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WALLACE NOMINATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

TO

CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF GEORGE ROBERT WALLACE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

JUNE 5, 2019

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Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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WALLACE NOMINATION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m. in Room SD–366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Lisa Murkowski, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order. This is a rare Wednesday session of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Before we begin, I want to recognize and provide a tribute to two Park Service employees, Jeff Babcock and Charles Eric Benson. They tragically passed away in an airplane crash in Whitehorse, Canada, just a week ago, last Monday. They were not on official business, they were ferrying a private aircraft from the Lower 48 up to Alaska, as so many Alaskans do. Both of these individuals had extensive time within the Park Service. Jeff, in addition to being with Park Service for years, had a distinguished career in the military and with the Troopers in the state. Eric Benson was also in the Air Force and the Army.

Truly, truly great individuals, longtime Alaskans, and just a reminder to us of just the inherent risk that sometimes we experience in more rural places—but both individuals who served their country and the agency very well. We were very, very saddened in Alaska by this news, and our thoughts and prayers are with their families and loved ones.

We are here this Wednesday morning to consider the nomination of Robert Wallace, Rob, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

This is, for me, a critical position. This is a nomination that we have been waiting for anxiously, I might add, for some period of time. And Mr. Wallace, I want to thank you for your willingness to serve.

This is one of five Assistant Secretary positions at the Department. And the individual who holds it oversees two key agencies, the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as National Park Service—of course they have numerous and wide-ranging responsibilities. But together they administer nearly 170 million acres of lands in the United States, including 129 million acres in Alaska alone.

So just to put it into context, colleagues, roughly 75 percent of all of the acreage of national parks and wildlife refuges in the country are in the State of Alaska. And Alaska is home to the largest National Parks and refuges—we have 7 of the 12 National Parks that exceed one million acres.

I am just putting it in context for the rest of you, when I say that the Department of the Interior is like our "landlord," we really mean it because Alaskans need the people that are in charge to recognize that their decisions have a significant impact on our lives and our livelihoods.

We have had some highs and some lows within the Department, where again, it was more of a landlord, "mother may I," type of relationship instead of a partnership. We want to return to that partnership relationship, and I think we have seen continuing improved relations.

With so much land administered by the Department, Alaska has a wide range of issues that need to be addressed. I don't think I need to tell you, Mr. Wallace, but you are probably going to be spending a lot of time on Alaska-related issues—it is just the nature of it.

But we have some things that are on deck, most notably a life-saving road to connect King Cove and Cold Bay. We also need to stand up the oil and gas program that Congress authorized for the 1002 Area, which is supported by nearly 70 percent of Alaskans, including many Alaska Natives who actually live within the 1002 Area.

At the national level, we need to address the multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog at our land management agencies, particularly for the National Park Service and for our wildlife refuges. This is something that many of us have been talking about, how we move forward on that. We need to provide access for hunting and fishing and promote outdoor recreation. There are also many other provisions from our recent lands package that we need to get implemented for the benefit of those communities and the people who live there.

So again, these are just a few of the imperatives that we have in place and why it is so important to fill this position. Mr. Wallace, you need to know that I am very confident that you have what it is going to take in order to succeed within this position. You bring decades of experience in public life, including your time at the National Park Service as well as here in the Senate. You are no stranger to folks around here, including right here on this Committee. Mr. Wallace understands the importance of public lands and the complex issues that affect them, so it is no surprise that a wide range of stakeholders, from Ducks Unlimited to the National Park Conservation Association, are supporting the nomination.

[The information referred to follows:]

Ducks Unlimited Applauds Wallace Nomination

Targeted News Service

May 6, 2019 Monday 7:40 AM EST

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Length: 430 words

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Body

Ducks Unlimited issued the following news release:

* * *

- ***Rob Wallace*** nominated to serve as assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior

* * *

President Donald Trump recently nominated Wyoming native ***Rob Wallace*** to serve as assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Wallace has 45 years of experience, having been head of congressional affairs for the ***National Park Service***, worked on Capitol Hill and in the private sector.

"Ducks Unlimited applauds the nomination of ***Rob Wallace*** to be assistant secretary of the interior for fish, wildlife and parks. He brings an important mix of Capitol Hill and private sector experience to a vital position in the conservation world," said Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam. "We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm him and we look forward to working with him on our critically important mission of conserving, restoring and managing wetlands for North America's waterfowl."

In his current role in the private sector, Wallace works with ranchers, energy companies, conservationists and regulators to balance the needs of conservation and energy development in the West. He previously served as manager of government relations for GE Energy, where he co-chaired the Government Relations Operating Council.

Wallace also served as a chief of staff and legislative aide for Sen. Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, where he worked on the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Under Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, Wallace served as the assistant director for congressional and legislative affairs at the ***National Park Service***.

"***Rob Wallace*** has a long track record of leadership on ***National Park Service*** and Fish and Wildlife Service issues," U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt said in a news release. "He will be a fantastic asset to the Department of the Interior, and I urge the Senate to confirm him quickly."

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 14 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit *www.ducks.org*.

POLICY UPDATE | May 20, 2019

Position on Nomination of Rob Wallace

Share

NPCA submitted the following position to members of the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resouces and Committee on Environment & Public Works in advance of anticipated nomination hearings.

NPCA urges senators to support the nomination of Rob Wallace as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks – responsible for oversight of the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On May 3, President Donald Trump nominated Mr. Wallace for this important Interior post. If confirmed, Wallace would play an instrumental role in supporting the mission of NPS to protect and keep unimpaired our most incredible resources – natural, cultural and historic –for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Wallace would bring 45 years of public service to the position, including serving as the head of congressional affairs for NPS. Wallace is a Wyoming native and currently a 5-year resident of Teton Village, Wyoming, adjacent to Grand Teton National Park. In fact, he began his career as a seasonal Grand Teton National Park river ranger.

Most recently, he led the Upper Green River Conservancy, which included a diverse group of stakeholders, including ranchers, conservation groups and industry representatives working together to preserve sage grouse habitat in the Upper Green River watershed in Wyoming. Wallace led the group to a successful resolution and management plan intended to balance the habitat needs of the grouse with other industry and agricultural uses in the area. Wallace has served on many philanthropic educational and conservation-oriented boards in Wyoming and has a deep understanding of the importance of the national parks and the iconic beauty and rich and diverse wildlife of Grand Teton National Park. Wallace was instrumental in supporting protection and acquisition of state-owned inholdings within the park in 2016. He understands the complexity of local issues that impact national parks; as well as the breadth of the work that the NPS faces across the country.

In NPCA's experience, Wallace understands the many diverse opinions surrounding national parks and has shown his commitment to inclusive community-based dialogue and solutions. He has been a dedicated participant and leader in public lands and wildlife management and most recently has demonstrated his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to preserve sage grouse habitat in Wyoming. Wallace has demonstrated his ability to work in bi-partisan manner–working effectively with both Republican and Democratic administrations.

We are confident that Mr. Wallace will bring experience and sound decision-making to his post as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. We believe he is capable of and willing to tackle the obstacles facing our parks and other public lands, including threats from development, air and water pollution, climate change, record visitation and ever-present funding challenges for the agencies managing these resources.

Recognizing how long this important Department of the Interior post has been vacant, we applaud Mr. Wallace's nomination and we look forward to his timely confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. NPCA supports him and all the important work ahead to ensure the protection and future of our national parks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ani Kame'enui

Director of Legislation and Policy, Government Affairs

akameenui@npca.org **202-454-3391**

Preserving Our Past. Protecting Our Future.

777 6th Street NW
Suite 700
Washington DC 20001-3723

800.NAT.PARK
800.628.7275

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The Interior Department has actually been without a Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife since 2011. That is a long time to have a vacancy in a very key position, so I look forward to moving Mr. Wallace's nomination quickly.

For those who have questions this morning, know that I am going to stick around for as long as it takes. We are going to have a series of votes beginning at 11:00 which will kind of interrupt things, but my intention is to conclude this hearing rapidly this morning, and then to report Mr. Wallace's nomination as soon as possible.

I am going to turn to my Ranking Member for his opening comments, and then I would invite Senator Enzi and Senator Barrasso, as the Senators from Mr. Wallace's home state, to provide further introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOE MANCHIN III,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Madam Chairman, for holding this hearing today.

Welcome to the Committee, Mr. Wallace, and thank you for your willingness to serve and appear before the Committee.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, as we know, was created by Senator Tom Udall's father, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, in 1965, when he assigned responsibility for the National Park Service to the Assistant Secretary for what was previously only Fish and Wildlife.

It is a big job, as the Senator has mentioned. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for overseeing 418 national park units with 85 million acres throughout all 50 states and 4 of our territories, which are visited by upwards of 300 million people a year, and 567 national wildlife refuges covering nearly 150,000 acres, which provide hunting, fishing, and recreational enjoyment to another 55 million people a year.

In my little State of West Virginia, we have six national park units and two national wildlife refuges. I am sure Mr. Wallace agrees with me that they are some of the greatest areas of the country. Like all the Senators, I believe the parks in my state are the best and the most important compared to everyone else's. So you will have not heard this for the first or last time.

Unfortunately, this important job has been without a Senate-confirmed office holder, as the Chairman has just mentioned, for eight years, nearly eight years. If confirmed, it will be on Mr. Wallace to provide the proper stewardship of some of the most iconic places in the country, which have been set aside for this and future generations.

I am pleased that we have a nomination for this important post. I am particularly pleased, Mr. Wallace, to be able to consider you for this position with the caliber and background that you have. I will read off a few. You know the National Park Service. You got started fresh out of college as a seasonal Park Ranger in the Grand Teton National Park. You later went on to serve as the Assistant Director for the Legislative and Congressional Affairs for the National Park Service. Equally important, you know the Senate and this Committee. You were a Legislative Assistant to Senator

Malcom Wallop and later went on to become Senator Wallop's Chief of Staff. In '91 you became the Committee's Republican Staff Director, a post you held for four years. During that time, the landmark Energy Policy Act of '92 and nearly 100 park and public land bills under the Committee's jurisdiction were enacted into law.

As if those ties to the Committee were not enough, your wife, Celia, used to work for the Committee and later for former Senator Craig Thomas. So you are well involved, and we have no way to have any excuses we can tolerate, okay? You know all the secrets.

I have not had a chance to meet with you personally until today, but I know our mutually good friend, Dave Freudenthal, recommends you at the highest level. Coming from my friend, Dave, who is a former governor of the State of Wyoming and dear friends of both Senator Enzi and Senator Barrasso, I take that considerably to be a compliment. One constant in your life, Governor Freudenthal wrote, "is a deep dedication to the nation's park system."

With that, I finally note that the Committee has received letters of support for your nomination from the National Parks Conservation Association, the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks and National Shooting Sports Foundation.

[The information referred to follows:]

NPCA Position on Rob Wallace for Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks

May 20, 2019

Dear Senator,

Since 1919, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our more than 1.3 million members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to support the nomination of Rob Wallace as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks – responsible for oversight of the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On May 3, President Donald Trump nominated Mr. Wallace for this important Interior post. If confirmed, Wallace would play an instrumental role in supporting the mission of NPS to protect and keep unimpaired our most incredible resources – natural, cultural and historic –for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Wallace would bring 45 years of public service to the position, including serving as the head of congressional affairs for NPS. Wallace is a Wyoming native and currently a 5-year resident of Teton Village, Wyoming, adjacent to Grand Teton National Park. In fact, he began his career as a seasonal Grand Teton National Park river ranger.

Most recently, he led the Upper Green River Conservancy, which included a diverse group of stakeholders, including ranchers, conservation groups and industry representatives working together to preserve sage grouse habitat in the Upper Green River watershed in Wyoming. Wallace led the group to a successful resolution and management plan intended to balance the habitat needs of the grouse with other industry and agricultural uses in the area. Wallace has served on many philanthropic educational and conservation-oriented boards in Wyoming and has a deep understanding of the importance of the national parks and the iconic beauty and rich and diverse wildlife of Grand Teton National Park. Wallace was instrumental in supporting protection and acquisition of state-owned inholdings within the park in 2016. He understands the complexity of local issues that impact national parks; as well as the breadth of the work that the NPS faces across the country.

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Washington, DC 20001
P 202.NAT.PARK | **800.628.7275** **NPCA.org**

In NPCA's experience, Wallace understands the many diverse opinions surrounding national parks and has shown his commitment to inclusive community-based dialogue and solutions. He has been a dedicated participant and leader in public lands and wildlife management and most recently has demonstrated his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to preserve sage grouse habitat in Wyoming. Wallace has demonstrated his ability to work in bi-partisan manner--working effectively with both Republican and Democratic administrations.

We are confident that Mr. Wallace will bring experience and sound decision-making to his post as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. We believe he is capable of and willing to tackle the obstacles facing our parks and other public lands, including threats from development, air and water pollution, climate change, record visitation and ever-present funding challenges for the agencies managing these resources.

Recognizing how long this important Department of the Interior post has been vacant, we applaud Mr. Wallace's nomination and we look forward to his timely confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. NPCA supports him and all the important work ahead to ensure the protection and future of our national parks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa Pierno

Theresa Pierno, President & CEO

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Washington, DC 20001
P 202.NAT.PARK | **800.628.7275** **NPCA.org**

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

June 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin,
The undersigned hunting, fishing, conservation, and outdoor recreation organizations are writing to offer our collective support for the nomination of Rob Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

The Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks oversees the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, which collectively manage 170 million acres of public lands critical to fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, and outdoor recreation. In addition, the position oversees complex issues such as migratory bird management, implementation of the Endangered Species Act, and the international trade in wildlife.

Rob Wallace is an exemplary nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. His vast work experience includes senior staff positions in Congress and in the Administration, including Assistant Director of the National Park Service. Rob also served as Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer's chief of staff and he fundamentally understands the important partnership between the states and the federal government when it comes to managing fish and wildlife, and our nation's public lands.

Rob also has critical experience in the private sector. He oversaw government relations for GE Energy, which gave him important experience in the development of both traditional and clean energy resources. Most recently, as a partner at i2 Capital, Rob has been intimately involved in creating market mechanisms to advance sage grouse conservation in the West.

Finally, Rob practices what he will preach as Assistant Secretary. He began his career as a backcountry ranger for the National Park Service, is an avid hunter and angler, and has always been an active user of, and advocate for, America's iconic public landscape. In short, it would be hard to find anyone with stronger experience, temperament and judgement for the position than Rob Wallace, and we strongly support his nomination.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks has been vacant for almost a decade for years, through multiple administrations. It is time to put politics aside and quickly confirm Rob Wallace on behalf of all Americans who care about public lands and well managed fish and wildlife.

Sincerely,
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association
Angler Action Foundation
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Boone and Crockett Club

California Waterfowl Association
Camp Fire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Masters of Foxhounds
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Deer Alliance
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Pheasants Forever
Pope & Young Club
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Student Conservation Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wildlife Mississippi

May 29, 2019

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

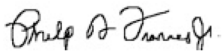
We, the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, write this letter in support of Rob Wallace for the position of Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The Coalition is largely comprised of retired National Park Service employees with over 1,700 members and roughly 40,000 years of experience leading and working in the National Park Service. The Coalition studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service.

Rob Wallace has had a distinguished career. After graduating with a degree in engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, Rob became a ranger in Grand Teton National Park and eventually was appointed assistant director for legislative and congressional affairs of the National Park Service in Washington, DC.

From there Rob went on to serve as chief of staff to Wyoming U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop, staff director for the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, and chief of staff to Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer.

Altogether, Mr. Wallace would bring 45 years of experience, having served in the National Park Service, on Capitol Hill, and in the private sector. Rob would bring a blend of experience that would serve the country well as he understands how both the public and private sectors work. His experience while serving as head of legislative and congressional affairs for the NPS and as chief of staff for Senator Malcolm Wallop provides him with an important perspective as he provides oversight and direction to Interior agencies such as the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His experience gives Mr. Wallace credibility and institutional memory vitally needed at this time. For these reasons, we support Mr. Wallace's nomination for Assistant Secretary and hope that he will be quickly confirmed.

Thank you for your consideration.



Philip A. Francis
Chair, Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Cc: Ranking Member Honorable Joe Manchin

NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.
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Lawrence G. Keane
SVP Gov't & Public Affairs
Assistant Secretary & General Counsel

May 20, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation's more than 10,000 members, I am writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of Rob Wallace as the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

An avid hunter, angler, and recreational shooter, Mr. Wallace is passionate about issues important to the sportsmen-conservation community. Throughout his public service on Capitol Hill and at the National Park Service, Rob has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to conserving and protecting our nation's National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and fish and wildlife.

Having served as Assistant Director and Head of Congressional Affairs to the National Park Service, Staff Director to the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, Chief of Staff to former Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer, as well as a ranger in Grand Teton National Park, Mr. Wallace is uniquely qualified to balance the needs of wildlife conservation, recreational management, and use of our public lands.

Mr. Wallace is a true conservationist, and throughout his forty-five-year career, he has been a devout steward of America's public lands. For example, while serving as manager of government relations for GE Energy, Rob co-founded two conservation organizations in western Wyoming, the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the Upper Green River Conservancy. The first funds projects that enhance, promote, and protect Grand Teton National Park in northwest Wyoming, and the latter protects critical sage grouse habitat in southwest Wyoming.

For these reasons, the National Shooting Sports Foundation® urges the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to approve Rob Wallace's nomination as the next Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior so that the full Senate can act to confirm him as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Lawrence G. Keane

Lawrence G. Keane

I truly believe that you are going to be a bipartisan builder here bringing us all together, which is something that we do not have too often and which is extremely important to all of us. But we want to thank you again for being here and letting us consider you for this important position for our country.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Let's turn to the Senior Senator from Wyoming to provide the first introduction, and then we will turn to Senator Barrasso.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL B. ENZI, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator ENZI. Thank you, Chairman Murkowski, and thank you, Ranking Member Manchin, for your comments.

It's my privilege to introduce Mr. Rob Wallace, who is testifying in front of the Committee today on his nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and for National Parks at the Department of the Interior.

I've known Rob for many years, and I don't think there could be a better choice to fill this position.

Now, Tom Bodett of Alaska, known for his Motel 6 ads with "leave the light on," wrote a humorous book—the name of it is "The End of the Road." And he begins that, "I'm writing about some of my friends. Please be kind to them."

I know you'll be kind to my very qualified friend, who is here today, and as a result I won't ask to read into the record all of the letters of recommendation from all of the people from Wyoming and across the country, so.

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

Senator ENZI. Now I'm going to say some of the same things that Senator Manchin said. I'm a retailer, and I know when you run an ad the first time hardly anybody gets it. If you run it again, a few more will do, and I'll be willing to run this several times if it will help with Rob's nomination.

I'll be hitting the highlights. My colleague, Senator Barrasso, will fill in the details. We're a team, and our whole delegation supports this nomination.

Rob was born and raised in Wyoming where he quickly learned the important role the Department of the Interior plays in the upkeep of the state's natural beauty. In fact, Rob's first job after college was with the National Park Service where he served as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park. For five years Rob helped with the preservation and maintenance at one of our nation's finest parks.

His passion for our nation's public lands sent him here to Washington where he handled energy and environment issues for former Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop. Before leaving Capitol Hill, he served as a Staff Director of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

He returned to Sheridan and the incredible Big Horn Mountains until Rob once again came back to Washington where he has served as Assistant Director of the National Park Service for Congressional and Legislative Affairs. During this time, he supervised the Reagan Administration's legislative agenda for national parks

which included readjusting visitor entrance fees, providing resources to fight the 1988 forest fires and adding several new units to the National Park System.

In 1989, Rob became Senator Wallop's Chief of Staff before heading back to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in 1991 to again serve as Staff Director. I first met Rob in 1995 when he served as Chief of Staff to Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer, and I was in the state legislature.

These days Rob is still involved in Wyoming in the management of public lands. Rob serves as the President of the Upper Green River Conservancy, a sage grouse habitat bank that partners with ranchers, energy companies and conservation groups that work together to protect critical sage grouse habitat in Wyoming.

Rob's career and character reflect a man willing to step up and serve his community and country. His years of experience at Interior and in the Halls of Congress have well suited him for this new chapter.

I'm pleased to introduce him to you today, and I hope you will give his nomination full and fair consideration while you're kind to my friend.

The CHAIRMAN. We look forward to doing just that. We appreciate your sage counsel and advice, Senator Enzi, and thank you for being here before the Committee this morning.

Now let's proceed to Senator Barrasso.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleague, Senator Enzi, in introducing our friend, Rob Wallace, as President Trump's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

Rob has had a very busy two days here in the Senate, Madam Chairman. Yesterday I chaired his nomination hearing upstairs in the Environment and Public Works Committee because our Committees both have jurisdiction over this. Of course, Rob did a great job discussing his experience and views on issues facing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

So today, I expect the Committee is going to focus more on the Assistant Secretary's role to oversee the national parks which is actually where Rob began his career.

Madam Chairman, Rob Wallace is the right person for this job. His 45-year career is comprised of service at nearly every possible, relevant level of state and Federal Government as well as the private sector.

He has been on both sides of the legislative table in government relations at the Park Service and during his service here in the United States Senate. He led the staff for this very Committee for former Senator Malcolm Wallop from Wyoming, and I know your father was Chairman of the Committee and at a point worked very closely with Senator Wallop as two solid Westerners focused on the major issues that our nation faces.

Rob knows the challenges facing the Department from his time as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park and as a longtime resident of Teton County, Wyoming.

And from his time in the private sector, Rob has continued to demonstrate his commitment to this nation's parks as one of the founding members of the Grand Teton National Park Foundation. And he spent many decades in leadership of organizations that promote conservation and cultivation of our natural resources for use in the future.

One could argue that Rob's entire career has prepared him to serve at Interior.

I have known Rob for more than 35 years. I know him to be pragmatic, fair, innovative. His dedication is second to none.

It is a pleasure to join Senator Enzi in introducing him here today, and I look forward to working with him after the Senate confirms his nomination.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Thank both of you for the introduction. You have not left much for Mr. Wallace to speak to in terms of his background, but we appreciate that because it is helpful to the Committee for those who know him and apparently know him well.

The rules of the Committee which apply to all nominees require that they be sworn in connection with their testimony. So I would ask, Mr. Wallace, that you please rise and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Mr. WALLACE. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. You may be seated.

Before you begin your statement, I will ask you three questions addressed to each nominee who comes before this Committee.

First, will you be available to appear before this Committee and other Congressional committees to represent departmental positions and respond to issues of concern to Congress?

Mr. WALLACE. Yes, I will.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you aware of any personal holdings, investments or interests that could constitute a conflict or create an appearance of such a conflict should you be confirmed and assumed the office to which you have been nominated by the President?

Mr. WALLACE. I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you involved or do you have any assets held in a blind trust?

Mr. WALLACE. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Wallace, you may proceed. If you have any individuals that you would care to introduce, you are certainly welcome to do so. We are pleased to have you before the Committee.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE ROBERT WALLACE, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. WALLACE. Well, thank you, Chairman Murkowski. I was talking to Sam Fowler a minute ago. I've probably been in this Committee 100 times and this is the first time I've actually looked

at Senators in my testimony. So you look differently in the front than you do from behind.

[Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. We have been told that.

Mr. WALLACE. But Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin and members of the Committee, thank you for having me here today. I am grateful to the President for nominating me to this position and thank Secretary Bernhardt for his support.

I would also like to recognize my family that's here today. We've shrunk by one since yesterday as my wife is ill today and can't make it. But my daughter, Morgan——

[Laughter.]

——you moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Welcome, Morgan.

Mr. WALLACE. My daughter, Morgan just completed her sophomore year at Wake Forest as an engineering student and is doing an internship up in New York and is down here to support her dad today. So Morgan, thank you for coming along.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate that, and we hope that your wife gets well.

Mr. WALLACE. And my youngest daughter, Ella, just finished the eighth grade. She's not here. She's studying for the SSAT under the event that she may have to apply for a new school next year. So she couldn't join us today either.

But I'm going to jump through my opening remarks because Senator Enzi and Senator Barrasso and even Senator Manchin mentioned much about my career.

But I would like to highlight that we're privileged, the four of us, to live just south of Grand Teton National Park. It's in the Yellowstone ecosystem and each year our community hosts millions of visitors who come to visit two of the world's most majestic national parks. They also marvel at the abundance of wildlife we all enjoy thanks to wise management by state and federal officials and the National Elk Refuge that's located in the heart of our valley.

But I know simply living in a special place is not sufficient justification to ask for your support for this important position overseeing the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

As Senator Enzi mentioned, my journey here began several decades ago when I was hired as a Park Ranger in Grand Teton National Park. There I patrolled the park's rivers and lakes, worked with the mountain rescue team, enforced game and fish regulations, performed law enforcement operations and emergency medical services on the park's highways and traveled for days at a time in the backcountry on skis as part of my job. And then in the winter and in the fall, if my job ended early, I worked at an elk hunting camp in the nearby national forest.

But it wasn't those daily adventures that made the most profound impact on me, it was the number of issues that swirled around the park when I was there. It was a place where dignitaries from around the world traveled to attend the Second World Conference on National Parks and where the President of the United States came to relax.

Up the road in Yellowstone a raging debate was underway about how to wean grizzly bears off human garbage. And in the Tetons,

a vibrant conversation was underway about fire management, search and rescue and visitor use and resources protection. Trying to figure out how to become more involved in these debates that were so interesting to me prompted me to quit that job, volunteer on a campaign for the United States Senate which I arrived in Washington, had a job as an LA for the EPW Committee and eventually as Minority Staff Director of this Committee and along the way. It's been a fascinating journey about the important mission of the Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service, a very important role that both the Federal Government and Congress plays in solving these complicated problems. And knowing that winning everything, people seldom win by winning everything, and it's the bipartisan decisions that are the lasting ones.

And if confirmed for this important position, I'm committed to working constructively with Congress on behalf of the parks, refuges, fish and wildlife because I strongly believe well-meaning people engage in good faith and communicate effectively the opportunity to do good things for these special resources are unlimited.

So thank you for the opportunity to be here, Madam Chairman, and I look forward to answering questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wallace follows:]

Statement of George Robert Wallace
Nominee for the Position of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks,
Department of the Interior

Before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate

June 5, 2019

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Manchin, and members of the ENR Committee, thank you for scheduling this hearing. I am grateful for the confidence of the President in nominating me for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and appreciative of the strong support from Secretary Bernhardt.

I would also like to thank the members of my family who are here from Wyoming. My wife, Celia, is not only a remarkable partner but is also the epitome of bipartisanship, having worked for both a Democrat and Republican member of the Senate. My oldest daughter, Morgan, just completed her sophomore year in engineering at Wake Forest University. And my youngest daughter, Ella, just finished the eighth grade in Jackson, Wyoming.

The four of us live a mile south of Grand Teton National Park in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Each year our community hosts millions of visitors who come to play in two of world's most majestic national parks and the Bridger-Teton National Forest. They also marvel at the abundant wildlife we all enjoy -- thanks to wise management by state and federal officials -- and the National Elk Refuge, located in the heart of our valley.

It's a place where one of our most famous residents, Grizzly Bear 399, has her own Facebook page, where visitors can rent a car and get a can of bear spray at the same time, where our traffic is often slowed to a crawl by herds of bison and elk, and where a "neighborhood watch" means looking out for animals when our kids are walking to and from the school bus.

It's a community where lives are touched every day by the agencies and policies that you oversee on this committee.

So, when my friends back home good naturedly ask why I would leave such a special place for Washington, I tell them it's because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to involve myself in issues I've cared about my entire adult life.

But I know that simply caring isn't sufficient justification to ask for your support to oversee two of the world's most celebrated agencies – the National Park Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. So, I would like to explain how I got here.

My journey began decades ago, when I was hired right out of college as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park.

For the next five years I patrolled the park's rivers and lakes, worked with the mountain rescue team, enforced game and fish regulations, performed law enforcement operations and emergency medical services on the park highways, and travelled on skis for days at a time across the Yellowstone and Teton backcountry. And in the fall, if my park season ended early, I worked in an elk hunting camp in the nearby national forest.

But it wasn't the daily adventures that had the most profound effect on me. It was the political issues that swirled around almost every aspect of my job.

Here was a place where dignitaries from around the world travelled to attend the Second World Conference on National Parks and where the president of the United States came to relax. Up the road in Yellowstone a raging debate was underway over how to wean grizzly bears off human garbage. In the Tetons, exciting conversations about fire management, search and rescue, visitor use, and resource protection were almost a daily occurrence.

I still remember spending a day at a smoldering lightning strike on the west shore of Jackson Lake while officials at Moose headquarters, the regional office in Denver, Park Service headquarters in Washington, the Secretary of Interior, and the White House deliberated on whether to let this fire burn according to a new policy or have me snuff it out.

And it was because of those experiences and dozens of others that I began asking myself how I could get more involved in these debates.

That desire led me to quit my park job and volunteer on a campaign for Malcolm Wallop, who was running for the US Senate from Wyoming. His race succeeded and suddenly I had a front row seat to some of the most consequential energy, wildlife, and natural resource issues in generations.

Starting my Senate career as a legislative assistant following the Environment and Public Works Committee and ending as the minority staff director of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I was here when Congress tackled the Alaska Lands Act, a crippling oil embargo, the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the restructuring of the US electricity industry, controversial endangered species listings such as the snail darter and northern spotted owl, and much more.

I also broadened my understanding of new park authorizations, fee legislation, concession oversight, and the importance of timely communications with Congress while heading the Park Service's office of congressional affairs. Later, as chief of staff to the governor of Wyoming, I was in middle of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone.

I ended my time in Washington working for GE, where I led a policy team that advocated for the deployment of clean energy technologies in the United States and around the world.

Over the years, I've also become a champion of public-private partnerships through serving as a board member on several natural resource-oriented foundations whose missions are to help fund important infrastructure projects, augment wildlife research budgets, and provide opportunities for young people to work and learn on our public lands.

Today, I work on the frontiers of the Endangered Species Act in southwestern Wyoming, bringing ranchers, regulators, conservationists, and industry leaders together to protect large scale habitats for the greater sage grouse while also removing barriers to multiple use.

Along the way I've learned so much -- especially that no one ever really wins by winning everything, that bipartisan solutions are always the lasting ones, and the importance of recruiting good people and trusting them to do big jobs.

Finally, if confirmed, I want to stress my commitment to work constructively with Congress on behalf of our parks, refuges, fish and wildlife. If well-meaning people engage in good faith and communicate effectively, the benefit to these national treasures can be unlimited.

Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Wallace.

I am going to start my questioning by taking it back home. I mentioned in my opening that the Department of the Interior, particularly Fish and Wildlife and the National Parks, play an outsized role in Alaska.

So a very broad question for you is, recognizing that, how do you intend to approach this relationship with Alaska? I will make it a little bit more specific in stating for the record something that you have heard and you have learned. Alaska is different. It includes laws that govern federal land management within the state, like ANILCA, that seeks to strike the balance between conservation and economic development and striking that balance is not always easy. With the last Administration we had a real difficult time trying to find any balance there.

So as you share with me and the others how you will approach this relationship with Alaska, if you can, incorporate into your response also what you intend to do to help exercise the federal authorities in Alaska under ANILCA to, again, achieve and strike that balance.

Mr. WALLACE. I think, Senator, my first trip to Alaska occurred almost 30 years ago and I got my first schooling on the question you just asked me from another Murkowski that held that position.

The CHAIRMAN. You have probably retained that lesson for some time.

Mr. WALLACE. Well, we went to the final exam at the Chena Pump House after the first three or four hours of the lesson, so——

The CHAIRMAN. Enough said.

Mr. WALLACE. He got me early in my career. And I do recognize the special relationship between Alaska. You've got probably, what, 55 or 56 percent of all of the wildlife refuges and national parks in the system.

And one of the things that I plan to focus a lot on, if confirmed for this position, is the role of partnerships. I mean, partner is an easy word to say, but as you probably know more than most, it's a hard word to implement and especially respecting the government-to-government partnerships between the state and the Federal Government, the tribes and the Federal Government, local communities and the government because the Federal Government always shows up as the alpha, you know, a partner in some of these debates. And that's a model that I will work very strongly to better equalize, if confirmed.

As I said in my opening statement, I've been around the Alaska issues for quite a while back in the 1980s but I'm going to have some dusting up or some boning up to do too and I hope to be up in your state soon after being confirmed and perhaps help you and, you know, suggest some itineraries for me when I get up there.

The CHAIRMAN. We have it mapped out for you already in anticipation of your confirmation.

But specific to, kind of, boning up on ANILCA and some of these other specific land management provisions that are unique to Alaska, we have made some headway in requiring that all department employees in the Alaska region attend ANILCA training. This has been beneficial. They need to understand the implications.

What I would hope is that you would be able to commit to ensuring that Fish and Wildlife and Park Service employees attend the same type of ANILCA training that other Department of the Interior employees attend. Again, just so that they can be knowledgeable in these areas of law.

The other thing, and you have raised it, is the relationship with the tribes. Consultation is, of course, required with our Native peoples. Some federal agencies do consultation better than others. We have been fighting this for years now. Consultation needs to be more than just, kind of, a check the box exercise. And one of the agencies where the consultation has been frustrating is within the Fish and Wildlife Service. They don't currently have any agency policies that address consultation with our Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs). It is my understanding that Fish and Wildlife has acknowledged that this is lacking, but they don't have any specific plans to address it within a timeframe.

So I would ask for a commitment that you will look into this to direct Fish and Wildlife to address the consultation issue with the ANCs in official agency policy so that we can implement better and meaningful consultation.

Mr. WALLACE. I do commit to that.

I look forward to meeting Tara Sweeney, if I'm confirmed. I know she's highly respected in the world of tribal relations and I want her as an advisor to me on how, you know, the agencies I'm responsible for are doing with her and her coalition and constituency. So I look forward to that relationship.

The CHAIRMAN. She will be a good guide.

Let me turn to Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Wallace, as you probably noticed if you kept tabs on us here in Congress, things can become a little unreliable at times as far as the job we are supposed to do, like keeping the government open.

Mr. WALLACE. Senator?

Senator MANCHIN. Like keeping the government open.

So what happened, we had a shutdown in 2013. We shut all the parks down at that time. We just shut it all down.

Then last year we come back with another shutdown because of the inability for us to do our job. The last time, Mr. Bernhardt at that time, moved in and kept the parks open to a point to where the sanitary conditions became intolerable. He had to make a decision. He made a decision to reach into the entrance fees of the parks and spent about a quarter of a billion dollars to try to pay people to come in and clean the bathrooms and clean the garbage and things of that sort.

I am not saying that this might not happen again. I hope it never does, but if it does, have you given it any thought, how you would handle that or would you keep the parks open and try to ask for compensation for that or the flexibility or basically just shut them down? It is a tough one.

Mr. WALLACE. It is a tough one, Senator.

And I haven't been down to the Department yet. I think this is my 23d day as being a nominee which included about three round

trips back home to negotiate with my 14-year-old on her life, but I know it's an important question.

I talked to superintendents that used fee money to keep their parks open during the shutdown.

Senator MANCHIN. Last year.

Mr. WALLACE. And it's a question I'd like to get a little bit more educated on before——

Senator MANCHIN. Well, we would like to work with you on that because we don't think that the citizens of this great country should pay the price for our inability to do our job.

Mr. WALLACE. Right.

Senator MANCHIN. It is a shame. I hope we never have another shutdown, but as toxic as things are from time to time, it could happen. We have to work through that and, basically, provide the fees to keep the parks sanitary if we are going to keep them open, but that decision has to be made.

Mr. WALLACE. I understand.

Senator MANCHIN. So that is a tough one.

I am going to defer because I know we are running for votes. I have a lot of our Senators here that want to ask questions, so I will basically yield my time to Senator Heinrich right now if he would like to go with his.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Wallace, are you a big fan of the North American model of wildlife conservation?

Mr. WALLACE. I am. The tenants that—yes, sir.

Senator HEINRICH. I am not surprised by that answer. And I am as well. I think it is that we are frankly the envy of the world because of that model.

And a lot of people today, I think, lack perspective on the history of that and don't realize that there was a time in this country when white-tailed deer were almost wiped out. It is kind of hard to imagine that. We had not a single elk in New Mexico. Today we have 70,000, and that is certainly something to be very proud of. The exception to that success, I think, has been ironically our national mammal, the American Bison. And I actually don't have a question on this, I just want you to think about the fact that that is a somewhat embarrassing omission in our history.

I think it is long past time that we start to find a path with all those partners you mentioned, with states, with tribes and the Federal Government, Fish and Wildlife, to recover something more than a postage stamp, ecologically significant public land, a huntable, wild bison herd somewhere in North America because I think when Teddy Roosevelt put us on this path, that would have been one of the things that he would have had out in the future.

So that is not a question, that is one of those things for you to think about because you don't have enough on your plate already.

I want to ask you about the maintenance backlog real quick. We hear so much about the park's backlog and that is critically important. But we also have enormous backlog on our wildlife refuges, in our national forests, on BLM lands. We have closed campgrounds and unusable trails and all of that has enormous economic implications for our states.

I would just ask that, if confirmed, would you support working with us on a maintenance funding solution that addresses all of those public land agencies and not just the National Park Service?

Mr. WALLACE. I certainly will, Senator.

I think the work that you all did with the 115th Congress with that lands package was historic. I mean, it's something everybody, you should all be proud of going home to say, this is what we did. 116th is a chance to do the same thing with the maintenance backlog.

And I agree, it's not just the national park areas. It's BLM. It's clearly the Fish and Wildlife Service areas and yes, sir.

Senator HEINRICH. I will just leave you with this thought. You know, some of that needs to be done directly through those agencies. We often forget that a huge part of that backlog is also road maintenance and much of that is supposed to be actually paid for out of the Highway Trust Fund. We need to think about both of those pieces as we work together on the backlog issue.

Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator. And know that we are planning on having an oversight hearing in the next week or so, and we are focused really keenly on this transportation piece of things.

Let's go to Senator Hyde-Smith.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Wallace, congratulations so much on your nomination to be the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, one of my very favorite agencies, no doubt, and it is so important for us to have these Senate-confirmed leaders over this agency that have such an impressive resume as yours. I think you are just the right person for this job, and thank you for willingness to take it.

You know, Mississippi is very proud of its national parks and wildlife refuges. And with the enactment of the lands package earlier this year, the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as a national monument and, you know, whether it be the bird depredation for our many catfish farmers as we produce more catfish than anyone in the country. These things are certainly important to my state and federal duck hunting regulations and the recreational opportunities at Mississippi's 15 national wildlife refuges, the programs and activities carried have such an impact on our state. So thank you for being willing to do this.

One issue, in particular, I would like to highlight is obviously catastrophic flooding that is occurring right now in Mississippi in the delta. Hundreds of thousands of acres have been underwater now for more than three months affecting, of course, our timberland, our wildlife habitat and the homes and communities. I have been over there multiple times and the devastation is truly real.

Included in the flooded area are a number of national wildlife refuges with more than 100,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat. I am not suggesting you can fix this problem, but you need to be aware of the significant damages that are occurring right now.

I certainly want to invite you to travel to Mississippi in the coming months, not only to observe the flooding issue but also to meet with Mississippians on various issues that are very important to them. So I extend that invitation to you, and I certainly hope that I can visit with you while you are in our state.

Thank you very much.

Mr. WALLACE. I gratefully accept.

The CHAIRMAN. Let's go to Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Mr. Wallace, I did not realize until Senator Enzi's introduction that you had worked with Jim Geringer. Jim and I were governors together for eight years. He was one of my favorite people in the country. I hope you will give my warmest regards to Jim and Sherri, please, when you see them.

Mr. WALLACE. I will.

Senator KING. We had a great relationship.

This has been, sort of, touched on, but the Secretary and his predecessor were big supporters of the Restore Our Parks Act which has the potential to be a historic action, bipartisan, to really make a difference to deal with this 30-, 40-year-old deficit. I hope you will be a strong voice on that subject as well.

Mr. WALLACE. I will, Senator.

Senator KING. Thank you.

I have dealt with few issues as complicated as fish passage and which fish should be allowed where. We have one of these disputes going on in Maine now between U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife where FERC has recently issued an order to essentially open up fish passage into a lake that has been blocked to certain species, alewives, in particular, for many years to protect the landlocked salmon and bass fishery.

I don't expect you to wade into this except I would ask that you would use your good offices, if confirmed, to try to facilitate discussions between our state Fish and Wildlife folks and the federal agency to see if there is some way to find a solution to this issue, because there are people in Maine who feel that if this is opened up, as has been proposed, it will destroy a very well-established and important fishery in landlocked salmon and bass. Would you give me your commitment to take a look at this issue and try to foster some discussions?

Mr. WALLACE. I will, Senator.

As you correctly noted, it's an issue that I'm not familiar with but I know it's important to you and I commit to learning more about it and being back in touch with you about what I've learned.

Senator KING. And I just wanted to add my voice to those who have been very impressed by your background, your approach to these issues.

National Parks are very important in Maine. We have two national park units, Acadia National Park, one of the original national parks dating back to 1916, and one of the newest park units which is Katahdin Woods and Waters which is inland in Maine. I invite you to come and visit either or both of those wonderful spots. I think you'll see how important they both are to their communities and to the region and to the State of Maine.

Mr. WALLACE. You know, I would like to choose both.

Senator KING. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE. I would also say, Senator, two of the finest superintendents spent time in Wyoming, Kevin Schneider at Acadia and

Timmy Hudson that's up in Katahdin. Both were, you know, got steeled a little bit. They were working in Wyoming years ago.

Senator KING. That is right.

Kevin Schneider is doing a wonderful job, and I am thinking of introducing legislation that will disallow Tim Hudson from retiring because he is doing such a great job.

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE. Well, he's doing—he's been trying for a long time. So the bully pulpit seems to be working.

Senator KING. I know. I know.

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Wallace, for your commitment and your willingness to work with us. I look forward to working with you on those park units and other issues that arise, both in the parks and also with U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Mr. WALLACE. Well, I look forward to that. Thank you, Senator.

Senator KING. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator King.

Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

Mr. Wallace, welcome. Congratulations on your nomination. Welcome to your family, those that are here and those that are listening, I am sure, intently.

I am very impressed with your background and want to bring something to your attention, particularly in Nevada.

I am the Senior Senator from Nevada and, you may or may not know this, I would assume on your background you know something about this. But 87 percent of the land in Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. That means that we have to really bring key stakeholders together, including the Federal Government, when we have issues that are contradictory or issues that we need to deal with when it comes to land and land management.

One of the issues I am going to just bring to your attention and ask for your support, and it deals with the Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Southern Nevada. It is a very unique place. It is the largest wildlife refuge in the Lower 48 states, encompassing roughly 1.5 million acres in the State of Nevada. It is predominately known as the home to Nevada's iconic bighorn sheep, although numerous other plant and wildlife species also share the range. Much of the range, though, is jointly administered with the Air Force as part of the Nevada Test and Training Range which is used as a proving ground and flight test area. The NTTR, the Test and Training Range, is the largest air and ground military training space in the contiguous U.S. and has no interference with commercial aircraft for that reason. And right now, both the Desert Wildlife Refuge and the NTTR contribute to this unique character of Nevada where we have competing interests, and we have to have everybody work together.

The challenge we are having right now is that the Air Force is seeking a land withdrawal and part of that land withdrawal is seeking to expand into the national wildlife refuge. This has required all of our stakeholders to come together and really figure out how we address this issue. Many are opposed to it and so much so that our legislature, the Nevada State Legislature that just finished since sine die this past week, they issued a resolution op-

posed to any land withdrawal taking away from that national wildlife refuge.

I bring this to your attention because so far, in respect to this issue, the Interior Department has been largely silent. So what I am asking from you is help. I need your commitment that you would be willing to come to the table, sit with all of us, figure out how we address this, bring all these competing interests together and have this conversation so that we can all walk away knowing that voices were heard and we can come to some final solution addressing this land withdrawal. Are you willing to do that?

Mr. WALLACE. I am, Senator.

I think it goes back to what I mentioned early on to Senator Murkowski, you know, partnerships are sometimes easy to say and hard to do, but I'm committed to making them work. It's the secret sauce in almost all public policy. If you can get the right group of people together in good faith, remarkable things happen.

There may be issues within the Department where we've seen this before, where other military withdrawals have occurred with wildlife refuges, maybe there's a lesson learned out there that we can bring to Nevada. But I'm happy to learn more and committed to working with you.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Congratulations again on your nomination.

Mr. WALLACE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Wallace, it is great to have you here today.

In looking at your bio, I believe you truly have the knowledge, the experience, the expertise, the service, of the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

I do have a few Montana priorities I would like to discuss with you though. I recently spoke with Secretary Bernhardt on the importance of addressing workplace and sexual harassment in our national parks. I believe it is one of the most important issues for you to focus on in your new position. In fact, Montanans and employees deserve a safe work environment. We must do all that we can to ensure that. We also discussed the need to address the growing maintenance backlog in our national parks. The Secretary committed to me to continue to work on these two important issues and in your new position you would also play a very key role.

My question is, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, do I have your commitment to work with me to address harassment as well as the maintenance backlog in our parks?

Mr. WALLACE. Absolutely on both, Senator.

I, you know, as a father of a couple of pretty capable daughters, I can't imagine. I'd love them to have a career in the National Park Service some day and the fact that they may find themselves in the bottom of the Grand Canyon for two weeks in a predatory environment, it just is disgusting and something that I am fully committed to making sure that, from the top to the bottom, that policy is well underway in being implemented.

And the maintenance backlog I talked about earlier, what a great legacy for all of us to work on together.

Senator DAINES. Well, I count myself very fortunate to have the Ranking Member, Senator King, on the National Parks Subcommittee with me. And I know it is a passion we share.

We want to see this actually get done. I think it is a great opportunity, tremendous bipartisan support. Egos are set aside right now. I think we can actually get something done here in the Senate. So thank you.

We also share being fathers to a couple of daughters, so I share your passion for your daughters as well.

I recently visited Libby, Montana, to discuss with community members the importance of getting the Rock Creek and Montanore mines up and running. Literally, over three decades in regulatory process at this point. These are over 400 jobs for a part of Montana that some describe as poverty with a view. We need these jobs badly. They are a critical part in Northwest Montana. They are heavily supported by the local community. We had Democrats, we had Republicans, all there in support of this when I was up there recently, elected officials, school administrators, many more.

And despite these decades, decades of permitting, these mines are still years away from being fully operational. We are talking about hundreds of high wage jobs, large increases in local tax revenues, all put on hold because of lengthy and burdensome permitting and endless litigation, often politically driven.

While I understand it is the Forest Service we are currently waiting on for this specific project and we hope to have a supplemental EIS out any day now for the Montanore mine, the Fish and Wildlife Service plays a really important role in permitting projects on federal lands.

My question is, if confirmed, what modernization and streamlining would you like to undertake to improve the coordination and the consultation with other agencies to speed up the permitting process?

Mr. WALLACE. You know, Senator, this is one of those issues I'd like to come back with you and learn a little bit more about to make sure we're focusing on the right issues and that I'm in a position where I can be of most help to you.

But again, it goes back to the state and the partnerships. It's the secret sauce. And we all, sort of, have a commitment to finding a way to make it work.

And in your particular—I look forward to coming back and hopefully even seeing you out West to talk about it.

Senator DAINES. That would be the best place to talk about it. Thank you.

Mr. WALLACE. Thank you.

Senator DAINES. The last thing I want to talk about is the Endangered Species Act reform needed.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) has been successfully used to recover endangered and threatened species for decades. However, excessive litigation—and we see that in Montana as part of the Ninth Circuit Court—and other abuses has led to delays in delisting recovered populations.

Despite the Fish and Wildlife Service proposing the delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear and the gray wolf in the Lower 48, their progress has been caught up in more litigation.

It is my opinion that sound science should derive the listing and delisting of species, not fringe litigation and personal opinions. If the science shows the species has recovered, it is quite quantitative at the end of the day, we should be able to delist and use these resources to recover species that are actually endangered.

We should celebrate the fact that the grizzly bear has recovered. It is exceeding all the targets that were set when it was listed.

My question is, if confirmed, how will you address ESA abuses and continue to promote sound science to delist recovered species?

Mr. WALLACE. Again, this would be a question that I, having not been at the Department and having a chance to, kind of, really, look under the hood to the degree that I think your question requires, to just speak in general terms that I completely agree that the idea that the Endangered Species Act has worked. We've seen some remarkable examples of that in the areas where we live, the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the black-footed ferret, the whooping crane, the grizzly bear. And for it to continue to work, people have to have confidence in the transparency, the science that goes in front of a listing decision, the science that goes on a recovery, the transparency of how it goes. But once it's recovered it needs to go back to the management of the states or the tribes as envisioned.

So I'm going to look under the hood more, have a look at more detail, but in principle for it to work it has to be transparent and once a species is recovered, it needs to go back under the management of the states or the tribes.

Senator DAINES. Thank you.

I am out of time here, but that is an important principle. I will tell you, out in Montana, we do a pretty good job of managing wildlife and it is time to transfer that responsibility back to the State of Montana as it relates to grizzly bears as we delist it.

Thank you.

Mr. WALLACE. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Wallace, thank you for your willingness to serve.

I want to ask you about a couple of large issues. Obviously, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I have heard you talk about the backlog and maintenance already this morning, but what about making sure that we get funding at the levels that we need to have continued access to lands that are important in carrying out the larger mission?

And on wildfires which are, you know, we have one raging in the state right now in Grant County. These are big risks to our wildlife as well. So could you address that and what you think we should be doing to mitigate those impacts?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I've been around the Land and Water Conservation Fund pretty much my entire career. It's a marvelous tool to help people enjoy their public lands, recreate.

I've heard Secretary Bernhardt mention in testimony, and I feel the same way, that with the fact that we're both at the Department, hopefully in confirmed positions for me, we'll have a better opportunity to, sort of, argue and fight for that issue in the next budget cycle that I know it is important to—I mean, almost every member that I talk to brings that up. And I'm fully committed to working to see that funding at the level you all will find satisfactory.

Wildfire policy, again, I haven't been to the Department yet, but I know that just based on watching the terrible fires that we've experienced in the West over the last few years that there's a lot of deep thought that needs to go into that.

And I'm going to get smarter about the policies, again as I said to Senator Daines, look under the hood and hopefully be able to come back and have a more meaningful conversation with you about ideas on how to do that.

Senator CANTWELL. But you do believe that climate is impacting our fire situation?

Mr. WALLACE. I believe that climate is changing, that man has a role in it and it's a big question with a lot of variables. Regardless of the cause, the fact is that we have to be involved in, sort of, healthy forests and healthy management and I'm fully committed to the idea that climate is a man-created issue and that smart science needs to be a very important part of how we adapt or modify our performance.

Senator CANTWELL. We are getting very, very, very technical about this in the State of Washington, and one of the reasons why we are is because we are putting incredible investment in stream restoration. And then, basically we are spending millions and millions of dollars to try to return salmon to a particular area and then next thing you know, a devastating fire season comes through there and basically erodes the hundreds of millions of dollars that we have invested.

So we are trying to think strategically about how we preserve those investments and continue to make progress without having hundreds of thousands of acres burn up in one afternoon and then eroding our streams and our stream progress.

Mr. WALLACE. I was the head of Congressional Relations in 1988 when the Yellowstone fires occurred. And up until that point, you know, a controversial fire was 10,000 acres, 15,000 acres, that made big national news.

That was a rounding error in 1988. It became so and I can just, when I read about what has happened in your state, in California and others, I look back to that experience and just can't imagine when you've got actually homes and roads and infrastructure involved in those fires too. So Senator, I'm fully committed to understanding what you're telling me.

Senator CANTWELL. Right. So just if you could take a look at that and then maybe send us some thoughts about this or we can pose a more specific question, but what we are really interested in is how does, in this position or new role, would you, you know, help to target protection of these most vulnerable wildlife corridors, you know, from fire? How would you engage in the debate to make sure that we, at Interior, are doing this important work?

So we can, I can get that for the record, Madam Chair. I can pose a question for a written answer.

But we do think that this is a very important role because, again, we are spending lots of money to protect these areas, but we are going to have to be more strategic about how we achieve it.

Mr. WALLACE. You know, Senator, one of the things I like about, and again, I haven't had the benefit of a lot of very smart people that I'll have the privilege of working with, if confirmed in this position at Interior, but if you look at the system that the Assistant Secretary has, it's about almost a quarter of a billion acres in all 50 states, five territories, a lot in Alaska.

And I would like to look at it about where the stress points are in that entire system, you know, along the coast in Louisiana, it may be adapting to climate change. And I saw Governor Edwards actually thinking about moving people out of Southern Louisiana. You talk about leadership in your State in Oregon. It's ocean acidification. It may be in Wyoming, invasive species or fire or migratory corridors or somebody that cares about historical preservation. It may be just finding the last piece of like Champion's Hill at Vicksburg to add to the system.

So there's stress points all over, and I think if I do my job correctly, I'm able to look at fire, invasive species, migratory corridors, climate and make sure that the applied science and the resource managers have the tools to address the problems that you so eloquently raised a minute ago.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I am just reminded that I was reading an article coming in this morning about the road at Denali National Park where you get into the heart of the park itself and what we are seeing. We are seeing a series of landslides, which you and I are working on legislation, but landslides and slippage that is due to a thaw in the permafrost. It is going to be a considerable undertaking for the Park Service. So when Senator Heinrich mentioned the piece about parks' maintenance and the funding and just the infrastructure side of the ledger, it is just a reminder that what we see from climate exacerbates already challenging issues when it comes to infrastructure for our parks.

We will have an opportunity to discuss more of this when we do our parks oversight.

Mr. Wallace, I just have a couple more quick things because I think what members have done is, they have really highlighted the priorities. I appreciate Senator Daines bringing up the workforce and ethics issues. I think that is very key, and I would join him in a sense of urgency in making sure that we address these and we address them boldly and quickly. You have heard from all of us about the park maintenance. We need a partner to work with on that. Again, so many of the local priorities that you get involved with that will be important going forward.

I just wanted to ask for the record here. Again, this goes back to more Alaska-specifics, but under the Tribal Self-Governance Act, the Department of the Interior is authorized to work with tribal governments to enter into compacts or annual funding agreements, and these are government-to-government agreements. They involve

indirect costs. They are separate. They are different from park concessions.

We have been working in Alaska to, kind of, pioneer in this area. The Sitka Tribe has recently, actually it has been a couple of years now, they have entered into a compacting agreement with the Park Service at the Sitka National Historic Park. I have been out there. We have, kind of, walked through the bumps and the hurdles. But it is important to try to get this right with the Sitka Tribes because other tribes and native corporations are looking at this as possible models going forward. I would just put this on your radar, and ask that you get up to speed on this, commit to directing some of your staff, again, not only on the training side but to see what it is that we can do to make these compacts workable arrangements, not only workable for parks but workable for the tribes that engage in those.

Mr. WALLACE. I'll certainly commit to getting up to speed, Senator. Thank you for bringing that to my attention.

The CHAIRMAN. Lastly, a couple of years ago Congress passed the National Park Service Centennial Act, and we expanded the agency's authority to award and administer the various commercial services, contracts for operation and expansion of commercial visitor facility services. But it has been almost three years now, and we haven't seen Interior implement any of these regulations. So we are waiting. We are not quite sure why it has taken three years on this. But again, when you think about the necessity to provide for a level of services within our parks, it is maintenance, it is upkeep that we need to focus on. But if we haven't done a good job on the service agreement side of it, that is also an area that needs some attention. I just ask that you to look into why, some three years after the fact, we have not seen any implementing regs yet.

Mr. WALLACE. I will, Senator, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. I just have one comment.

I look forward to working with you. I look forward to voting for you.

I think you have a great opportunity, Mr. Wallace, to really make some changes, necessary changes, that we have and also be able to have the support in a bipartisan way of the resources that will be needed to do the park maintenance to basically secure our parks, make them more, I think, more user friendly, if you will, and hopefully navigate your way through some of the difficulties that we don't intentionally try to put before you but might come about because of a dysfunction that sometimes interrupts our day-to-day operations here.

But I really do look forward to working with you and think you are going to do a great job.

Mr. WALLACE. Well, thank you, both.

I look forward to maybe even sitting here again sometime.

[Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. That is a guarantee.

Mr. WALLACE. It would be twice now.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, Rob, thank you. Thank you for, again, your willingness to serve.

I think it is clear from the questions that you will enjoy strong support within this Committee. I don't want to predict any outcomes, but my sense is that you hit it out of the park today, and we will be very pleased to be able to send your name forward to the Floor as soon as we are able to move you out of Committee. And we look forward to doing that very, very soon.

We appreciate your willingness and that of your family to provide that support. Fourteen-year-olds do come around. It takes a little bit, so keep up your negotiation there.

With that, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:09 a.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
June 5, 2019 Hearing: ***The Nomination of Robert Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior***
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Robert Wallace

Questions from Senator Mazie K. Hirono

Question 1: As part of my responsibility as a member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and to ensure the fitness of nominees for an appointed position, I am asking nominees to answer the following two questions:

a. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors, or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

   Response: No, I have not.

b. Have you ever faced discipline, or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

   Response: No, I have not.

Question 2: I am extremely concerned by allegations regarding political pressure influencing science at the Department of the Interior under this administration. These allegations have been specific to agencies that you will oversee-including political edits to early versions of a sea level rise report by the National Park Service and the suppression of a Fish and Wildlife Service report on the impacts of pesticides on endangered species.

Do you believe that science plays an important role in informing policy decisions within the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service?

Response: I believe science is a fundamental component of sound policies and positive outcomes for the myriad challenges facing the Department's land and resource managers. Should I be confirmed, my decision making within the Department will be informed by by the best available science.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that scientists within the department are able to communicate their science free of political pressure?

Response: Scientific integrity should underpin agency actions. I have great respect for the work the Department scientists carry out. My view is that agency decisions should be predicated on the best information, including an evaluation of the science.

Question 3: In early 2017 a department-wide survey was sent to Interior employees to assess the workplace environment. Of the respondents, nearly a combined 10,000 National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service employees said that they had experienced harassment within the past 12 months.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
June 5, 2019 Hearing: ***The Nomination of Robert Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior***
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Robert Wallace

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the workplace culture is changing and what metrics will you utilize to assess the effectiveness of these steps?

Response: I am committed to making sure that, from the top to the bottom of the agencies I would oversee, effective policies will be developed and implemented to address this very serious issue, should I be confirmed.

Questions from Senator Martha McSally

Question 1: In Arizona, our state game and fish department has a strong record of successful conservation by taking a science-based approach and balancing recreational, environmental, and community concerns. While leadership on the federal level is key, any successful conservation goals must include effective partnerships with state and local efforts.

Mr. Wallace, if confirmed, what would be your approach to or principles for working with state fish and wildlife agencies?

Response: I believe that partnerships are the key to almost all good, well-balanced public policy. So strong, sustained working relationships and dialogue with not only state fish and wildlife agencies, but also localities, members of Congress, Tribes and all interested stakeholders is paramount.

Question 2: Managing and producing fish in a desert state like Arizona is no small feat. Its success is critical not only for species conservation but for the state's economics and tourism as well. For example, the Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in eastern Arizona is the only facility in the world that has a brood-stock of Apache trout, one of Arizona's two native species of trout. While the hatchery is renowned for its role in the species' recovery, the facility is in desperate need of infrastructure and operational improvements.

Mr. Wallace, how do you plan to ensure that fish hatcheries, both those managed by the federal government and the state, are properly maintained and producing quality native and sport fish to meet current and future population demands?

Response: Although I am not currently at the Department and do not have the latest information on the legal, regulatory and budgetary parameters concerning fish hatchery management, if I am confirmed, I will work with you and with the professionals in the Department to learn more about this issue.

National
Wildlife Refuge
Association

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, we would like to share our support for Rob Wallace as you consider his nomination to be Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks in the Department of the Interior. For over 40 years, the Refuge Association has advocated on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the largest system of lands in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. We believe Mr. Wallace has the background, experience, and leadership abilities to perform in an exceptional manner in the position of Assistant Secretary.

Rob Wallace founded the Upper Green River Conservancy in his home state of Wyoming in 2015, after a long career as staff director for this committee and in private and public positions. In these positions, he has worked with all manner of public agencies, including those within the Department of the Interior, with landowners seeking solutions to conservation concerns such as sage grouse initiatives, and with private companies on sustainable energy development. Mr. Wallace has worked effectively with both Republican and Democratic Administrations and we believe he will competently and effectively lead the Fish and Wildlife Service and other land management agencies under his purview.

The integrity and habitat value of the Refuge System is paramount to the viability of wildlife populations across the continent. It is our hope that, in this position, Mr. Wallace will examine the enormous benefits these refuge lands bring to wildlife and to our communities and advocate for the resources necessary to manage these lands appropriately.

Thank you for your consideration of Rob Wallace to serve the Department as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. Please let me know if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey L. Haskett
President

1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 905, Washington, DC 20036 ■ 202-417-3803 ■ www.refugeassociation.org ■ CFC #10076

RIO BLANCO COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY ADMIN BUILDING, 555 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 599
MEEKER, COLORADO 81641
970-878-9430

May 28, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Unites States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Unites States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, MD
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Unites States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Unites States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Robert Wallace Nomination

Dear Committee on Energy and Natural Resources & Committee on Environment and Public Works:

The Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado would like to thank you for your nomination of Robert Wallace for Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Rio Blanco County is made up of 6,668 people, and covers approximately 3,200 square miles in northwest Colorado.

Rio Blanco County is home to significant amounts of public land. It has vast natural resources, including coal, natural gas, and timber. Our region is home to one of the largest elk and deer herds in the country. We also offer many great fishing and outdoor recreational opportunities. Rio Blanco County has some of the oldest privately held ranches and agricultural operations in the state. We are the home of Colorado's oldest Rodeo, celebrating its 134th anniversary this year. Throughout its existence our county has balanced agricultural, resource development, and recreation, for more than 100 years and boast some of the cleanest air and water in the country.

Mr. Wallace is no stranger to public service, nor to the agencies, which he would oversee if confirmed. He has extensive knowledge of natural resources and has illustrated the ability to balance the diverse issues facing agriculture, recreation, resource development, and wildlife. We strongly believe his experience in these critical areas of at the state and federal level, as well as the private sector, make him uniquely qualified for the position.

We cordially invite you to visit and experience firsthand the balance of natural resources we have achieved in Rio Blanco County. We applaud the nomination of Robert Wallace for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. It is vitally important to our community to have a man with his knowledge and experience as Assistant Secretary. We strongly encourage the Senate to confirm his nomination quickly.

If you have any questions, or would like to speak with us individually, please email us at bocc@rbc.us, or feel free to contact us at our individual telephone numbers listed below.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners
of Rio Blanco County, Colorado

Jeff Rector
Chairman
(970) 629-2614

Si Woodruff
Commissioner
(970) 942-8734

Gary Moyer
Commissioner
(970) 629-5136

WAYNE COUNTY
UTAH
EST. 1892

May 31, 2019

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Senator John Barrasso, Chairman
Senator Thomas R. Carper, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chairman
Senator Joe Manchin, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Robert Wallace as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior – Wayne County, Utah Supports

Dear Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

Livestock grazing on public lands is a huge component of the economy of Wayne County, Utah with approximately 90% of our land being managed by Department of Interior agencies (BLM and Park Service) and the U.S. Forest Service.

We strongly support the President's nomination of Robert Wallace as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Our reasons mirror those set forth in the May 20, 2019 joint letter of support of Robert Wallace submitted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Public Lands Council and the American Sheep Industry Association. Please include our letter in the Senate Report in regards to the hearings on Mr. Wallace's nomination on June 4th (Committee on Environment and Public Works) and again on June 5th (Committee on Energy and Natural Resources).

Sincerely,

WAYNE COUNTY, UTAH BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Stanley Wood, Chairman