets that we own. In this regard, the President's budget, including the addendum, funds National Park Service operations level with 2017, and would not require a reduction in employees. The Secretary believes that we need 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 2019 budget.

Question 26: As you know, Cliven Bundy owes America's taxpayers more than $1 million in grazing fees and fines. Do you have any plans to collect those fees and to hold Mr. Bundy accountable for illegally grazing his cattle on federal land?

Response: As this matter is still in litigation, the Department cannot comment at this time.

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Questions from Senator Portman

Question 1: Providing for a reliable funding stream for the Centennial Challenge fund and the Park Foundation's endowment are crucial pieces of my National Park Service Centennial Act that was signed into law in December 2016. The National Park Service Centennial Act required a change in the senior pass fee to fund the Centennial Challenge fund. How much has the Centennial Challenge Fund received as a result of the senior pass to date?

Response: $1,112,000 has been deposited in the NPS Centennial Challenge Fund from Senior Pass sales to date. This includes the deposits into the fund beginning with the enactment of the Centennial Act through FY17.

Question 2: I understand that the President's FY2019 budget does not request discretionary funding for the Centennial Challenge fund, and estimates that $15 million will be deposited into fund in FY2019 from the senior pass. If the senior pass does not achieve the Department's estimates, would the Department support and request continued appropriations for the Centennial Challenge fund?

Response: If funds deposited in the Centennial Challenge fund do not meet expectations, the Department will carefully consider appropriate actions at that time.

Question 3: I am aware that the President's budget nearly eliminates funding for LWCF. However, LWCF is currently funded at $400 million in the current FY2018 CR. The LWCF is also of particular interest in my home state of Ohio. As you may know, 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. If Congress continues to appropriate money for LWCF, will you support the activities of the LWCF program?

Response: Yes.

Question 4: Additionally, I was recently made aware that the Department of the Interior did not approve continued funding for the Countryside Conservancy, which operates a cooperative agreement with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to manage an agricultural leasing program and a farmers market within the park. I have been told that the Department has not provided an explanation for why funding was not approved. Could you provide an explanation as to why funding was not approved for the Countryside Conservancy?

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Response: We are reviewing, Department-wide, grants and cooperative agreements awarded by all bureaus of the Department to ensure there is appropriate review and oversight and to ensure that taxpayers' funds are used in the most efficient and appropriate manner.

Question 5: Another issue I've been working on is 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: Yes. I support the placement of this plaque, and the sacrifices of all our men and women who defend our nation.

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Questions from Senator Smith

Question 1: Mr. Secretary, thank you for agreeing to work with me on the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System. The President's fiscal year 2019 budget proposed only $100,000 for this project. As was acknowledged during the hearing, this is clearly not a serious proposal for a critically needed rural water project. Can you explain how the administration arrived at this figure, and will you commit to reconsidering this proposal?

Response: Rural water projects help to build strong, secure rural communities and help ensure safe, reliable sources of drinking water for rural and tribal residents. The FY 2019 budget proposes $34 million for rural water projects. Reclamation recognizes that current and projected funding levels may not be sufficient to expeditiously complete the federal funding portion of every project, such as the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System, and that it must prioritize the allocation of available funding. Reclamation applies objective funding criteria to guide decision-making in allocating budgetary resources towards rural water projects.

Question 2: As you know, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act mandates that states perform historic preservation reviews of certain federal projects, but failed to provide them the resources necessary to carry out that mandate. The Historic Preservation Fund was created in 1976 to solve this problem. The President's budget proposed cutting the Historic Preservation Fund by about $48 million, or 60 percent. If Congress approves this proposal, are you concerned that State Historic Preservation Offices would be unable to complete the historic preservation reviews that they are required to do under the National Historic Preservation Act in a timely manner?

Response: The Department is committed to preserving U.S. and tribal history and heritage. The 2019 budget request for the Historic Preservation fund prioritizes funding within the core grants-in-aid programs to States and Tribes, and provides resources for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices to meet the preservation responsibilities required by the National Historic Preservation Act.

Question 3: Right now in Minnesota a lot of farmers and ranchers are concerned, and rightfully so, about losing their livestock to wolves. The 2014 court decision that returned the gray wolf to the Endangered Species list has resulted in the loss of state wolf management programs. Without those we need federal funding to help prevent wolf-livestock conflicts. Why is it then that the Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to discontinue funding for the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Program in its fiscal year 2019 budget? Other available programs may provide indemnity payments after a loss has been incurred; however, this valuable program—which is zeroed out in the budget—allows livestock producers to be proactive and employ strategies to help prevent wolf attacks from occurring in the first place.

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Response: While a court decision overturned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's delisting rule, the FWS has determined and maintains the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes is biologically recovered. In addition the Department has testified in support of legislation that would reinstate science-based rules that resulted from a public rulemaking process to delist the gray wolf and we continue to support you and your colleagues' efforts to that end. The Department is not requesting funding for this activity in order to support higher conservation priorities. The FWS along with the Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services is committed to minimizing the economic impact wolves can have on livestock producers. We have taken a proactive approach to working with affected stakeholders to find innovative solutions as well as to provide clear guidance on how to obtain technical assistance and preventative measures like depredation permits.

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
http://www.blm.gov

DEC 20 2017

The Honorable Jeffery A. Merkley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your September 22, 2017, letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke cosigned by Senator Merkley regarding the cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Institute of Applied Ecology for the Sagebrush in Prisons Project. The Secretary asked me to respond on his behalf.

The BLM has approved over $207.2 million involving 1,124 cooperative agreements during Fiscal Year 2017. In an effort to fulfill its mission on behalf of the American people and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse, the BLM has worked to ensure that all approved agreements align with the Administration's priorities and are an appropriate use of the American taxpayers' money.

The agreement you have inquired about with the Institute of Applied Ecology for the Sagebrush in Prisons Project was not funded in 2017. We are continuing to look at this and similar agreements, as well as new opportunities, to determine which ones will maximize our opportunities to succeed in 2018. We understand the importance and challenges involved in restoring fragile habitats on the rangeland, especially after the incidence of wildfires on the landscape, as many of our cooperative agreements support programs involving wildland fire, wild horses and burros, and rangeland resources. We value all of our partners who have worked with us over the years to help us develop processes to manage and maintain those resources for current and future public use.

The BLM posts numerous funding opportunities on Grants.gov each year that assist us in managing our public lands in a way that can benefit the public. We both welcome and look forward to cooperating with those partners on other projects as they are announced for potential funding opportunities and partnerships in the future. A similar letter is being sent to Senator Wyden.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Steed

Brian C. Steed
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs
Exercising the Authority of the Director

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
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DEC 20 2017

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

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Sincerely,

Brian C. Steed
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs
Exercising the Authority of the Director

NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION
Advancing Excellence for All Native Students

March 27, 2018

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Re: The Hearing on the Proposed Budget for the Department of Interior for 2019

Dear Chairman Murkowski:

On behalf of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) I respectfully submit the following comments in response to the Department of Interior's 2019 budget proposal.

NIEA represents Native students, educators, families, communities, and tribes. Our mission is to ensure that all Native students receive a high-quality academic and cultural education. As part of that mission, NIEA's work has centered on improving Native students' educational experience, a goal that is only possible if the federal government upholds its trust responsibility to tribes.

The Federal Trust Relationship
Established through treaties, federal law, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the federal trust relationship includes a fiduciary obligation to provide parity in access and equal resources to all American Indian and Alaska Native students, regardless of where they attend school. Under the federal government's trust corpus in the field of Indian education, it is important to state that the obligation is a shared trust between the U.S. government and tribal governments. It is through the Federal Trust relationship, that NIEA considers the Administration's 2019 Budget for the Department of Interior.

The Federal Trust Relationship Applies to Bureau of Indian Education Students
The Department of Interior (the Department) has a specific fiduciary responsibility for the education of the 48,000 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) students who attend the 183 Bureau operated and Bureau operated and funded schools across 23 states. The Committee's discussion of the more than $640 million in BIE construction and maintenance backlog, and Secretary Zinke's specific acknowledgment, were positive statements with respect to the trust responsibility.

The Public Lands Infrastructure Funds Proposal
NIEA is pleased that funding for BIE school infrastructure is discussed in the budget through the "Public Lands Infrastructure Fund", but concerned that the means for providing the estimated $18 billion in funding could infringe on public lands. If the proposal were to fully respect tribal

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sovereignty and provide the full funding that BIE Schools need—more than $640 million in immediate funding and at least $1.3 billion in funding for construction and maintenance—then NIEA will of course be interested in learning more about the proposal. If, however, the proposal is for funding that does not respect the inherent sovereignty of tribes, we could not support it.

At the hearing, Secretary Zinke, spoke about the need for BIE school construction funding and there was discussion of legislation from Senator Alexander and Senator Portman that might address both BIE Schools and funding for national parks. The discussion, however, was more focused on national parks. NIEA is concerned that any proposal on public infrastructure must prioritize BIE Schools.

The President's Budget

NIEA also must share our concerns with respect to the actual Department of Interior budget with respect to BIE School Construction, which included a cut from $238 million in the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus to $72.9 million. This proposal, along with the proposed overall cut in BIE funding from $914.4 million to $741.9 million, is simply unacceptable. NIEA believes this is extreme neglect of the federal trust responsibility for Native students, and, therefore, is opposed to the proposed budget.

We appreciate your consideration of and for Native students and your focus on the Congressional role of determining the fiscal year 2019 funding levels through the appropriations process. Native students in BIE schools across the country deserve a real opportunity to follow their dreams. To do so, they must go to schools with roofs that do not leak, air and heating systems must work, and students must have adequate facilities. We ask that you consider the attached two documents showing the need through numbers and pictures of BIE schools in need, and subsequently continue your leadership for Native students in the 2019 budget for BIE.

Conclusion

With these concerns and through these recommendations on the Department of Interior's website, NIEA looks forward to working with the Senator to develop a BIE budget the only students that the federal government has a direct responsibility to educate – Native students. If you have any questions, please contact Matt de Ferranti, NIEA's Legislative Director, at mdeferranti@niea.org.

Sincerely,

Ahniwake Rose
Executive Director, NIEA