

S. HRG. 117-124

BEAUDREAU NOMINATION

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
TO
CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF TOMMY P. BEAUDREAU TO BE
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

APRIL 29, 2021



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BEAUDREAU NOMINATION

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

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. Joe Manchin III, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order. Before we turn to our hearing today, I want to take a moment, a privilege, for my Chief Counsel on the Committee, Sam Fowler. This year Sam reached 30 years of service on this Committee, providing sage counsel to me, six of my predecessors, and all Committee members, I think, on both sides of the aisle on a broad range of issues, including Senate and Committee history. If you need to know anything about this Senate and how it operates and works, Sam is your man.

He is only the second person to have served as Chief Counsel for the Democratic side since the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was established in 1977. In fact, only four Senators have been in the Senate longer than Sam. So I would like to now present him his 30-year service pin and certificate along with a plaque to commemorate our appreciation for his years of dedicated service to our country. I cannot thank him enough.

Sam?

I will put the pin on you, but I get to pin you. This is a good pin, Sam.

[Laughter.]

I think this is an official pin.

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Sam, say something. A person, after 30 years, has a right—what do you think, Senators? Okay?

[Laughter.]

Mr. FOWLER. Well, certainly the number of years I have worked here is one measure of my career, I suppose, but one of the other measures that I take a special pride in is the number you mentioned earlier, that out of the eight democrats who have served as either the Chair or Ranking Member, I have managed to be Chief Counsel for seven of them, and it has been a great honor with each and every one and especially with Senator Manchin.

The CHAIRMAN. We are not going to have him rate them either, okay.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Sam.

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Turning back to our hearing.

We meet today to consider the nomination of Tommy Beaudreau to be the Deputy Secretary of the Interior (DOI). Welcome to the Committee, Mr. Beaudreau. It is so good to have you and your family with us. I want to thank you for being here this morning and for your willingness to serve in this important position, and thank you to your family for joining you here today.

If you want to, Tommy, why don't you introduce your family with you right now, and then I will go ahead and finish up on my—

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you so much, Chairman.

So I'm joined this morning with my wife, Carrie Beaudreau, and my boys, August Beaudreau and Alex Beaudreau.

The CHAIRMAN. Welcome to all of you. Thank you so much for your service.

The Department of the Interior has a bipolar mission in a highly polarized, political environment. On the one hand, the Department is charged with preserving and protecting our national parks and public lands. It is the guardian of our iconic landscapes and our most sacred historical sites. It is the steward of our natural resources and must take into account not only our present needs but the needs of generations to come. On the other hand, the Department of the Interior is called upon to provide a large part of the energy and mineral resources that we need to power the nation. The lands and waters managed by the Department produce nearly 20 percent of the nation's energy, including 43 percent of our coal, 24 percent of our oil, 2 percent of our natural gas, half of our geothermal energy, and much of our wind, solar, and hydropower.

The lands and waters managed by the Department generate \$12 billion a year for the Federal Treasury, support 1.8 million jobs, and contribute an estimated \$315 billion to our economy. The Department does not have the luxury to choose one mission over the other. It must fulfill both and find the right balance between the two. As the Secretary's top lieutenant, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior plays a major role in striking that balance and keeping the Department on course. I am not telling Mr. Beaudreau anything he does not already know. He learned the importance of responsible resource development at an early age from his father, who worked in the Prudhoe Bay oil fields in the North Slope of Alaska. At the same time, he learned the value of the great American outdoors growing up hunting, fishing, hiking, and skiing in the Alaskan wilderness. He brought those experiences and values with him to the Department of the Interior in 2010 when our former colleague, Ken Salazar, called on him to help reform the offshore drilling program after the tragic Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico.

As the first Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, he learned firsthand the importance of not only developing energy resources, but developing them wisely, safely, and with careful regard for the environment. He saw what happened when the Department cut corners, and he played a major role in reform-

ing the Department's regulatory program so that energy production could resume in the Gulf more safely than ever before. Perhaps one measure of the outstanding job Mr. Beaudreau did as head of the offshore oil program is the fact that Secretary Salazar soon put him in charge of onshore leasing as well, as Acting Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management, and Secretary Jewell ultimately made him her Chief of Staff with oversight over the Department's broad portfolio.

On that note, without objection, I will enter into the record former Secretary Jewell's letter to the Committee endorsing Mr. Beaudreau.

Objections? No objections. It will be entered in.

[Letter of endorsement from former Secretary Jewell follows:]

April 21, 2021

Members of the United State Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Committee Members:

It is with pleasure that I convey my full endorsement of Tommy P. Beaudreau, President Biden's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior. I believe he will be a terrific complement to Secretary Deb Haaland and will bring his deep dedication to public service to this important role.

During my tenure as Interior Secretary from 2013-17, I worked very closely with Tommy and came to deeply appreciate his intellect, capacity to listen to multiple points of view, deep understanding of the law, respect for elected officials and constitutional processes, and pragmatic knowledge of how to get things done.

Following the devastating Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, Tommy was tapped in 2011 to be the first-ever Director of the Bureau Ocean Energy Management – one of two bureaus formed to address needed changes in Interior's organizational structure, laid bare following the accident. Despite being relatively new to government at that time, Tommy's leadership skills shone through and he was valued by staff, stakeholders and elected officials for his capacity to listen and shape the department for the future. Beyond modernizing processes and ensuring there was an appropriate separation of duties to reduce risks in offshore energy development, Tommy was instrumental in standing-up wind energy development along the Atlantic seaboard. These efforts have since generated new and significant sources of revenue for the American taxpayer, while launching a new industry to harness our nation's renewable energy potential and build America's clean energy economy.

When I began my tenure as Secretary in April 2013, Tommy was also serving as Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. When my Chief of Staff position opened up in 2014, Tommy was my first choice to take the role, bringing his ethical compass, deep understanding of the law, and ability to bring people of different perspectives together to find common ground. Alongside Deputy Secretary Michael Connor, Tommy served a vital leadership role, enabling us to thoughtfully address the needs of the public in the complicated and oftentimes conflict-filled portfolio of Interior.

Tommy deeply understands public land law and policy. He grew up in Alaska with an appreciation for the natural world, respect for indigenous cultures, and recognition of the importance of public lands. He understands that our shared lands and waters are an important driver of a wide variety of economic and recreational activities around the nation, and critical for their natural and cultural values like biodiversity, ecosystem services, and habitat for healthy wildlife on land and offshore. Tommy helped shape actions to protect and conserve vulnerable and important habitat and natural areas, while also shaping policies and plans to facilitate safe and balanced development.

I urge you to support President Biden's nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior and am confident he will work respectfully and thoughtfully with Secretary Haaland, Members of Congress, and a wide variety of stakeholders to serve the interests of the American people today and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally Jewell".

Sally Jewell
U.S. Secretary of the Interior, 2013-17

2201 Sunset Ave. SW
Seattle, WA 98116
Email: sally@srjassociates.com

The CHAIRMAN. Her letter endorses Mr. Beaudreau "for his intellect, capacity to listen to multiple points of view, deep understanding of the law, respect for elected officials and constitutional processes, and a pragmatic knowledge of how to get things done." Like former Secretary Jewell, I am very pleased that the President has nominated Mr. Beaudreau to be the Deputy Secretary of the Interior. I think he is extremely well qualified for this important position, and I strongly support his nomination.

Before I turn it over to Senator Barrasso for his opening statement, I ask unanimous consent to enter another additional five letters for Mr. Beaudreau's nomination in the record.

Without objection.

*** AMERICAN WOODCOCK SOCIETY * ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION *
 ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES * BOONE AND CROCKETT
 CLUB * CALIFORNIA WATERFOWL * CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA * CATCH-
 A-DREAM FOUNDATION * CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION *
 CONSERVATION FORCE * DALLAS SAFARI CLUB * DELTA WATERFOWL *
 DUCKS UNLIMITED * HOUSTON SAFARI CLUB * IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF
 AMERICA * MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION * MULE DEER
 FOUNDATION * NATIONAL BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE *
 NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION * NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION
 * NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION * NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
 ASSOCIATION * NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION * NORTH AMERICAN
 FALCONERS ASSOCIATION * NORTH AMERICAN GROUSE PARTNERSHIP *
 PHEASANTS FOREVER * QUAIL FOREVER * RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY * THE
 CONSERVATION FUND * THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION
 PARTNERSHIP * WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE * WILDLIFE
 MISSISSIPPI * WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION ***

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 Chairman
 Senate Committee on
 Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on
 Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso,

The undersigned organizations, which represent millions of hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts are writing to express our strong support for Tommy Beaudreau to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI).

In addition to an impressive career in the private sector, Mr. Beaudreau has a great deal of experience working at DOI in a number of capacities. He was the first Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, and ultimately Chief of Staff of the Department. During his tenure, Mr. Beaudreau demonstrated a strong commitment to solving complex problems while also balancing the management of America's public lands for multiple uses to benefit wildlife, development, and outdoor recreation.

Throughout his career Mr. Beaudreau has consistently sought the input of sportsmen and women-conservationists and utilized their guidance to inform policy decisions important to our community. A dedicated sportsman, Mr. Beaudreau also has a proven track record of working across the aisle to achieve robust conservation outcomes.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to advance Tommy Beaudreau's confirmation, so that the Senate may quickly act to confirm him for this critical position at the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society
 Archery Trade Association
 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
 Boone and Crockett Club
 California Waterfowl
 Camp Fire Club of America
 Catch-A-Dream Foundation
 Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
 Conservation Force
 Dallas Safari Club
 Delta Waterfowl
 Ducks Unlimited
 Houston Safari Club
 Izaak Walton League of America
 Masters of Foxhounds Association
 Mule Deer Foundation
 National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
 National Deer Association
 National Shooting Sports Foundation
 National Wildlife Federation
 National Wildlife Refuge Association
 National Wild Turkey Federation
 North American Falconers Association
 North American Grouse Partnership
 Pheasants Forever
 Quail Forever
 Ruffed Grouse Society
 The Conservation Fund
 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 Wildlife Management Institute
 Wildlife Mississippi
 Wild Sheep Foundation

April 28, 2021

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

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

RE: Nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau for Deputy Secretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior

Dear Senators Manchin and Barrasso,

We are pleased to submit this letter in support of Tommy P. Beaudreau, President Biden's nominee for Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

For background, the undersigned are former public officials, environmentalists, academics, energy professionals and offshore wind industry members. We support offshore wind energy as a uniquely positioned opportunity to address the intersecting environmental, public health and economic crises that our communities and nation face. We understand that offshore wind energy will bring unparalleled climate and public health benefits, while creating tens of thousands of quality jobs in manufacturing, construction, operations and maintenance, and in the development of port facilities and associated infrastructure.

The Biden Administration has made early, bold commitments to advance 30 gigawatts of responsible offshore wind development by 2030. The Department of the Interior will be at the forefront of this commitment, ensuring that offshore wind energy is developed responsibly in a manner that protects coastal and marine ecosystems and advances social and racial equity and environmental justice. We are excited about, and have confidence that as Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Beaudreau will complement the robust leadership team in place, with his experience, professionalism, keen ability to listen to and include all stakeholders, and his unwavering commitment to clean energy and climate action.

The U.S. offshore wind sector would not be poised for the Biden Administration's liftoff if not for Mr. Beaudreau's commitment to clean energy writ large and offshore wind energy specifically, during his previous tenure at the Department. With his leadership first at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (as both Senior Advisor and then Director), then as Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, and finally as Chief of Staff to the Secretary, the Department of the Interior implemented new regulations specific to the responsible development of offshore wind energy, advanced to a Record of Decision the first offshore wind project proposed in federal waters, and leased millions of acres on the Outer

Continental Shelf for offshore wind energy. Mr. Beaudreau also sought clean energy and climate experts for key personnel roles, further demonstrating his commitment to Interior's critical role on the frontlines of climate action.

We thank you for considering our strong support for Mr. Beaudreau's nomination and urge the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to approve his nomination and send it to the full Senate for confirmation.

Sincerely,

Eddie Ahn, Executive Director, Brightline Defense

Richard Andre, President, Vineyard Power

Kevin Banister, Chief Development Officer, Simply Blue Energy Group

Alicia Barton, CEO of FirstLight Power and former CEO of the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Michael Behrmann, Co-founder, Revolution Energy

Ann G. Berwick, former Undersecretary for Energy, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and former Chair, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

Ted Boling, former General Counsel and Associate Director for NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality

Liz Burdock, President & CEO Business Network for Offshore Wind

Jason Busch, Executive Director, Pacific Ocean Energy Trust

Garry George, Director, Clean Energy Initiative, National Audubon Society

Jeff Grybowski, President and CEO, U.S. Wind

Elizabeth Turnbull Henry, President, Environmental League of Massachusetts

Willett Kempton, Professor, University of Delaware

Kevin Knobloch, President, Knobloch Energy

Jim Lanard, CEO, Magellan Wind

Paula Major, Vice President, U.S. Offshore Wind, Mainstream Renewable Power

James Manwell, Director, Wind Energy Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Jonah Margulis, Senior Vice President, Aker Offshore Wind

Carlos Martin, CEO, Blue Float Energy

Joe Martens, Director, New York Offshore Wind Alliance and former Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Stephanie McClellan, Founder, Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, University of Delaware

Kris Ohleth, Executive Director, Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, University of Delaware

Matt Palmer, Director, Head of Global Business Development, President and CEO, Wood Thilsted USA.

Amisha Patel, Head of Public Affairs, Principle Power

Doug Pfeister, Managing Director, Renewables Consulting Group

Nancy Rader, Executive Director, California Wind Energy Association

Dominic Schwegmann, Head of Offshore Development Americas, RWE

Erich Stephens, Founding Principal and former Chief Development Officer, Vineyard Wind

Adam Stern, Executive Director, Offshore Wind California

Individuals below sign in their personal capacity; any organizational affiliations given are for information only.

Seth Kaplan (Mayflower Wind)

Rob Sargent (formerly, Environment America)



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso,

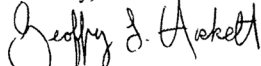
On behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, I am writing to express our strong support for Tommy Beaudreau to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Our organization has worked with Mr. Beaudreau for many years, and he has a long history of working with both sportsmen and green groups to establish a strong conservation legacy.

Mr. Beaudreau has spent time as an attorney in the private sector, the first Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, and Chief of Staff of the Interior Department. His tenure at the Interior Department demonstrated significant commitment for the National Wildlife Refuge System and for the management of our nation's systems of public lands to benefit wildlife.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association is committed to the long-term health, funding, and protection of our nation's refuge lands. We believe that Tommy Beaudreau will be a strong advocate for these public lands, the largest system of lands set aside for wildlife in the world. He has a proven track record of reaching across the aisle to work with all conservation advocates, and we look forward to working with him in his capacity as Deputy Secretary, if confirmed.

We urge the Committee to advance Tommy Beaudreau's confirmation, and for Committee members to support his nomination before the full Senate.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey L. Haskett
President

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

April 27, 2021

Sen. Joe Manchin
Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Outdoor Alliance support for the nomination of the Tommy Beaudreau to be the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

On behalf of the human powered outdoor recreation community, we write to express our support for the nomination of Tommy Beaudreau to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

Our country's public lands and waters have profound intrinsic value. Moreover, the ecological, biodiversity, climate resilience, and social values—ranging from the recreational experiences they provide to their panoply of economic benefits—would be difficult to overstate. The stakes for decision making at the Department of the Interior are high, and the policy issues are complex. We believe that DOI will be better positioned to navigate the challenging path ahead with Mr. Beaudreau's



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

talent and experience, and we therefore enthusiastically support his confirmation to serve as the Deputy Secretary.

In addition to his accomplished career in the private sector, Mr. Beaudreau has an impressive array of experience at DOI, serving as the first Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management, and eventually as Chief of Staff to DOI to Secretary Sally Jewell. In each of these positions, Mr. Beaudreau demonstrated a commitment to core conservation values and a sincere willingness to not only listen to, but to understand a diversity of stakeholder perspectives so that these perspectives could inform and improve DOI's policy agenda and conservation outcomes.

We therefore encourage the committee to advance Mr. Beaudreau's confirmation and empower the Senate to act with purpose soon thereafter to confirm him to this consequential position of service.

Best regards,



Adam Cramer
Executive Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Louis Geltman, Policy Director, Outdoor Alliance
Chris Winter, Executive Director, Access Fund
Beth Spilman, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Kent McNeill, CEO, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Todd Walton, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Mitsu Iwasaki, Chief Executive Officer, American Alpine Club
Sarah Bradham, Interim Executive Director, the Mazamas
Keegan Young, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club
Chad Nelson, Chief Executive Officer, Surfrider Foundation



The CHAIRMAN. Now I want to recognize my dear friend and colleague, Senator Barrasso, for his opening statement.

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

Senator BARRASSO. Well thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I also would like to welcome Tommy Beaudreau to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee as well as to your family. Thank you all for joining us and for your service to the country.

The Deputy Secretary of the Interior is a critically important job to my home State of Wyoming and to the entire West. If confirmed, you are going to work alongside the Secretary to lead an agency with more than 70,000 employees. Department of Interior employees manage 20 percent of the nation's lands, including all of our national parks, our national monuments, our wildlife refuges, our multiple-use lands, and the Outer Continental Shelf. They also manage the largest water supply in the West, our nation's trust responsibilities to American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives, and our nation's responsibilities to U.S. territories and freely associated states. One of the most vital functions is overseeing the development of traditional and renewable energy supplies on public lands and waters.

In Wyoming, we are proud to be America's leading producer of coal, uranium, trona, and bentonite. Almost 50 percent of Wyoming's surface area and 69 percent of Wyoming's minerals are owned by the Federal Government. Energy production on public lands is the engine of Wyoming's economy. It creates good-paying jobs. It provides tremendous revenue for our state. In Wyoming, energy and mineral activity on Department of Interior land had a \$17.3 billion economic impact in 2019 and supported over 57,000 jobs. For years, the State of Wyoming has collected over \$1 billion annually in royalties and taxes from energy production on federal lands. Wyoming is not the only state that benefits from energy production on public lands. Mr. Beaudreau's home State of Alaska and Secretary Haaland's home State of New Mexico, as well as many others, rely on the production of oil and natural gas on public lands.

Mr. Beaudreau, you know from personal experience the critical importance of energy production to the livelihoods of Americans all across the United States. In 2013, you came before this Committee as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management and Budget. You testified that your family moved to Alaska so your father could "get a good job working in the Prudhoe Bay oil field on the North Slope," as Senator Manchin has mentioned. You stated, "Because of my upbringing I have a firsthand understanding of the importance of responsible resource development to the economic well-being of communities and families." Your appreciation of the benefits that energy production on public lands affords to millions of Americans is very welcome news. If you are confirmed it is imperative that you keep those Americans who have jobs in energy production on public lands at the forefront of your mind. The Biden Administration seems intent on destroying the livelihoods of oil, natural gas, and coal workers in the West, seems to want to rip away all the advantages in the

traditional energy production that those sources bring to our states, our local communities, and our families. Mr. Beaudreau, the Biden Administration has given every indication that it wants to throw oil and gas workers, who have jobs like your father's, out of work. So I hope that if you are confirmed you can serve as a voice of reason in an Administration that is waging an economic war on energy workers in my state and across the country.

I want to thank the Chair and look forward to your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Beaudreau.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

The rules of the Committee, which apply to all nominees, require they be sworn in connection with their testimony. So Mr. Beaudreau, if you would please stand 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, so help you God?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Please be seated.

Before you begin your statement, Mr. Beaudreau, I will ask you three questions addressed to each nominee before the Committee.

Will you be available to appear before the Committee and other Congressional committees to represent the Department's position and respond to issues of concern to the Congress?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes.

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

Mr. BEAUDREAU. No.

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

Mr. BEAUDREAU. No.

The CHAIRMAN. You are now recognized, Mr. Beaudreau, to give your statement. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF TOMMY P. BEAUDREAU, NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you so much, Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and the members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I'm honored to be with you today as President Joe Biden's nominee to be the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. I'm very happy to be appearing before this Committee again.

I am joined this morning by my wife, Carrie, and my two sons, Alex and Auggie. I thank their school for allowing them to be with me today for this hearing. Alex graduates next month, so I'm pretty sure he doesn't mind missing class at all. If I may, I will begin with a brief personal introduction which will help explain why I'm here today seeking your consent to return to the Interior Department as Secretary Haaland's Deputy and the Department's Chief Operating Officer.

I am and always will be a Westerner. I was born in Colorado, and my first home was in a small town called Brush in Morgan County. My father was a Marine who served in Vietnam, and, as Senator Barrasso pointed out, in the late 1970s he got a job working in the Prudhoe Bay field on the North Slope and moved my family to Alaska where I was raised and graduated from high school. I'll always be grateful for my upbringing in Alaska. Alaska is where I learned to hunt, fish, ski, backpack, and appreciate the beauty, adventure, and the power of America's vast landscapes and wild places. I am proud to say that my children are developing their own connections with the outdoors. Alex takes frequent weekend camping trips and hiking trips to national and state parks in Virginia and Maryland, and I joined Auggie for his first wilderness backpacking adventure in Olympic National Park two summers ago.

Secretary Salazar brought me into the Interior Department in 2010 to help the Department respond to the Deepwater Horizon crisis and implement sweeping reforms to the federal offshore oil and gas oversight, including the successful reorganization of the offshore regulator. These reforms withstood a change in administration because the case for the reorganization was compelling. We enlisted the career staff to help define the responsibilities and design the functions of the new agencies, and we worked with Congress and this Committee to stand up the agencies and ensure that they were properly resourced. My perspective on leadership as well as my understanding of how to be effective in government also is shaped by my unique career path at Interior. I started at DOI as a Senior Advisor in an agency that no longer exists. Secretary Salazar appointed me to be the first Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management where, among other things, I conducted the first offshore wind lease sales in the United States. I also served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management overseeing several agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management. Finally, I spent three years as the Department's Chief of Staff under Secretary Sally Jewell. All of these roles and experiences have given me a profound respect for the work of the 70,000 career staff at the Interior Department.

When I first joined government, then-Deputy Secretary David Hayes told me I could expect to meet two kinds of folks in government, show horses and work horses. I love the Interior Department because it is truly a team of work horses, which brings us to today. If confirmed, I would be honored and humbled to rejoin the Interior Department and to work with Secretary Haaland. Secretary Haaland has inspired millions of Americans with her historic vision for the Department, and I will be deeply invested in supporting her in achieving that vision, promoting equity and confronting injustice; bringing America's lands, water, and people to bear in tackling the great climate and conservation crises facing us today; and ensuring that the nation's public lands and wildlife are conserved for future generations. Interior is front and center in meeting the Biden Administration's targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This effort includes bringing public lands and waters to bear in building a clean energy economy that supports good-paying union jobs as well as strengthening working communities. Interior

brings to the table the premier science agency in the Federal Government, the USGS, and is on the front lines addressing drought and partnering across the Federal Government and with Western states to combat wildfire.

As stated by the Supreme Court, the Federal Government has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibilities and trust toward Native Americans. Fundamentally, this responsibility means honoring the government-to-government relationship with tribes, including through genuine and meaningful consultation, respecting tribal sovereignty, and recognizing that self-determination is the path to strengthening communities and living up to the United States trust and treaty obligations.

Interior, as steward of the national parks, public lands, and largest wildlife refuge system in the world, has the awesome responsibility to conserve these lands, nature, and wildlife for the benefit of all Americans and for future generations. I'm grateful to this Committee and to Congress for its investments in protecting our shared heritage and legacy to the Great American Outdoors Act and funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. If confirmed, I will have an open door and an open mind to the important challenges that are before all of us. I hope this hearing will be the first of many conversations I have with each of you, and thank you, and I'm ready to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Beaudreau follows:]

**STATEMENT OF
TOMMY P. BEAUDREAU
NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

APRIL 29, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I am honored to be with you today as President Joe Biden's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. I am very happy to be appearing before this Committee again. I am joined this morning by my wife Carrie and my two sons Alex and Auggie.

If I may, I will begin with a brief personal introduction, which will help explain why I am here today seeking your consent to return to the Interior Department as Secretary Haaland's Deputy and Chief Operating Officer.

I am and always will be a Westerner. I was born in Colorado, and my first home was in the small town of Brush in Morgan County. The family vocation on my mother's side was horse racing, and my grandfather was racing secretary for the Colorado Racing Commission. My father was a Marine who served in Viet Nam. In the late 1970s, he got a job working in the Prudhoe Bay field on the North Slope, and my family moved to Alaska where I was raised and graduated high school.

I will always be grateful for my upbringing in Alaska. Alaska is where I learned to hunt, fish, ski, backpack, and appreciate the beauty, adventure, and power of America's vast landscapes and wild places. I am proud to say that my children are developing their own connections with the outdoors, taking frequent weekend camping and hiking trips in the National and state parks in Virginia and Maryland.

Secretary Salazar brought me into the Interior Department in 2010 to help the Department respond to the *Deepwater Horizon* crisis and implement sweeping reforms to federal offshore oil and gas oversight. These reforms included the successful reorganization of the Minerals Management Service and establishment of three new agencies with clear and de-conflicted missions. These reforms lasted through a change in administration because the case for the reorganization was

compelling, we enlisted the career staff to help define the responsibilities and design the functions of the new agencies, and we worked with Congress to stand up the agencies and ensure they were properly resourced.

My perspective on leadership, as well as my understanding of how to be effective in government, is shaped by my unique career path at Interior. As mentioned, I started at DOI as a senior advisor in an agency that no longer exists. Secretary Salazar appointed me to be the first director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management where, among other things, I oversaw the first offshore wind lease sales in the United States. I also served at the assistant secretary level as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. Finally, I spent three years as the Department's chief of staff under Secretary Sally Jewell. All of these roles and experiences have given me a profound respect for the work of the 70,000 career staff at the Interior Department.

Which brings us to today. If confirmed, I would be honored and humbled to rejoin the Interior Department and to work with Secretary Haaland. Secretary Haaland is an inspiration. I will be deeply invested in supporting her in achieving her historic vision for the Department – promoting equity and confronting injustice; bringing America's lands, water, and people to bear in tackling the great climate and conservation crises facing us; and ensuring that the Nation's public lands and wildlife are preserved for future generations.

This is a critical time for Interior. No other Department is better equipped to rise to meet these challenges and seize the opportunities that lie before the Nation.

Interior is front and center in meeting the Administration's target of reducing greenhouse gas. This effort includes bringing public lands and waters to bear in building a clean energy economy that supports good-paying union jobs; and strengthening working communities. Interior brings to the table the premier science agency in the federal government, the USGS, and is on the front lines addressing drought and partnering across the federal government and with western states to combat wildfire.

There is also no greater set of responsibilities than those of honoring the government-to-government relationship with Tribes including through genuine and meaningful consultation; respecting Tribal sovereignty and working to advance self-determination; and fulfilling the United States' trust and treaty obligations. DOI also has a special responsibility with respect to the Insular Areas, including U.S. territories and under compacts with the freely associated states, and to the Native Hawaiian Community, as well.

Interior, as the steward of the National Parks, public lands, and the largest wildlife refuge system in the world, has an awesome responsibility to conserve these lands, nature, and wildlife for the benefit of all Americans and for future generations. I am grateful to this Committee and Congress for its investments in protecting our shared heritage and legacy through the Great American Outdoors Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

If confirmed, I commit to have an open door and an open mind on the important challenges before us. And I also commit to listen to and collaborate with this Committee and with each of you. I hope this hearing will be the first of many of those conversations. Thank you, and I am ready to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Beaudreau.

I will start with the questioning. The United States became a net total energy exporter in 2019 for the first time in 67 years, in large part due to the surge of domestic oil and gas production. Do you believe that it is in our best interest to maintain our energy independence?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, I believe it is extremely important on the national stage that America maintain its energy security.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you believe that we can strike the right balance between environmental protection and responsible energy development so that we can maintain our energy security and independence without sacrificing our environmental quality?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Each year, the Office of Surface Mining transfers up to \$750 million to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Health and Retirement Fund. This is because in 1946 the Federal Government made a promise to the UMWA, the only one that we have ever had between labor and government. In 1940, the Federal Government made that promise. It was called the Krug-Lewis Agreement that ensured hard-earned health care and retirement benefits would be secured for the lifetimes of back-breaking work in the coal mines. These programs are very important to coal miners, their widows, and their dependents. So will you commit to ensure the timely and uneventful transfer of funds from the Office of Surface Mining to the necessary UMWA funds as directed by Congress?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Senator, the AML program is a tremendous success story. In my previous service at the Interior Department, it was always an important moment to be able to oversee the transfer of those funds. Obviously, I haven't been at the Department for some time now, but with your consent when I return, I absolutely will look into the program.

The CHAIRMAN. I believe more needs to be done to reduce methane venting and flaring, and we have been told that methane, the venting of methane, is 84 times more detrimental to our environment than just CO₂. So we know it is very lethal. The other thing is, it has a value to it. So do you believe that there is an opportunity from the federal lands, both to mitigate an environmental impact of this extremely potent greenhouse gas and to ensure taxpayers receive a fair return for the resources? We already have technologies to reduce methane emissions, and we will continue that innovation, but one of the missing pieces seems to be the gathering lines. The gathering lines that it takes to take the methane from the well head to the main pipeline and ultimately to market, instead of venting or flaring it. What role does the Bureau of Land Management play in approving the construction of gathering lines?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you for the question, Senator. There is no doubt that—and President Biden has spoken about this, and Secretary Haaland has spoken about it—we absolutely need to address greenhouse gas emissions emanating from public lands, and that includes methane. It's an important part of the challenge facing us with respect to climate, and, as you pointed out, that resource belongs to the American people, and to have it vented or flared or wasted is not only not in the American people's interest

but is contrary to law. If I return to the Interior Department, I'll work across the board to develop solutions to prevent the waste of that resource, both for the benefit of the taxpayer and the benefit of our fight against climate change.

The CHAIRMAN. There are steps that will need to be taken, basically, to make sure that we can get the product to market, and the lack of gathering lines is what is impeding it right now, and they are flaring it because flaring is better than just venting it. So it is going to be all-hands-on-deck on that one.

The 1872 Mining Laws for hard rock mining, do you have any comments on that and the need to upgrade that?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. So——

The CHAIRMAN. It has been quite a while since we have approached this. The last time was 1872.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. I will say, I consider myself extremely fortunate to be present today for your honoring of Sam Fowler's long career here at the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, he does not go back to 1872.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. No, but he——

The CHAIRMAN. But he understands——

Mr. BEAUDREAU. He and I have joked and made observations about this, and so our view is it would be great to bring that law into the 21st century and if we can't, at least the 20th century.

The CHAIRMAN. If you can give me just a quick, because my time is running out, a little bit. I know you were very much involved in offshore wind along the Atlantic Coast. Can you explain to me what we can do and why you think it is such a valuable resource that we should be developing?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Offshore wind, so President Biden, Secretary Haaland have talked about building a clean energy economy. The potential that offshore wind has is three-fold. One, producing 30,000 megawatts of clean energy by 2030. Two, it aligns with the state goals to bring that energy in that's really created the market that's unlocked offshore wind potential. And it means jobs. And so, part of the President's entire program around clean energy is not only to fight climate change but to bring high-paying, union, domestic jobs through the clean energy sector, and offshore wind will be a big part of that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

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

Mr. Beaudreau, I have a couple of questions along the lines of how Senator Manchin started his questioning. Just as a general matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit oil and gas wells in this country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. I think the Administration has been clear that permitting of oil and gas will continue even during the penancy of the Interior Department's review of the BLM's oil and gas programs.

Senator BARRASSO. As a general matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit coal mines in this country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. I think, again, the Administration has been clear that we need to answer the bell in terms of reducing carbon

emissions emanating from public lands, and while we step up to do that the programs will continue.

Senator BARRASSO. As a general matter, should the Federal Government continue to process actions related to coal mines already authorized and permitted in this country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. As a general matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit copper, lithium, and other hard rock mines in this country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. There's no question that critical minerals play a role in advanced technology development as well as renewable energy. Responsible mining is something that I look forward to, if I'm confirmed and joining the Department, helping to oversee. But we do, as everyone on this Committee appreciates, we must be extremely attuned not only to the potential environmental effects, but potential effects on historic and cultural resources.

Senator BARRASSO. General matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit natural gas pipelines in this country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Again, as I discussed with Senator Manchin, we need to look at ways of preventing waste of that resource as well as preventing it from being released into the atmosphere, and if I return to the Interior Department, I will have an open mind about all potential solutions to accomplish those goals.

Senator BARRASSO. As a general matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit oil pipelines in the country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Similar answer, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. General matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit electric transmission lines in the country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes. Transmission and modernization of the grid are critical to achieving President Biden's goals for a clean energy economy.

Senator BARRASSO. General matter, should the Federal Government continue to permit natural gas and nuclear power plants in the country?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Again, the overall climate picture requires bold action. I believe the President has articulated that vision. If I'm confirmed, it'll be first and foremost among my responsibilities to achieve that. And again, I will be open to solutions to get us there.

Senator BARRASSO. I want to visit about grazing. You know, throughout the West there are hundreds of vacant allotments that could be permitted for grazing activities, and this would help ranchers and rural economies to be more resilient when disasters or drought strikes. That is why last week I introduced a bill called the RANCH Act, stands for Resiliency for Ranching and Natural Conservation Health Act. The bill will allow temporary use of vacant grazing allotments during extreme weather events and disasters. Currently the vacant allotments need updated environmental reviews under NEPA. So, if confirmed, would you commit to prioritizing vacant allotments in NEPA evaluations for future livestock grazing?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you for describing your bill. If I'm confirmed, I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and looking into that. I also believe strongly that conservation includes partnerships, especially in the American West, and working with ranching

and farming communities are extremely important to helping step up to meet the conservation crisis. And so, yes, I will work with you on those issues.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

I want to ask about the 30 by 30 initiative. You know, President Biden issued an Executive Order establishing a directive to conserve at least 30 percent of America's land and waters by 2030. This does not define what constitutes conservation, and it is really unclear what percentage of America's lands would be impacted. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, about 12 percent of America's lands are currently permanently protected. So to raise that number from 12 to 30 you would need to keep land off limits to multiple use equal to seven times the size of the State of Wyoming. You are talking about vast amounts of the United States. I am wondering how the 30 by 30 initiative is consistent with multiple-use, private landownership in the country, voluntary conservation efforts. I do not know if you have any thoughts on that?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, and again, I look forward to joining the Administration to advance the 30 by 30 initiative, if I'm confirmed. I think Secretary Haaland has said it best. Conservation, in order to meet the 30 by 30 goals, is about partnerships. It's about inclusivity. It's about working with folks on the ground. And your mention about grazing and ranching and agricultural communities absolutely should be a part of that effort. And so, I think there are real opportunities across the board to achieve those goals by working together.

Senator BARRASSO. Finally, in his first few weeks in office President Biden issued orders banning new oil and natural gas leasing on federal lands and waters. It is estimated that a long-term leasing ban will cost my home State of Wyoming about 33,000 jobs, over \$1 billion in royalties and in taxes which are collected annually on oil, gas, and coal production on federal lands within our borders. This money is a principal source of funding for public education, for roads, for water projects, other essential services. So we need lease sales to resume, and it is not just Wyoming, it is the Rocky Mountain West. How quickly can we get back to the legally required lease sale process?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you for that question. There is no doubt in my mind that the BLM and the federal oil and gas leasing program needs modernization and needs reform in order to address, among other things, the climate crisis and to achieve fair value for taxpayers. I appreciate your points about the uncertainty that pausing leasing may cause, and I look forward when I join the Interior Department, with your consent, to participating in the review of the program and charting the path forward for the program.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Now we have Senator King by WebEx.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to join your congratulations of Sam for his extraordinary service to the Committee over 30 years. That is an amazing record, and I just want to thank him for all that he has done for us.

Mr. Beaudreau, first, there has been some criticism of your nomination because of your associations in your private sector experience in recent years with fossil fuel companies and other commercial entities that may have an interest in the work that comes before the Department of the Interior. Can you answer those questions and address any allegations of conflict of interest or tainting of your views in terms of the issues that will come before the Department?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you for very much for that question, Senator King.

I have been in government service for a long period of time during the Obama Administration. I am accepting of the scrutiny and criticism that comes with holding these roles. I'll admit that I'm a little bewildered by some of the criticism given what I believe was a very strong track record during the Obama Administration on conservation, including things we worked together on in Maine and, for example, the designation of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and my reputation as a regulator, both tough but, I think, fair minded.

In terms of the ethics rules, I've already begun working with the career ethics staff at the Interior Department to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure and obviously I will be mindful at all times about complying with my ethical obligations as I have in the past.

Senator KING. I want to be clear that I do not necessarily hold those concerns, but I wanted to give you an opportunity to address them simply because they will be part of our Committee consideration of your nomination.

One comment, and perhaps you could respond. The National Park Service has been leaderless for four or five years, four years anyway. What kind of priority do you place upon helping the President and the Secretary to find a Director of the National Park Service and making sure that we have consistent and strong leadership in charge of that critically important part of our federal responsibility?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you, Senator. I couldn't agree more with that sentiment. The National Park Service is essential to connecting the American people with our shared natural resources and encouraging a next generation of Americans to be involved in conservation. In order to carry those values forward, I agree with you. I think it's extremely important that the National Park Service have a Director.

Senator KING. I am going to go out on a limb and predict that this summer is going to be the biggest summer ever for the national parks, and we better be ready. As you and I have discussed in our meeting prior to this hearing, we really need to talk about the national parks in terms of the pressure on them. That brings me to the Great American Outdoors Act. The implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act, which involves both the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Restore our Parks Act, maintenance in the parks, is critically important. Here in Congress, we can provide the vision, but your agency has to provide the implementation.

Is this going to be a priority for you when you go into office, and will you commit now to being clear and transparent with this Committee in terms of the steps taken by the Administration to implement the Great American Outdoors Act?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you for that. As I said in my opening statement, I am profoundly appreciative of the work of this Committee and Congress to pass the Great American Outdoors Act and to bring much needed resources into the Park Service and our public lands. We've talked for many, many years about the maintenance backlog and infrastructure crisis facing the national parks and to have Congress step up in such a significant way to address that problem is really amazing. I know everyone has frustrations sometimes about getting stuff done, Congress really got some important work done and, yes, I look forward to working with the Interior Department and this Committee on making sure that we bring maximum value out of each one of those dollars.

Senator KING. And will you commit to remaining in close contact with this Committee on the implementation in a fully transparent way?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes.

Senator KING. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Next, we have Senator Hyde-Smith.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Beaudreau for being here and your willingness to serve. Congratulations on your nomination, and I certainly hope that today's hearing will have the answers that we are seeking of how you would assist the Secretary.

One of the things that I am concerned about from my home State of Mississippi is forestry is just such an important part of Mississippi economy. It is 46,000 jobs and nearly \$2 billion in payroll and contributing more than \$8 billion to the state's sales and manufacturing economy. So we are a wood basket in Mississippi, and we have plenty of that, and it is just very important. But multiple countries and intergovernmental organizations have declared that forest management and biomass play an essential role in an all-in approach to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Mr. Beaudreau, what role can sustainable biomass play in our nation's overall energy strategy, and what is your understanding of how strong forest products markets benefit rural communities such as the ones that we have in Mississippi that really depend on this?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you very much for that question.

I recall during the previous Administration listening very closely to Secretary Vilsack on exactly these issues and his belief in the role that the Forest Service has on that type of resource. And I can tell you, if I'm confirmed and join the Interior Department, that I will be committed to one, an open mind on all of those potential resources, again, to meet, among other things, the climate crisis, and two, be absolutely committed to making the best use of science to inform those decisions.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you for that answer. I want to focus on your experiences as former Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to expand upon the issue of offshore oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico. I know you have been asked about

this, but not everybody has had the chance to ask you the same question. In an interview you gave in 2013 you stated that the Gulf has tremendous resource potential, but it is also one of the most mature fields in the entire world and has a very sophisticated, widespread infrastructure. Given the detrimental impact that pausing offshore oil and gas leasing has for the Gulf Coast and the Gulf States, how do you view the Gulf in terms of American oil and gas production now and in the future?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thanks very much for that question. I do have, you know, based on my previous roles, a very good understanding of the Gulf of Mexico and the offshore oil and gas industry like the entire federal management of oil and gas in those programs, it is appropriate and as Secretary Haaland has articulated, necessary to undertake a review of those programs, how they're implemented, including through the lens of fair return to the taxpayer and climate. I believe that the offshore industry should be at the table for all those discussions as reflected during the roundtable hosted by Secretary Haaland to discuss the review of the oil and gas program. It's important that that industry be at the table because I believe they can offer a lot of solutions to move the ball forward on achieving these goals.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. And when do you think the Administration should lift its freezes on new offshore leases?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. So I'm not in the Administration yet. I haven't been part of the discussions with respect to the review. If I'm confirmed, I'd look forward to joining those discussions and working with the Department and the full range of stakeholders necessary to plot out the appropriate path for the offshore oil and gas programs. And so, I don't have that direct answer to that question of how long the review should be. It should be a thorough review. It should achieve the goals, as articulated by the President as well as the Secretary, and it should be mindful of, you know, uncertainty that is inherent to conducting those reviews. But at the end of the day, the program needs to be modernized, and I look forward to being part of that effort.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Now we have Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to Mr. Beaudreau, congratulations on your nomination.

First of all, like everyone else, let me just recognize Sam as well for 30 years of service to the Committee. We are so fortunate to have your experience and your knowledge, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on the Committee. Thank you for your commitment.

Mr. Beaudreau, we have talked. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. As you well know, in Nevada, 85 percent of the land is owned by the Federal Government, and 60 percent of that is managed by the BLM. So our relationship with the Federal Government, particularly the Department of the Interior, is crucial to how we manage and develop our land in our state and make sure that everybody has an opportunity to thrive in the State of Nevada.

So the first question I have for you—as you well know, we talked about this—the Las Vegas Valley in Clark County is home to near-

ly two million people, and it is growing. The valley is essentially land locked by Interior Department-managed lands, and the BLM is the manager of hundreds of small parcels throughout the metropolitan area there. In order for mundane city management actions to occur, it often requires collaboration with federal land managers. In order to ensure local land management needs are being met and to support our local government facilitating a growing population and economic diversification efforts, the Interior Department must be focused and be a present partner. It will require BLM to prioritize permitting and realty applications. It will require greater alignment between BLM and state and local governments on renewable energy and transmission siting. It will require prioritizing the distribution of funds from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act's special account for regional conservation and environmental enhancement projects, among other priorities. Mr. Beaudreau, can I have your commitment that you will prioritize efficient land management and greater collaboration in Southern Nevada with all of the key stakeholders and leaders there?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you very much. And again, thank you for taking some time to visit with me in advance of the hearing.

I look forward to, with your consent, rejoining the Interior Department. In my previous roles in the Department, I worked very hard and very closely with the BLM on the full range of issues facing Nevada that you describe and, absolutely, I'm committed to continuing that work and would look forward to doing so.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Wonderful.

The other area or component that is important for us in Nevada involves critical mineral development. Outside of a few domestic mines, including our nation's only lithium mine exists in the State of Nevada, critical minerals are produced outside of the country. Our country has a very small critical mineral supply chain industry, and we rely heavily on foreign countries for procurement, processing, and manufacturing of these materials. What do you see as the Interior Department's role in fostering the development of a domestic critical mineral supply chain?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thanks very much.

Critical minerals are, I mean, they're well named, right? It's essential to not only unlocking the renewable energy potential and the future clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland seek to build, it is also essential to driving technological innovation where the United States is a leader and needs to continue to be. So I look forward, if I'm confirmed, to continuing to work on the Interior Department's role in overseeing hard rock mining, including with respect to critical minerals to ensure that those resources would be responsibly developed, but also, especially in an environmentally sensitive way and in a way that is considerate of and avoids impacts to cultural and historic resources.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Great, thank you.

And then, let me touch on one other area: wildfire prevention, suppression, and restoration. We have seen the devastating impact of wildfires in our state. Most of that is rangeland and wildland urban interface areas where the fires have occurred. And key to that prevention, suppression, and restoration is collaboration

amongst the federal agencies, not just with our state and local government leaders but with private ranchers and individuals that can really be good, great partners in not only helping to prevent and suppress but restoring the land after a fire. So if confirmed, would you commit to a greater amount of prevention, suppression, and restoration resources to the rangeland and wildland urban interface areas?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you.

Wildfire, especially in the American West, I mean, we used to talk about wildfire seasons, and even that concept is becoming a difficult one given the expanded and, you know, greater intensity of wildfire across the American West. And so yes, I couldn't agree more that all-hands-on deck, all partnerships need to be brought to bear on meeting that challenge.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. Beaudreau, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Now we have Senator Lankford.

Senator LANKFORD. Chairman, thank you very much.

Mr. Beaudreau, good to see you again. Thanks for our conversation before to be able to go through some issues here. I need to just provide a little bit of clarity here for the public record. Do you believe that on federal lands we should be able to use federal lands to explore for critical minerals, rare earth minerals, and any other mineral that may be there for the public good?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you for that question.

The answer is yes, subject to the environmental and cultural, historic safeguards that we've talked about.

Senator LANKFORD. Right, are those anything different than what has existed in the past? Do you feel like those have not been honored in the recent days?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. So, again, not being in the Department yet, if I'm confirmed, I do think it is essential, as I mentioned in my opening statement, that with respect to, you know, the full range of responsibilities that the Federal Government has and the Interior Department has, I do think we need to do better relative to Indian Country around issues of consultation and respect for tribal sovereignty and self-determination, and that will have a role, again, across all of the Interior Department's responsibilities, including with respect to hard rock mining.

Senator LANKFORD. I would agree on that as well. Several of the tribes have asked, very point blank, is this new Administration going to step in and going to prevent us on tribal lands from being able to explore for energy? You and I have spoken before about the Osage Nation and their Minerals Council and the challenges they have had with DOI since 2014, that the rules were changed, they cannot get access to land records without doing a FOIA request and is dramatically slowed the process for energy development there based on that demand for a FOIA request which was unusual, to say the least, and unique to them. Is that something you would be willing to be able to explore when you get there, why that is happening and how that could be expedited?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, and thank you for raising that issue, and we talked a little bit about it earlier this week in our meeting. I'm

not familiar with it, but, absolutely, I will look into that if I'm confirmed and join the Department.

Senator LANKFORD. That would be great. Thank you.

The McGirt decision in the Supreme Court, obviously, is significant for all tribes, but especially for Five Tribes in Oklahoma, in particular. That particular decision was a criminal decision, is that correct, based on your interpretation of the reading of that law, of the, actually it was passed by the Supreme Court?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, the specific controversy at issue in the McGirt decision had to do with criminal jurisdiction.

Senator LANKFORD. Do you have a sense that McGirt decision from the Supreme Court changed the authorities that the Department of the Interior has in that area based on the decision that the court came down with?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you. So, as you know, the McGirt decision was heralded across the country and especially in Indian Country for representing a powerful acknowledgement by the Supreme Court of the Federal Government's trust and treaty responsibilities. I have not undertaken a, you know, a review of that decision in the context of the Interior Department's authorities but, if confirmed, I look forward to doing so.

Senator LANKFORD. Yes, I look forward to that conversation. Obviously, the Department of the Interior has already reached out and started the process of changing their authorities based on the McGirt decision, and we are trying to explore what does that mean, and where is that coming from, and where is the consultation with the tribes and with the state, and is that still occurring? Tribes will need engagement from the Department of the Interior in this transition. Is this something the Department of the Interior would continue to be able to engage with tribes as they ask questions, as they try to be able to deal with the decisions on the McGirt decision as well?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Absolutely, that is, as Secretary Haaland has said very clearly, that is one of this Administration's top priorities.

Senator LANKFORD. Mr. Beaudreau, we have 2.6 million miles of pipeline in the ground right now across the country, and some people think pipelines are new or rare. We have 2.6 million miles of pipeline across the country. Do you think existing pipeline owners should be able to have access to the right of way to be able to inspect, to be able to repair, to be able to do what they need to on that existing pipeline in the ground?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you.

As a general matter, pipeline operations have responsibilities for the maintenance and oversight of pipelines in order to ensure they're safely operated and, among other things, controlling potential fugitive emissions. Each circumstance, obviously, is unique; it needs to be considered on its own merits, but, yes, the maintenance of pipelines for safety and environmental purposes is important.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I will submit one more question for the record dealing with the Endangered Species that will be important to all of us as well, but thank you for your testimony.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Beaudreau, welcome, it is good to see you before the Committee again. I, too, want to acknowledge Sam Fowler a little. There he is back there. Sam, 30 years, you have not only been advising me, but you have been advising other Murkowskis, and I think Mr. Beaudreau probably has had the benefit of your guidance and wisdom as well. So thank you for your years of dedication.

So a couple of things, and I do appreciate our conversation on the phone. It is important that we get updated here.

We have used the expression in Alaska that the Department of the Interior is our landlord. Under the Trump Administration, I really felt like the Federal Government went from landlord status to more of a partner status. Right now, I am not feeling that same partner status. I am starting to feel more like a tenant to the Department of the Interior's landlord. And so, I want to get back to that partnership, and I think that you can be one that can help us do that. You have had experience in Alaska. You know and understand the value of development of our public lands recognizing the very special nature of them, but also the great contribution that these resources can provide to us all.

So I am hoping that as you move forward, I am assuming you will make it through this process and become confirmed, but my hope is that you will see that some of the very directed initiatives that have, kind of, come out of the Administration in the very early days, these Executive orders, seven of them, were directly targeted toward Alaska, called us out. Folks back home are looking at this as a significant threat to our responsible resource development in the state.

I guess I would just like for you to state on the record what will your approach be to responsible oil, gas, and mineral resource development on public lands, particularly in Alaska and then, more specific, if you could detail for me your understanding as to the impact on a state like Alaska when you have a pause or a halt for two years on permitting, drilling, or development of existing leases and here the code to you is Willow, recognizing and understanding what that means to delay a project like Willow that has been decades in the process through multiple Administrations beginning with the Obama Administration, but again, allowing for a couple thousand construction jobs, considerable resources, not only to the State of Alaska but to the Federal Treasury and to those contributions. So it is a wide-ranging question, but I would like your response here.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you very much, Senator Murkowski, and thank you for welcoming me back to the Committee.

We've worked together a lot over the years, including during the Obama Administration, and fundamental to that working relationship between the Department, the State of Alaska and the Department, and the Alaskan delegation has been, in my view, transparency, honesty, and good communication. I will say some of the most harrowing experiences of my career have been sitting in your office and talking about issues that I know we had a difference of opinion on. I managed to come out of each of those meetings with all of my limbs which I was thankful for, but I'm also thankful for

a number of times, including in the Obama Administration, when we were able to work together and come up with solutions that were good for the state, good for the United States, and good for the Interior Department, and it was one of my proudest moments to come to your office and let you know that the President and Secretary Jewell were restoring the name of Denali in advance of President Obama's trip to the state.

So that's a long way of saying I have a deep appreciation for how important energy development is for the state, and I also have a deep appreciation for how important close work with the state, state officials, local communities, Alaska Natives, and this delegation represented on the Committee is. I'm pleased to say that I've started having these conversations again with a host of folks, including the Alaska Federation of Natives, and I look forward to taking those relationships and conversations forward.

Senator MURKOWSKI. As you point out, we have a lot to do. We are certainly still trying to provide for a level of environmental justice, if you will, to the good people of King Cove after these many years trying to get a simple road to be able to access a lifesaving runway over in Cold Bay. We need you to be working with us on these PLOs, the withdrawal that, again, I think, was not only extraordinarily unfortunate and short-sighted when that decision was made just a couple months ago. But again, the impact to our Alaska Native veterans who have been waiting decades now to be able to select their Native allotments and who are now facing yet even more delay due to the actions of the Administration with regards to these withdrawals. So we have a lot of work to do to help a lot of people, and I am looking forward to moving quickly to resolve some of these long-standing issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

And now, Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Beaudreau, welcome.

As you know, Montana is home to hundreds of wildlife species, several of which are either endangered or threatened. Unfortunately, the Endangered Species program is broken. If you look at the data, less than four percent of species listed have ever recovered. Due to litigation, in fact, like the 2015 Cottonwood case and the recent Grizzly Bear lawsuit, our limited resources are not always going to species that need it most. And more often than not, landowners view ESA decisions as punitive, heavy-handed which can actually hinder conservation efforts. One sage Montanan said the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is like a 40-year-old ranch pickup. It once served a useful purpose, but it is in bad need of repair. The Endangered Species program is broken, and what areas would you prioritize for improving, if you are confirmed?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much.

The Endangered Species Act has been a really powerful tool for wildlife and habitat conservation. And so, I believe, overall, the Endangered Species Act has been a tremendous success story. It has recovered, as you know, species like the Bald Eagle and has been very effective in protecting habitat. In terms of implementation of the Endangered Species Act going forward, if I'm confirmed, I bring

the same principles to bear that I always have while at the Interior Department, and that is to be grounded in the science first and foremost and to work closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as state wildlife agencies to ensure that species recover, are resilient, and can be success stories under the ESA.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Beaudreau, you brought up a good point around working with the states, and I think about Montanans, and nobody cares more about protecting Montana wildlife than Montanans, and we have seen that in the unprecedented investment in sage grouse conservation throughout the State of Montana. However, I am worried that if we do not adequately consider the state efforts in listing decisions and allow time to determine effectiveness, we might discourage future conservation and have an unintended consequence. Do you believe that states should be afforded time to play out, and should these efforts and plans be considered in listing decisions?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much.

As, you know, during the Obama Administration we worked under Secretary Jewell's leadership, extremely hard with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and, especially, the states to develop plans for sage grouse and sage grouse habitat conservation. The states are critical to continuing with the conservation efforts for the benefit of the sage grouse, and so, to answer your question, absolutely, the states and state wildlife plans are essential to sage grouse conservation. It's an unlisted species.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Beaudreau.

Last month, the Fish and Wildlife Service determined that two, two grizzly bear populations in Montana had biologically recovered. Tragically, just a few weeks ago, we lost another Montanan to a grizzly bear mauling, just north of West Yellowstone. If confirmed, when wildlife populations or the population segments do meet the recovery criteria, would you support delisting the species and returning it to state management?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much.

I have to return to those fundamental principles about being guided by the science, working closely with the Service, and understanding what the outlook is, both in terms of recovery and management and resiliency for the species. And so, I can commit to you that if confirmed and I join the Department, I will do all of that, you know, including with respect to the grizzly.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Beaudreau.

Another topic I want to talk about is the net zero carbon emissions the Biden Administration has set by 2050, that goal. Healthy forests, we believe out in Montana, are a fantastic way to store carbon, but Montana is one of seven states with forests that actually emit more carbon than they are storing. This is largely due to dying tree stands and massive reduction in wood products coming out of Montana. When I was a kid growing up there, we had 30 active sawmills. Today we are down to seven. The biggest issue has been not being able to get access to timber on public lands. Our carbon sequestration was actually the highest in the 1990s when timber harvests were much higher.

My question, Mr. Beaudreau, is do you believe that increasing the scale of forest management should be a component of reducing our carbon emissions?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you very much.

It is my view that there are forest management practices grounded in science that can be very effective in not only providing for sustained yield from timber on public lands but also improving the quality of forests as carbon sinks. This will be a major priority. It already is for the Interior Department, and, if confirmed, I look forward to becoming involved in those issues again.

Senator DAINES. Last, before I comment, I'll be done, Mr. Chairman.

I am working to reintroduce a very bipartisan forestry bill with Senator Feinstein like we talked about on the call earlier this week. It would seek to really take that issue head on as California has faced catastrophic wildfires, as many of us across the West have, including my colleague to my left from Alaska, Senator Murkowski. Would you commit to work with us to help get a critical bill like that across the finish line?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, if confirmed, I would look forward to reviewing that legislation and as the Interior Department is very good at doing, providing any input and our thoughts on that legislation.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Beaudreau.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Cassidy.

Senator CASSIDY. Yes, sir. Thank you.

I thank you, sir and thank you for your answers. Sometimes these nominees come in so coached you end up with nothing to think about except that they do not know how to answer a question. So I thank you for your, kind of, thoughtful responses. And I also thank you because it is clear that you are using science to, kind of, guide your decisions. I cannot help but note that when the President revoked the cross-border permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, an Obama Administration State Department report said, revoking such a permit would actually increase global greenhouse gas emissions. And I just say that, to, kind of, in context.

We spoke, you have spoken already of the halt to the new lease scene on the Outer Continental Shelf. I am from Louisiana. Despite the EIA science saying that in 2019 methane emissions in federal waters accounted for roughly 2.5 percent of nationwide emissions while the Gulf accounted for 17 percent of nationwide production, and I am not quite sure the rationale of why they shut down the new leasing. Any thoughts about that?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much.

You know, obviously, I'm not at the Interior Department yet and haven't been part of the review or internal discussions about how the review is proceeding. As I've spoken about before though, I think, the federal oil and gas programs, as administered by the Interior Department, ought to undergo a periodic review in order to understand—

Senator CASSIDY. Now, let me ask, let me ask, sir, because, again, you have been very straightforward, and I understand you are not in a position, and, by the way, I appreciate your dad

worked on that pipeline. A lot of people from Louisiana did as well, and it just provides great jobs. You know that. My concern is the fact that they ignore the science on the Keystone XL pipeline that suggests that it is a politically motivated halt and that it is not just a temporary halt, but it evolves into something which will be permanent despite the science now saying that the ratio of emissions to the amount of production is the lowest in the world, if not the lowest, one of the lowest in the world.

I ask you, are you aware, and I know you are, but this is for the record, that when you inject uncertainty into a leasing process that not just those who lease, but all the oil fields service industries, it stills investment, and those jobs that would normally be created begin to be shed because of the uncertainty. Is there any way that those involved in development of the Outer Continental Shelf should not receive this pause as creating uncertainty?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you.

Again, not being at the Department I haven't been part of these conversations, but I have seen what Secretary Haaland, for example, has said about the review, and, during the roundtable that the Secretary convened, I think, what's very clear about the purpose of the review and the desire to have everybody at the table as part of it, including the offshore industry. And so, I appreciate very much your question. I appreciate very much the points about uncertainty, but I also have faith in the Secretary's statements about the purpose of the review, the intent of the review, and the desire to have it take into account all perspectives, including the regulated communities.

Senator CASSIDY. Let me ask you, again, just for the record. We have had testimony from others on this Committee before that developing, that producing oil and gas in the United States for domestic consumption has a lower greenhouse gas profile than if we import from elsewhere, if only because of the cost, the emissions profile of the transportation vessels which bring it here that is ignoring the ecologic impact of some countries having poor regulatory standards than we. Would you agree with that assessment?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much.

I agree that as part of the review and, again, I'm not part of the review yet, but with the Committee's consent, and, if I'm confirmed and become part of it, I agree that the entire set of information, including what you've described needs to be considered in plotting the path forward for the Interior Department's oil and gas programs, including with respect to offshore.

Senator CASSIDY. And so, one more question, but I am out of time. I yield, sir, and I thank you for your commitment to serve our country.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HIRONO.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Beaudreau, I ask every nominee on all of the committees I sit on the following two preliminary questions.

The first question, 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?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. No.

Senator HIRONO. Second question, have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. No.

Senator HIRONO. When I spoke with Secretary Haaland ahead of her confirmation hearing, we discussed the unique importance of Hawaii's indigenous Native Hawaiian community, and I look forward to working with you and the rest of the Department as you work to support this community. So of course I would invite you to come to Hawaii so that you can meet with some of our Native Hawaiian leaders and come to an understanding of the uniqueness of the indigenous people of Hawaii.

The other thing—

Mr. BEAUDREAU. I absolutely accept that invitation.

Senator HIRONO. Great.

[Laughter.]

Senator HIRONO. What is not to like about coming to Hawaii?

The United States enjoys unique and mutually beneficial relationships with the independent nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. These nations are governed by compacts of, the relations as you say, are governed by compacts of free association, which promote U.S. national security interests while bolstering our alliances and aid and the development of these nations. Economic assistance provisions of the compacts, which are administered by the Department of the Interior, are set to expire in 2023 and 2024. Clearly these compacts are vital to our national interest, and I would like our country to do more to support these nations.

So, if confirmed, will the Department provide my office and the Committee with regular updates on compact negotiations, especially with the view of what more we can be doing to support these nations?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you very much for that question.

Among the most important responsibilities that the Interior Department and the Secretary have are with respect to the U.S. territories and the freely associated states subject to those compacts. And so, absolutely, I believe it is extremely important to make sure that those relationships are supported, healthy, and that the compacts are fully well negotiated and work for the communities who, among other things, and we'll have these conversations as well, are, you know, on the front lines of issues like climate change and the potential for inundation. And so, we have, Senator, a lot of work to do, and I look forward to that.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, because they do face some unique challenges, and it took me years to enable the COFA citizens to become eligible for Medicaid coverage—and that is not within your “ko’ehana,” as we say in Hawaiian—but these are the kinds of ways that we can be helpful to our COFA citizen friends.

I think I have more time. So another issue that I would like to highlight is the importance of protecting Hawaii's native species. As this month is national Native Plant Month, it is important to note how Hawaii's native species, like the Ohi'a, are under continual threat. As the Department works to implement President Biden's conservation initiatives, like protecting 30 percent of land

and water by 2030, outreach to local communities is crucial to ensure that efforts can be successfully implemented on the ground. I would like to be able to count on your Department to work with me and the stakeholders in Hawaii on advancing efforts to protect our native and endangered species, because we have more endangered species than any other state. We also have, well, let us just say that we want to have your assistance in protecting our native and endangered species.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you, Senator.

If confirmed, absolutely and I do have an appreciation for the vulnerability of Hawaii's native species to a host of threats including invasive species. And so, yes, and we also have a lot of work to do together on those issues.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you for understanding the nature of our fauna, because we are also the invasive species capital of our country.

I think I have a little bit of time left. The U.S. Geological Survey's monitoring of volcanoes is very important to Hawaii. The Lava Lake at Kilauea has been filling up over the past couple of months, and scientists are closely watching Mauna Loa. USGS is also in the process of building a new volcano observatory in Hawaii, as the old one was destroyed by the 2018 Kilauea eruption. I appreciate that the Department has been providing me with regular updates on the rebuilding of the observatory in Hawaii and ask that USGS continue to provide these updates.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you. I'd look forward to working with USGS on exactly that. Their seismology and volcanology programs are, among other things, just really cool.

Senator BARRASSO [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Hirono.

Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Beaudreau, the Antiquities Act states regarding national monuments that, "the limits of the parcel should be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected." Do you believe that the national monuments designated by President Obama, including the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, adhered to that limitation?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes.

Senator LEE. Now, to be clear, every time the Antiquities Act is used to designate a monument, every acre of that monument becomes restricted, significantly restricted in its use. That means constituents in my state are restricted from certain types of use on every acre. So when designating the Bears Ears National Monument, were the objects to be protected identified on each and every one of the 1.35 million acres, an area nearly as large as the State of Delaware?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you very much.

As reflected in the proclamation by President Obama, there is very, sort of, thorough description of the basis for the designation and the objects that were covered by the designation. Obviously, as with all monuments, part of the implementation of the management of the monument is the development of the management plan

and participation in the governance and, you know, as I think you're aware, Senator, part of the innovations around the Bears Ears Monument were to provide for a very inclusive mechanism for participation in the management of the monument for exactly those reasons.

Senator LEE. But just to be clear, there was no inventory doing what I just described, identifying the objects to be protected in every one of the 1.35 million acres.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. So, respectfully, there is a huge body of evidence supporting the monument designation, including the resources within the monument to be protected.

Senator LEE. Right. I would note here that there is a significant difference between conclusory assertions and specifications, specifications of the sort required by the Antiquities Act were required or Presidents are required to make sure that monuments designated under that Act are confined to the smallest area compatible.

For the record, do you acknowledge that you will uphold the fact that it is, in fact, the policy of the United States that public lands be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic resources for domestic sources of minerals, food and timber, and fiber from the public lands, including the implementation of the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, as it pertains to public lands?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you for that question, and, yes, if I'm confirmed and once again, you know, work with public land managers, including those at the Bureau of Land Management, we will work consistent with the law on multiple-use and sustained yield.

Senator LEE. Okay, thank you.

Do you believe that public lands, federal public lands should be managed according to the multiple-use principles that allow for activities like grazing, mining, and energy extraction?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, consistent with the broad mandate under FLPMA, you know, the Bureau of Land Management, in my view and if I'm confirmed, will continue operating under the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield.

Senator LEE. Do you believe President Biden's directive to halt oil and gas leasing is compatible with that statute?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. And again, I'm not in the Administration yet, but my understanding from the Executive Order is to pause oil and gas new leasing in order to allow for a broad review of the federal oil and gas leasing program which Secretary Haaland has initiated and made clear is intended to be an inclusive, comprehensive process for the review of that program and if confirmed, I'd—

Senator LEE.—As it is written in federal regulations, implementing them do, in fact, require regular leases to be done. I am not aware of anything in the applicable legislation and regulatory framework that allows those simply to be suspended.

But in the brief time I have left, I want to point out, livestock producers in the West are fighting for space on the range every day. In my state we are talking about approximately 5,700 wild horses and burros, while the appropriate management level calls for there to be only 1,900. It is about three times the acceptable

limit, the acceptable amount. So tell me how will you work to preserve the ability of producers to be able to operate and reduce horse and burro populations on the range?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thanks very much for that question.

I'm looking forward to becoming involved in a host of issues, again, if I return to the Interior Department. I can't say wild horse and burros is my favorite issue. I appreciate how challenging it is and, yes, absolutely, Senator, I look forward to continuing to work with everybody, including you, on figuring out solutions because it is a massive challenge for the Department and BLM.

Senator LEE. I appreciate that commitment, sir, and I would point out here, I understand regardless whether it is your favorite issue or regardless of whether it is an issue that gets a lot of attention from a lot of people. In many of the communities I represent, this is everything to them, and this could mean the difference between their survival or their non-survival. This can mean the difference between whether they are able to make a living or not. So we are at the mercy, especially in federal public land states like mine, where the Federal Government owns 67 percent of the land, we are at your mercy. So I appreciate your commitment to this and hope you will make it a priority. Thank you.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you, Senator.

And please, I, by no means, meant to minimize the issue. I just was remarking on how difficult it is. And so, and so thank you for the question.

Senator LEE. Thank you. I appreciate that.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator Hickenlooper, are you there? It is that little button, John, over on the left that says, unmute. He must not, we must have lost him.

[Laughter.]

Senator HICKENLOOPER. I am here.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, there. I knew it. I knew it. Thanks.

Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. My phone is going off.

The CHAIRMAN. He is the only scientist we have in the whole Senate. Sometimes it gets challenging.

[Laughter.]

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you for the opportunity to ask Mr. Beaudreau a question. I can really just ask one question. I was so impressed the last couple years when Sally Jewell was the Secretary of the Interior, during the Obama Administration. I was the Governor of Colorado. But you were able to bring all the Republican and Democratic Governors together. You were able to help find ways to bring together ranchers and the oil and gas industry and the environmental community and the outdoor recreationists. I mean, things like the sage grouse plan were monumental efforts of collaborative results where things got done.

What is the magic? How do you do that? And do you think you can do that now?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thank you very much, Senator.

I think, in part, it's, and we've talked about this a little bit, and it's part of what I appreciate about this Committee, in particular.

I think when you go out West there's, obviously, you know, there's politics and there's, you know, noise, but at the end of the day, especially among the Western Governors, because of the commonality of the challenges and issues, there's actually a lot more collaboration and work that gets done. And your leadership when you were Governor of Colorado was key to all of that. And while, you know, like any family we have our differences and quarrels along the way, again, part of what I've always appreciated about this Committee is there is that, sort of, Western spirit of working together, and at the end of the day I think that's the key.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. And that is—I have more time, and I realize everybody else has more questions, so I will yield my time back, but I think that is one of the key questions in looking at this position. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

And now we have Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much. First of all, Mr. Beaudreau, thank you for taking the time to speak with me, and we had a really good discussion. As I pointed out, I am one of the Western states where the Federal Government owns two-thirds of us, and it is a struggle, as always. And so, I appreciate your view of the importance of collaborating with the Governors, with the constituents in the state, as you manage the state.

I supported you in your nomination for Assistant Secretary in 2014. I was not disappointed, and I will be supporting your nomination again. I think you are the right guy for the job. And what I really appreciate is the collaboration and the willingness to listen to us when it comes to decision time before you actually make the decision. So thank you for your willingness to serve. Look forward to working with you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Now we have Senator Hoeven.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

Mr. Beaudreau, thanks for visiting the other day, I appreciate your time and, of course, for being here today. I am concerned about the Administration's moratorium on oil and gas leasing on federal lands. Isn't there a value in resuming scheduled lease sales while Interior conducts its review so that we can fully realize the resulting job creation and revenue benefits? And as you know, you know, we are talking many, many, many millions of dollars in revenue, to the Federal Government, to the states, to the counties.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks for that question.

Obviously, I'm not part of the Department yet and haven't been involved in those conversations. If I join the Department, with your consent, I do look forward to participating in the review. I think, you know, part of the idea is to ensure that leasing has the benefit of input into that review. You know, I've heard the Secretary talk about, you know, oil and gas remaining part of the United States energy mix for the foreseeable future, and I think part of the idea with the review, as I understand it, is to make sure that one, we're doing our best on a host of issues, including fair return to the taxpayer and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but two, ensuring

that the program benefits from all of the input that's coming through the review.

Senator HOEVEN. Will you come out to our state and see the kind of energy development we are doing on federal lands so we can show you that we can do it well and with good environmental stewardship?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, I'd commit to that, sir.

Senator HOEVEN. Will you commit, in regard to the Dakota Access Pipeline, if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the Department reviews the EIS objectively and in a prompt manner?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Thanks very much for the question. Obviously, you know, the permitting decision rests with the Army Corps in that case, but because of the Interior Department's, sort of, unique position and role relative to Indian Country, I know they'll be a lot of communication with the Department, and I look forward to ensuring that all of those views are fairly communicated into the permitting process before the Army Corps.

Senator HOEVEN. In our Theodore Roosevelt National Park we are doing substantial maintenance including to the scenic loop which we have had great cooperation from both the Departments of Transportation and Interior, and that work is now in process. Will you commit to work with us to get that done expeditiously?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, I think—and we spoke a little bit about this in our conversation this week. I think part of what is really exciting about the American Great Outdoor Act is, you know, these opportunities to invest in the National Park system, and I do look forward to working with you and talking about the needs of Teddy Roosevelt.

Senator HOEVEN. The Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply Project is one that we have worked very hard to get approved and so forth and vitally important for water in the eastern part of the state, River Valley—Grand Forks, that area, which is growing rapidly. Will you work with my office and our state to ensure that these projects are adequately funded by the Bureau of Reclamation, consistent with federal responsibilities under the Dakota Water Resource Act?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thanks very much for the question. If confirmed, absolutely look forward to ensuring that vital water infrastructure is, you know, provided for.

Senator HOEVEN. In regard to Indian affairs, five tribes are located either fully or partially within North Dakota, and, you know, I served as Chairman of the Indian Affairs Commission, and I guess, just, I would say, want to make sure that you are willing to work with us on issues that the tribes face and making sure that we uphold our trust and treaty responsibilities to the tribes, and I'd just like you to address that and your commitment to doing that.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, and I'm quite sure Secretary Haaland will have the highest expectations of all of us to do exactly that.

Senator HOEVEN. Again, I want to thank you for visiting the other day, taking significant time to do that and for being here today. I appreciate it.

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Marshall.

Senator MARSHALL. Thank you, Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Beaudreau.

I think I want to start by talking about 30/30, and of course, I wish I had more details, but I just want to make sure that we are on the same page. Do you recognize that private property is protected by the Constitution and is really a foundation of every right we have, and as we put that into context here, I am just very concerned about private property being seized or being taken out of production. I wish you could tell me what 30/30 means and the direction that you would take the Department if given the opportunity, but I think the real question, that I think you could answer, is the economic impact of taking productive farm or grazing land out of production. So Kansas is only about 3 percent of the land is in parks, so to speak, the other 97 percent is in private hands and production. What do you think the economic impact would be of taking 30 percent of the farmland out of production to rural America and to this nation?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you very much.

Obviously, I'm not part of the Administration yet but, if confirmed, look forward to becoming involved in the 30 by 30 conservation initiative. My understanding, and I think Secretary Haaland has been very clear, that 30 by 30 is meant to be an inclusive approach to comprehensive conservation which includes where, you know, you have willing private parties' participation from private landowners in conservation. We've seen great examples of that, you know, earlier, you know, speaking with Senator King about the Katakhdin Woods and Waters National Monument. That was a donation by the Quimby family to the Federal Government to establish a national monument for the purpose of conservation. That was voluntary. That is, you know, private landowner thinking through what she thought was best for that land.

And so, I fully respect private property and the rights of landowners over their private property, and where a landowner wants to be, use that land for conservation, I think there should be avenues by which to do that.

Senator MARSHALL. Certainly I am in favor of voluntary conservation, too, but I just want you to hopefully acknowledge the economic impact of even of what you described. I am not sure what that land was in, but even permanent easements of land that was being used for cattle grazing or was being used for agriculture, turning it into a voluntary easement certainly hurts the local economy, and the idea of taking 30 percent of Kansas farmland and pasture land out of production would literally ruin the Kansas economy.

Let us move on to invasive species and endangered species. I think we can talk about them in the same context and just, kind of, get your philosophy. I think of these challenges together and former member of the Wildlife and Parks Board there in Kansas. I have seen these two interact constantly, and I think the lesser prairie chicken is a great example that the successes of bringing that species back, including burning pasture which would get rid of invasive species, maybe cattle grazing, helping to manage the invasive species, but the greatest success I have seen is private landowners working in conjunction with the government as op-

posed to all the government grant projects have been miserable failures.

How do you feel the interaction should be between the private property owners and the government in managing invasive species and endangered species?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, thank you so much for that question. I am a big believer in incentivizing conservation on private lands for the benefit of species and their habitat. And I think there are a number of examples of that, and especially in states like Kansas where you don't have a lot of public lands, it's absolutely essential to wildlife conservation and agree wholeheartedly with your sentiments on that point.

Senator MARSHALL. Thank you so much. I yield back, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I have one final question, and then I know Senator Barrasso has a couple he wants to go over very quickly.

In a letter to the Committee endorsing your nomination, former Secretary Jewell credits you with standing up wind development along the Atlantic seaboard, working to harness the nation's renewable energy. I think increasing deployment of renewables on fairly managed lands and waters really makes all the sense in the world to me. Renewables have come a long way, but much work needs to be done. The permitting process is still so extremely slow.

So my question would be, what actions do you think are needed to increase deployment of renewables on federal lands and waters and, my second follow-up would be, what role can geothermal energy play in our energy future, and what more can be done on public lands to expand that?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yes, I think those are tremendous questions and just taking offshore wind for example. I know from my previous work the permitting process, federal permitting process, is a complex one. There are a host of agencies with relevant authorities and permitting authority in order to get, you know, a project like that developed, and then you also include, you know, the near shore and onshore components with states. And so, my philosophy on that is there has to be strong leadership to really drive coordination through the permitting process and ensure that all the regulatory requirements and legal requirements are strictly adhered to in the interest of the defensibility of those permits. But it takes an enormous amount of leadership, effort, and coordination to make sure that those projects are permitted in a timely way and properly.

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to need your help. We are diving into that pretty rapidly to find out why, for many, it takes so long, and looking at all the leases we have and how we can accelerate that, especially if we are going to maintain our energy independence, but also be able to reduce the methane and do so much with the pipelines and everything else we can do, but a lot of this is very instrumental.

But I appreciate it. We will get into it further. We have to get you confirmed first, and we will get that done as quickly as possible.

With that, I turn to Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thanks so much, Mr. Chair. Just one final question, just like you had a final question.

Last year, the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law. The law directs the Secretary of the Interior to address the maintenance backlogs at our national parks, at our wildlife refuges, our national forests, and at the Bureau of Indian Education. Well, these maintenance backlog projects are, you know, funded by federal energy revenues. So if the Department ends or restricts leasing and production on oil and gas and coal on federal lands, I think it is going to greatly impact these revenues, and I wondered how you propose to alternatively fund these many important and necessary projects?

Mr. BEAUDREAU. Yeah, thank you for the question. I think, you know, again, in the context of the review and I'm not there yet. I look forward to becoming involved in the review. I've not heard an indication from the Administration or Department to, you know, end leasing, but rather to conduct a review of the federal program. And so, I'm excited about, as we've talked about, I'm excited about Congress' investment in public lands and addressing the maintenance backlog for the National Park Service, and I look forward to working, with your consent, working with the Department to implement that.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just say, Mr. Beaudreau, it was great having you today. I think it was a great hearing that we had, a lot of activity, a lot of questions. You did very well. And I want to thank your family for attending and welcome them back anytime. We appreciate all the responsiveness to our questions, and I think that we had a very good meeting.

Members are going to have until 6:00 p.m. this evening to submit additional questions for the record.

The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m. the committee adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 April 29, 2021 Hearing: *The Nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior*
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Questions from Ranking Member John Barrasso

Question 1: I respectfully ask that you respond to the following questions in their entirety.

- a. **Are you aware of any evidence that banning new oil, natural gas, or coal leasing on federal lands will reduce the total production of oil, natural gas, or coal globally? If so, please provide that evidence to the committee.**

Response: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. As I said at my hearing, the oil and gas leasing program needs reform and modernization in order to address the climate crisis and to achieve a fair return to the public, two considerations referenced by the President in Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. My understanding is that existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. I understand that climate change is a global crisis that requires actions by all nations, including our own. I am aware that the President has re-engaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

- b. **Are you aware of any evidence that banning new oil, natural gas, or coal leasing on federal lands will reduce the total consumption of oil, natural gas, or coal globally? If so, please provide that evidence to the committee.**

Response: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. My response to this question is similar to my response to the previous question. The President's Executive Order 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new leases, pending completion of the review of the program. Existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. While I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review, I am aware that the President has reengaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

- c. **Are you aware of any evidence that banning new oil, natural gas or coal leasing on federal lands will reduce total greenhouse gas emissions globally? If so, please provide that evidence to the committee.**

Response: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. My response to this question is similar to my response to the previous questions. The President's Executive Order 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new leases, pending completion of the review of the program. Existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. I understand that climate change is a global crisis that requires actions by all nations, including our own. While I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review, I am aware that the President has reengaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

Question 2: Many Tribal Nations rely on energy development, including oil, natural gas, and coal production, to fund their governments and provide services to tribal members. Many tribal members and families rely on oil and natural gas production as a source of income. I respectfully ask that my questions be answered in their entirety.

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- a. Do you support the efforts of Indian tribes and individual tribal members to develop and produce oil, natural gas, and coal resources on land held in trust for the benefit of the tribes or tribal members?**

Response: Honoring the nation's trust and treaty obligations to Tribes is a priority for Secretary Haaland and it is for me, too. If I am confirmed I would take my role and the Department's role with regard to economic development and all other activities on Tribal lands seriously. As I said at the hearing, the government's trust obligation covers the full range of responsibilities, and includes respecting Tribal sovereignty and honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship with tribes, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and recognizing that self-determination is the path to strengthening Tribal communities. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- b. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members, seeking to develop and produce oil, natural gas, and coal resources on trust lands?**

Response: I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- c. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members, seeking to bring oil and natural gas from trust lands to market through the most cost effective means, such as oil and natural gas pipelines?**

Response: Again, I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- d. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members to identify and secure the means to bring coal resources from trust lands to market, including (but not limited to) to international markets?**

Response: As I said in response to the previous question, I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and Robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

Question 3: Multiple laws authorize the development of various renewable resources on federal lands and waters. Many federal lands and waters are open for the development of renewable energy resources. Some examples of renewable energy resources developed on onshore federal lands include geothermal, wind, solar, hydro, and biomass. Offshore, DOI has issued leases for wind development in Atlantic waters. Development of federal lands for renewable energy projects can contribute to clean energy goals and generate revenues. Based on agency studies, renewable energy projects also create impacts to individual species, populations and their

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habitat and creates visual impacts over vast landscapes. Over the long term, renewable energy projects also restrict the use of those federal lands for other activities. I respectfully ask that the following questions be answered in their entirety.

a. How would you reconcile competing uses and priorities relating to renewable energy development on federal lands and waters?

Response: If confirmed, I will work to promote smart planning and to strike the right balance so that we can increase the amount of renewable energy generated on public lands and waters.

b. Should the government offer incentives to develop renewable energy on federal lands and waters, or defer to the private sector to utilize existing approaches to such development?

Response: Among other things, President Biden has made clear his intention to address the climate crisis, and the Department's renewable energy programs are a significant component of the Administration's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create good-paying union jobs, and build a strong, clean-energy economy. If I am confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and with Congress to strike the right balance going forward, including when it comes to developing renewable energy on federal lands and waters.

c. Do you support sharing revenues that are generated by the leasing and development of renewable energy on federal land and waters with affected states?

Response: That is an interesting question and, if confirmed, I look forward to hearing the views of Congress, states and other stakeholders.

d. Does the current fee structure for renewable energy projects on federal lands provide an equitable return for long-term singular use of those lands?

Response: If confirmed, I will study this issue and look forward to hearing the views of Congress, states, and other stakeholders.

Question 4: The outlook for coal production has changed significantly over the last decade. Because AML programs directly depend on coal production, any measure that decreases coal production will decrease revenues into the AML program. Is it important to protect coal production in order to continue AML programs across the country? If not, how will you propose to compensate AML programs and safeguard the communities, Indian reservations, and jobs created by reclamation activities?

Response: As I said at my confirmation hearing, the AML program is a success story. While I am not currently part of the Administration, I am aware that President Biden has supported AML activities through the American Jobs Plan. I am also in agreement with Secretary Haaland who has supported a long-term reauthorization of the program. If I am confirmed I will work hard to implement the administration's policies and to ensure that these communities realize the environmental safeguards and job opportunities that are a part of that plan.

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Question 5: Please elaborate on your views on hydroelectric power.

Response: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy. Hydropower operations should support healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them.

Question 6: BOR provides critical assistance, both financial and technical, to water districts and users through water contracts, and also provides opportunities for assistance to agencies to promote access to water, recreation, and water conservation efforts. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring BOR assistance continues to be available to nonfederal partners?

Response: The drought situation is dire in many of our western states. I agree with Secretary Haaland that consensus-based solutions work best and, if confirmed, I will do all that I can to support such a framework and the Department and Bureau of Reclamation's efforts.

Question 7: The federal land systems administered by DOI agencies are managed under different statutory frameworks each with a distinct emphasis. BLM manages land for multiple use and sustained yield of resources. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) manages land to conserve plants and animals. The National Park Service (NPS) manages land to preserve resources and provide for their enjoyment by the public. Congress, the President, and the Secretary of the Interior (among others) have authority to make certain land designations.

a. Under your leadership, how would DOI work with states, localities, and tribes to manage federal lands? For example, how would DOI use authorities which allow nonfederal partners to conduct resource management work on federal lands?

Response: My approach to decision-making throughout my career has been based on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, Tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach, if I am confirmed. I also believe that partnerships with nonfederal partners are important to accomplishing the Department's mission. I would make efforts like this a priority.

b. Do you support one-size-fits-all requirements and regulations, or do you believe DOI should strive to meet the varying local needs of States, counties, cities, and towns?

Response: Regulatory processes should be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I also believe that it is important to be transparent and to work with stakeholders, including states, Tribes, and local governments in developing and implementing regulation, and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

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Question 8: The BLM has a multiple use mission – as set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 – to manage public land resources for a variety of uses, such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvest.

- a. Many BLM lands are neighbors to state and local lands. What role should state and local governments play in defining the appropriate multiple use and sustained yield standard within their jurisdictional boundaries?

Response: As I have said, input from and communication with state and local communities, Tribes and the public are essential to informing the Department’s land management decisions planning process.

- b. What role should the public and nongovernmental entities play in influencing the appropriate multiple use and sustained yield standard on federal lands?

Response: Similar to my previous response, I believe that input from and communication with state and local communities, Tribes and the public are essential to informing the Department’s land management decisions planning process.

- c. Should input from affected citizens in the local geographic area where land use decisions are made be given more weight than input from outside interests?

Response: As I said in my previous responses, input from and communication with local communities and Tribes are important to Department’s planning and land management decisions concerning resources owned by the public.

Question 9: The BLM manages grazing on approximately 155 million acres of land in the western United States.

- a. Can grazing be used to reduce the threat of wildland fires?

Response: I look forward to working with the Department’s fire and grazing program experts, including on this question.

- b. Should grazing be classified as a “surface disturbing” activity?

Response: I look forward to hearing from a variety of stakeholders, including Congress, on this question.

- c. If confirmed, what would your priorities be in this area? What changes, if any, would you seek to make with regard to how BLM administers permits and leases for livestock grazing on public lands?

Response: As I noted at the hearing, I believe strongly that working with ranchers and farmers is important to the Department’s work. I support multiple use and respect the role grazing plays on our public lands.

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- d. President Biden signed an executive order banning new oil and gas lease sales on federal lands and waters. Many ranchers fear that a similar order could be issued to curtail livestock grazing on Federal lands. Will you urge the President, his advisors in the White House, and the Secretary of the Interior against the issuance of such an order or any other constraints to livestock grazing?

Response: I am not aware of plans for such an order.

- e. Is there room for improvement in the way BLM works with grazing permittees?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's land managers on grazing policies, and in general I believe in working to seek improvements in all of the Department's programs.

Question 10: Overgrazing by wild horses on and around BLM lands have created challenges in my home state of Wyoming. To help address this issue, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Congress allocated roughly \$116 million in response to the BLM's May 2020 proposal to institute an aggressive, non-lethal, population control strategy to address the current unsustainable trajectory of on-range wild horse and burro population growth.

- a. How should the Congressional directive outlined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 be implemented?
- b. What changes to BLM policies would improve the implementation of the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act to reduce costs and improve compliance with Appropriate Management Levels in the West to avoid severe wild horse and burro overgrazing?

Response: This is a longstanding and difficult issue. I agree that horses and burros need to be appropriately managed for the benefit of wildlife and other important factors, and I believe this should be done in a humane way and in coordination with Congress. If I am confirmed, I will work the BLM experts on this issue.

Question 11: The BLM manages close to 65 million acres of forests and woodlands across 12 western states and Alaska. These forests provide food and habitat for wildlife, trails for hiking and biking, clean abundant water for communities, and a variety of different wood products.

- a. How should forests be managed to protect from disease and improve species diversity?
- b. How should forests be managed to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire events?
- c. How can active forest management be used to reduce wildfire risk, including the devastating effects of megafires in the West?

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and Tribes.

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Question 12: In 2020, more than 58,250 wildfires burned 10.3 million acres, the most acreage impacted in a year since 1960. The 2020 wildfire season also resulted in damaging impacts to several thousand structures—including homes and communities across several states. Several Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports have identified potential issues with DOI's wildfire risk reduction efforts, wildland fire responsiveness, and stewardship of appropriated funds, among other concerns.

- a. Starting in FY2020, Congress authorized a special budgetary mechanism—referred to as the wildfire funding fix or the wildfire adjustment—to provide a certain amount of funding for wildfire suppression operations. If confirmed, will you provide us information on the impacts of the wildfire adjustment on DOI operations and budgeting?

Response: Yes, if I am confirmed I will work with the Department to provide the Committee with available information, as appropriate.

- b. On January 14, 2021, the Trump Administration issued an executive order establishing the Wildland Fire Management Policy Committee. The Committee is chaired by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and includes other agency heads. The purpose of the order is to improve coordination among federal agencies on wildland fire management policy, implementation, and oversight issues. Are you familiar with this order? How should the Biden Administration address the issues identified in the order?

Response: I am not yet part of the Administration and I am not familiar with the order referenced in your question, but I believe that coordination among federal agencies on this issue is critical to success, and if I am confirmed I will make that a priority.

Question 13: Wyoming ranks 2nd in the nation in renewable energy production, and I am very familiar with the benefits. Renewable energy is an important asset in the federal lands energy portfolio. It can also have adverse effects on wildlife and intrusive visual impacts that cannot be ignored, especially when a renewable energy installation becomes a permanent fixture on public lands and essentially eliminates any other use or enjoyment. Do you agree that renewable energy projects and development contributes to environmental and resource impacts, including impeding important wildlife migration corridors and impacting avian species?

Response: Energy development, including conventional and renewable energy sources, often has environmental impacts. The Department of the Interior bureaus have a role in ensuring that the impacts of all energy development are analyzed, minimized and mitigated. If confirmed, I will work to strike the right balance and promote smart planning so that we can increase the amount of renewable energy generated on public lands and waters in an environmentally responsible way.

Question 14: One of the provisions of President Biden's E.O. 14008 tasked the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with others, to develop a report with recommendations on actions the United States should take to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 (commonly referred to as 30x30).

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a. When will this report be shared with this committee?

Response: I am not at the Department and not part of this process. I am aware that Executive Order 14008 directs the submission of the report to the White House National Climate Task Force by April 27, 2021. It is my understanding that the report was released on May 6, 2021.

b. Please define conservation.

Response: I understand that conservation in this context is one of the issues that the Department has been engaging with stakeholders on and intends to address for the purposes of the Biden Administration's conservation goal.

c. How much land and water in the United States is currently being conserved?

Response: As noted in the previous response, "conservation" in this context is one of the key issues on which the Department has engaged stakeholders. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that only 12% of lands are permanently protected. Studies show that roughly 23% of America's ocean is currently protected. However, those categories do not encompass all actions that benefit nature and wildlife habitat, thus the ongoing process to flesh out that concept in a collaborative way for purposes of reaching the administration's goal.

d. How can DOI spearhead the 30x30 effort while still ensuring it meets its other responsibilities, such as managing access for energy production, grazing, and motorized recreation?

Response: I understand that the President's initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and Tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

Question 15: On April 16, 2021, Secretary Haaland signed Secretarial Order 3399, "Department-Wide Approach to the Climate Crisis and Restoring Transparency and Integrity to the Decision-Making Process," which established the Departmental Climate Task Force, among other actions.

a. As its co-chair, will you commit to providing this committee with regular updates on the work of the Task Force?

Response: Yes.

b. When do you think the Task Force should begin providing recommendations?

Response: The Deputy Secretary is responsible for ensuring implementation of the Order. If confirmed, I would begin work on implementation immediately.

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c. What is the timeline for completing the Task Force's mission?

Response: The Order establishing the Task Force is effective immediately. The Order does not set a timeline for completing the Task Force's mission, and addressing the climate crisis is a priority for this Administration and the Department.

d. Describe the efforts of public and private consultation that, if confirmed, you would ensure occur as co-chair of the Task Force.

Response: While I am not yet at the Department and have not been a part of the work of this Task Force, I have stated previously my belief in ensuring transparency and communication with stakeholders. If I am confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will work cooperatively with all of the Department's stakeholders.

Question 16: DOI administers energy leasing and permitting on onshore and offshore federal lands. DOI and the President also have various statutory authorities to withdraw federal lands from energy leasing. Some stakeholders have proposed new withdrawals or a complete ban on oil, gas, and coal leasing on federal lands, while others have proposed that currently withdrawn or unleased lands be made available for leasing.

On January 27, 2021, President Biden issued E.O. 14008, directing multiple administrative actions to address climate change. Section 208 of the order directed the Secretary of the Interior to "pause new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters pending completion of a comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices...." The executive order stated that this review must evaluate "potential climate and other impacts" associated with federal oil and gas leasing, as well as whether to adjust royalties paid to the federal government from onshore and offshore oil and gas production to account for "climate costs." The required pause and review must be "consistent with applicable law."

a. In your view, does DOI have the legal authority to suspend new onshore and offshore oil and gas lease sales indefinitely while undertaking the review?

Response: While I am not in the Department and have not been involved in any discussions concerning the leasing pause directed by Executive Order 14008, my understanding is that the Administration believes that the relevant authorities provide the Department with the discretion necessary to carry out the broad review of the federal oil and gas leasing programs as directed by the President.

Question 17: Some states rely on disbursements from oil, gas, and coal development on federal lands to help fund various state programs. Some federal conservation programs also are funded partly or wholly from traditional energy revenues.

a. How do you see future trends in federal energy revenues affecting federal and state programs? How will DOI assist states if future revenue streams decline?

Response: As I stated at my hearing, I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review directed by the President under Executive Order 14008, but I am aware that existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not affected by the EO. If I am confirmed I would look

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forward to working on this issue and participating in the review as directed by the EO. I also appreciate the actions taken by Congress in providing historic funding for the Department's land management agencies' maintenance backlogs as well as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

- b. E.O. 14008 directed DOI to consider, in its review of the federal oil and gas leasing program, whether to adjust royalties associated with coal, oil, and gas extracted from public lands and offshore waters to account for corresponding climate costs. What is your view on whether royalty adjustments are needed?**

Response: Again, I am not yet part of this review, but I agree with the President that is appropriate to review the programs to ensure, among other things, that the taxpayers receive fair return from the federal oil and gas program. I look forward, with your consent, to participating in the review of the program and charting a path forward.

Question 18: According to a 2020 GAO report, BLM estimated it would cost approximately \$510 million to complete the inventory of abandoned hardrock mining features on lands BLM manages. BLM estimated it would cost \$4.7 billion to fill in, gate, or address the physical safety hazards posed by those abandoned mine features. Additionally, GAO reported total future costs associated with addressing environmental hazards from 50 contaminated abandoned hardrock mines on lands managed by NPS ranged from \$21 million to \$35 million. GAO also reported that the NPS was not able to provide a cost estimate for an additional 19 sites, because the work was in the early stages or the NPS is not likely to fund the cleanup.

- a. The financial needs to inventory abandoned hardrock mining sites and address environmental and safety hazards remain an ongoing issue for DOI. Given this, how would you prioritize federal funding to complete the reclamation of these sites? How should the government assess whether the funding level is sufficient to address the scope of the task?**

Response: I agree that this is a very important and, because of the scale, a substantial issue that the Department and Congress will need to work together to address. The President's American Jobs Plan contains significant funding to create jobs cleaning up abandoned mine lands and orphan wells, so it will be important to have an efficient way to prioritize and allocate funding to the wells and mine lands presenting the most risk and to most accurately determine necessary funding moving forward. I would want to work with the experts at the BLM and other agencies, if confirmed, on these issues.

- b. Would you undertake actions to pursue funding from responsible parties to support necessary remedial activities? If so, what actions would you take?**

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to exploring all available options to support remedial activities, including seeking funding from responsible parties. I look forward to working with the experts at the BLM and other agencies, if confirmed.

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Question 19: Under federal law, local governments (usually counties) are compensated through various programs for reductions to their property tax bases due to the presence of certain federally-owned land. Federal lands generally cannot be taxed but may create a demand for services such as fire protection, police cooperation, search and rescue, or road construction/maintenance.

The most widely applicable program, called Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), is administered by DOI. In recent years, PILT has been funded through either discretionary appropriations or mandatory spending, or both.

a. Please describe your views on the PILT program.

Response: The PILT program is important to local governments, providing them with a key source of revenue to help offset the inability to collect taxes on federal lands. These payments are important not only for vital services in these places but also to rural economies. Like Secretary Haaland, I am a strong supporter of the PILT program.

b. PILT payments are calculated based on the formula specified in statute. Is the formula sufficient for compensating local governments for the presence of federal lands in their jurisdictions? In what ways, if any, would you suggest modifying the formula?

Response: I would need more information, including about the program's funding and other trends, in order to have an informed opinion on any potential changes. I also look forward to working with Congress on any proposed changes to the statutory formula for calculating PILT payments.

Question 20: If confirmed, you will be responsible for the issuance of federal leases as well as oversight of the permitting of existing leases. Restricting production on federal lands will drive production to state and private lands and encourage flaring in areas of the country without sufficient takeaway capacity. In the Wamsutter Basin of Wyoming, for example, there is a surplus of processing, gathering, and takeaway capacity for natural gas. While in neighboring states there is a takeaway capacity deficit, often resulting in the flaring of the natural gas produced attendant to oil production. Moreover, industry opposition groups are making it increasingly difficult to site, permit, and construct the much-needed new takeaway capacity.

a. Do you agree that sufficient takeaway capacity helps reduce venting and flaring?

Response: I understand the importance of gathering lines to help reduce venting and flaring. The President has been clear that his intention is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, including methane from public lands, and if I am confirmed I will work to develop solutions to achieve those reductions.

b. If so, do you commit to permitting takeaway infrastructure necessary to reduce venting and flaring?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will work to develop solutions to address the President's policy to reduce GHG emissions, and I will have an open mind about all potential solutions to accomplish those goals.

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Question 21: The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act was important landmark legislation for this committee but there are still items that need to be completed. Can you give us a status update on The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act and will you commit to ensuring completion of these priorities directed by Congress?"

Response: Yes, if I am confirmed I will work with career staff at the Department and in its bureaus to ensure that the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act is implemented properly. I also commit to updating the committee as to the status of implementation.

Question 22: In southwestern Wyoming, the Bureau of Land Management estimates there are over 5,100 wild horses across five Herd Management Areas—more than double the Appropriate Management Level for these populations. Such severe overpopulation causes damage to federal lands and waters, jeopardizes responsible uses of the land, such as grazing, and puts the wild horses at risk. I was pleased to see a recent Bureau of Land Management plan that calls for the removal of excess wild horses in Wyoming. Last week, I and the Wyoming delegation sent a letter to Secretary Haaland encouraging full and timely implementation of this proposed action. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the Department's plan is fully implemented in a timely fashion?

Response: Wild horse and burro management is a challenging issue. If I am confirmed, I would look forward to working with all concerned stakeholders to determine humane and effective strategies to address the situation, including working with the BLM on its proposed plan.

Question 23: Less than one percent of Bureau of Land Management lands are located outside of 11 contiguous western states and Alaska. I believe it is important that federal officials and staff work near the lands they manage and the people they serve. That's why I, and others on this Committee, applauded the Trump Administration's decision to move BLM's Headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Grand Junction, Colorado. Do you support BLM's headquarters move to the West? And if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that BLM's headquarters will remain in Grand Junction?

Response: I believe it is a priority that BLM has a full and accessible team to ensure that it can most effectively and efficiently carry out its mission activities. I understand that the BLM headquarters move is being assessed. If confirmed, I look forward to being involved in that assessment as well as other efforts to ensure that the BLM is an effective agency and that BLM staff are involved appropriately in decision-making. I also agree with the Secretary about hearing from career BLM staff and taking their views into account moving forward, along with other stakeholders, including Western States and Tribal Nations.

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Questions from Senator Ron Wyden

Question 1: During Secretary Haaland's hearing I raised the importance of building coalitions to get things done. In Oregon, I have worked with local ranchers, tribes, and environmentalists on a bill to establish wilderness on Bureau of Land Management lands in Eastern Oregon, increase public participation in land management decisions, and increase economic development in Malheur County. I have legislation that was the result of dozens of meetings with local and regional stakeholders to identify common ground and a shared vision for a healthy landscape. The Department of Interior is a critical partner to accomplish the goals set out in my bill.

Will you work with me and this committee to move the legislation forward this year?

Response: Like you, I believe that input from and communication with state and local communities, stakeholders, and Tribes are an important part of the Department's decision-making process. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with you to advance priorities that incorporate that framework.

Question 2: In Oregon, the Klamath Basin is shaping up to have one of the worst water years on record. A drought emergency has already been declared by the Governor and a more comprehensive solution is going to be needed. There are going to be competing water needs in the region that are focused around farming, fish, wildlife, and conservation. We greatly appreciate the work the Interior has done so far securing up to \$14 million for the Drought Relief Program for Klamath farmers. However, more funding will be needed.

Will you commit to working with us on long-term solutions on Klamath's water issues?

Response: This is an important issue and it needs full attention. I am aware that the Administration recently announced the formation of an Interagency Working Group that will be chaired by the Department to address worsening drought conditions in the West and to support farmers, Tribes, and communities impacted by ongoing water shortages. I support the Department's commitment to using every resource available to ensure that Tribes, irrigators, and their communities receive adequate assistance and support.

Question 3: I have a bill to create a 21st Century Conservation Corps that has the opportunity to create thousands of jobs. This legislation focuses on funding hazardous fuel and thinning treatments that are shovel ready and environmentally reviewed. This will maximize rural communities' wildfire reduction efforts and it creates critical new programs for job development and COVID relief. This legislation will add more money to existing programs at the Interior, that have proven track records of getting money on the ground and employing workers in the woods.

Can you support the creation of 21st Century Conservation Corp? And will you work with me on this legislation?

Response: I know that President Biden is committed to putting Americans to work conserving and restoring public lands and waters, protecting natural treasures, increasing reforestation, improving access to recreation and increasing resilience to wildfires and storms. This is a tenet of his American Jobs Plan, addressing the

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nation's climate crisis and creating new jobs. If confirmed, I look forward, along with Secretary Haaland, to working with you and members of the Committee on legislation to move these policies forward.

Question 4: Whether its drought or wildfires, water needs are only growing in Oregon and we need the support of the Department. Tribes in Oregon have been suffering from inadequate water infrastructure for decades. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs' water infrastructure has been failing and has led to unsafe drinking water--all in the midst of a Pandemic.

What actions can the Department of Interior take to support long term solutions and the critical water infrastructure needs for tribes?

Response: Safe and accessible drinking water is a critical resource that is not only a health and safety issue but is important for economic development on Tribal lands. It is important for the Department to work with Tribes, particularly those Tribes that have struggled for so long with basic infrastructure issues, as the Administration moves forward to create jobs and repair and improve our country's infrastructure.

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Questions from Senator James E. Risch

Question 1: In Idaho, we have always had the most success with locally-driven, consensus-building initiatives and very little success with top-down federal mandates. If confirmed, will you consult with our Congressional leadership, locally-elected officials, and local communities before agreeing to any land use designations, including National Monuments?

Response: As I discussed at my confirmation hearing, I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency with state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and will have an open door and an open mind on the important challenges that we face. I agree with Secretary Haaland that conservation works best when it has local support and I agree with her approach to consult with state leaders on monuments matters.

Question 2: In your view, is the goal of the Endangered Species Act to delist a species?

Response: I believe that the Endangered Species Act is one of our most important environmental laws and has the goal of recovering species. As I said at my hearing, there have been great successes along these lines, including the American Bald Eagle.

Question 3: What role do you believe science should play in the determination to list or delist a species under the Endangered Species Act?

Response: I believe that science plays a fundamental role in the determination to list or delist a species under the ESA, consistent with the law.

Question 4: In administering the Endangered Species Act, how would you engage states as critical partners?

Response: As I have said, I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency with impact state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state and tribal wildlife agencies, which are primary managers of wildlife with significant expertise, to implement the ESA.

Question 5: Do you support delisting a species if prescribed population targets have been achieved?

Response: I support delisting a species when a species meets the criteria for recovery and no longer meets the standards for listing under the law, as supported by the science.

Question 6: We have over 12 million acres of BLM land in Idaho managed for multiple use under congressional mandate. Can you describe your understanding of the term “multiple use” and how this understanding would guide your role should you be confirmed?

Response: The Bureau of Land Management’s multiple use mandate is contained in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and it recognizes that public lands have many resources and many uses. This mandate also directs

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these resources and uses be used in a balanced way that enables sustainability for future generations. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will strive to achieve an appropriate balance of these uses and to ensuring that the Department is engaging with stakeholders as decisions regarding management of the public lands are made.

Question 7: As you are familiar, Idaho and other states went through a long and collaborative process to develop a plan for management of the greater sage-grouse, bringing a wide array of diverse interests to the table. After years of back and forth, we finally have a plan with local buy-in back in place. We know that top-down management in this regard simply does not work. When it comes to management of this species, can you commit to working with individual states to recognize differences in landscapes and supporting a collaborative process?

Response: As I mentioned at the hearing, I believe that states and state plans are essential to sage grouse conservation. I believe in the importance of close communication and transparency with state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the FWS, as well as state and Tribal wildlife agencies, in a collaborative fashion in order to manage the species.

Question 8: The West has seen record-setting fire seasons each year for the past decade, with over 8 million acres burned in 2020. There are many factors that increase the spread of wildfires, but fuel loads are a critical and indisputable piece that we have the ability to control. If confirmed, what management strategies would you employ to reduce fuels and prevent another catastrophic fire season?

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire events. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. If confirmed, I would serve as the chief operating officer of the Department and effective prevention and response to wildfire will be an important priority.

Question 9: At the hearing, when discussing renewable energy projects on federal lands, you stated, of your philosophy, that there... “has to be strong leadership to really drive coordination through the permitting process and ensure that all the regulatory requirements and legal requirements are strictly adhered too in the interests of the defensibility of those permits, but it takes an enormous amount of leadership, effort, and coordination to make sure that those projects are permitted in a timely way and properly.”

If confirmed, would you work with hardrock mining companies as earnestly as you have with renewable energy stakeholders in the past to encourage, incentivize, remove barriers to, and enact push forward permitting reforms that will support and enable President Biden’s clean energy goals without increasing our mineral imports from other countries? Additionally, would you prioritize domestically-produced raw mineral projects and supply chains for clean energy at the same level as permitting clean energy itself?

Response: It is important to promote environmentally responsible critical mineral development, which is central to unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland are promoting. If I am confirmed, I would look forward to taking a balanced approach to overseeing mining on our public lands, including for critical minerals, ensuring that those resources would be responsibly developed in a way that is considerate of and avoids impacts to cultural and historic resources.

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Question 10: Do you believe that resource development projects on federal lands and waters deserve the same level of prioritization as conservation and recreation?

Response: I believe it is important, and appropriate, that the Department and its individual bureaus fairly implement the statutory authorities that Congress has passed and under which they must operate. With regard to federal lands and waters managed by the BLM under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act specifically, those lands should be managed in accordance with multiple use and sustained yield principles under the processes and procedures established under that Act.

Question 11: In January, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule to amend Section 7 consultation regulations under the Endangered Species Act. This was a bipartisan issue during the Obama administration and has unnecessarily halted conservation and management across the West. If confirmed, will you complete this rulemaking process?

Response: If confirmed, I will be committed to implementing the ESA in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species.

Question 12: Hydropower is incredibly important to the Idaho, providing the majority of our state's energy needs. Preserving hydroelectric facilities was even cited by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine as a necessity for reaching carbon emission targets.

a. Do you agree hydropower is a clean and renewable resource?

Response: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an important part of our energy future.

b. Do you support the continued use of already-operating hydropower projects, and do you support additional hydropower development?

Response: President Biden strongly supports clean energy generation, including from hydropower sources. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on our public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 13: The West has seen record-setting fire seasons each year for the past decade, with over 8 million acres burned in 2020. There are many factors that increase the spread of wildfires, but the one piece we can control on the ground is fuel loading. Forest management and grazing are not only statutory components of our public land agencies' multiple use, but they are also key tools in reducing fuel loads. If confirmed, how would you utilize forest management and grazing to address catastrophic fuels and fires?

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire events. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and stakeholders on matters related to grazing policies and the factors raised in this question.

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Question 14: The vague “30 by 30” initiative has been of increasing concern for my constituents in Idaho, where over 60% of our land is already managed by the federal government.

- a. Can you define what conserve functionally means under “30 by 30” and what standards land would be held to?

Response: I understand that conservation in this context is one of the issues that the Department has been engaging with stakeholders on and intends to address for the purposes of the Biden Administration’s conservation goal.

- b. If confirmed, could you commit that “30 by 30” will not be used to change use designation or acquire additional land in Idaho without support from local communities?

Response: I understand that the President’s initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

- c. If confirmed, will you ensure that “30 by 30” is not used to erode multiple use on our public lands?

Response: As I said in response to the previous question, I understand that the President’s initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

Question 15: We have a number of projects in Idaho that have been completed in the last five to six years. Many of these have spanned multiple administrations and were likely on your desk the last time you were at Interior. Before terminating or altering a project or permit in Idaho, can you commit to first, informing me, and second, hearing from stakeholders on both sides of the issue on the ground before making a decision?

Response: Yes, as I said at my confirmation hearing I strongly believe that good communication and transparent decision-making processes are important to accomplishing the Department’s mission.

Question 16: This administration—as recently as last night—has made renewable energy and Buy American both priorities, including supply chains for semiconductors, critical minerals, and other sectors. At the same time, we have orders from the White House and Interior to slow down permitting and NEPA. We can all agree that we should and do have strong environmental laws and permitting in this country. But, if we want to build wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles, or grid-scale battery technology, we need minerals to do so. If we want these supporting American jobs and held to America’s high standards, we can’t take a decade or more to permit every project. This issue expands beyond

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minerals—we’ve had cases in Idaho with permitting delays on transmission lines, conservation projects, and more. If we go back to the old NEPA timelines, it’s just not possible to do what needs to be done for clean energy. If confirmed, what would you do to ensure NEPA and permitting timelines are not inhibiting our domestic, clean energy supply chain?

Response: As I stated at my hearing, I believe it is important that America maintain its energy security and that we can strike the right balances among environmental protection and responsible energy development to do so. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that projects are responsibly and timely authorized to support, among other things, the President’s expanded renewable energy effort.

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Questions from Senator Maria Cantwell

Question 1: WILDLAND FIRES

- Senators Manchin, Wyden and I introduced legislation that would increase prescribed fire activities. If confirmed, can you commit to working with us on passing legislation like the National Prescribed Fire Act and supporting funding and policies that increase healthy forest management activities?

Response: I know that forest health can be a life or death matter in so many areas of the country that are susceptible to wildfire risk. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. I support these actions and, if confirmed, am committed to working with you, with Congress, and with affected communities to find ways to address this growing threat.

In 2019, I worked to pass the Wildfire Management Technology Advancement Act, which directed the Department of Interior and the Forest Service to acquire and use a number of widely available technologies like GPS locators, smoke forecasters and drones. It's my understanding that the Department of Interior has moved forward with some of these technologies, but not everything that was included in the bill.

- If confirmed, can you commit to providing me an overview of how Interior has implemented the bill and plans to continue to acquire these lifesaving technologies?

Response: Yes.

In Spokane, there is a CLT manufacturing center and most recently, the Town of Darrington started work on the Darrington Wood Innovation Center which will host companies that manufacture CLT and Mass Timber.

- How can Interior support CLT manufacturing in the U.S.?
- If confirmed, can you commit to working with me on finding ways to promote and increase CLT manufacturing in the U.S.?

Response: Jobs that rely on natural resources from the public lands are important to many communities, particularly rural and remote communities. Like Secretary Haaland, I believe that we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment. If confirmed I look forward to learning more about Cross-laminated timber (CLT) and to working with you to determine how the Department can participate in this process.

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Question 2: OUTDOOR RECREATION

- **How will you ensure the full \$900 million authorized for LWCF is part of the Department of Interior's budget request and the funding is appropriately divided between both federal and state projects?**

Response: The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act is truly one of the cornerstone environmental laws enacted by Congress, and now that it is fully funded it provides incredible opportunities for recreation and conservation on our public lands. The Act provides the formula for allocating resources between federal and state projects. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the Department complies with the intent of Congress in implementing this important conservation statute.

- **How will the Department ensure agencies have the resources to put dollars to work? Specifically, are there enough staff on the ground to begin work on improving our parks and forests?**

Response: As I noted in my statement for my confirmation hearing, my previous experience at the Department showed me the value of the Department's dedicated career staff. If confirmed, I look forward to working with offices and programs across the Department and its bureaus to ensure that they have the tools necessary, including the staffing that they need, to implement the Great American Outdoors Act and to begin addressing the maintenance backlogs of our land managing bureaus and improving our federal lands.

Question 3: WATER INFRASTRUCTURE / YAKIMA BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a basin wide water project that focuses on balancing and fulfilling the needs of a robust agricultural sector, flood risk management, and salmon recovery. It's vital the Bureau of Reclamation continues to fund these projects.

- **If confirmed, will you work to promote the need for water projects, like the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and other irrigation and water conservation projects, to be considered in any infrastructure legislation?**

Response: If I am confirmed I would look forward to working with you, with Congress, and with stakeholders to ensure that these vital water infrastructure projects are properly considered. I know that water projects like this are becoming more important than ever as our western states are impacted by long term drought.

- **Will you commit to including funding for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan in the Department of Interior's proposed budget?**

Response: Because I am not yet at the Department I cannot commit funding to particular projects, but I understand that the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is an important project for the Bureau of Reclamation and I am told that the FY21 budget included funding toward the project. If I am confirmed I would look forward to working with you, with Congress, and with stakeholders to ensure that these vital water infrastructure projects are properly considered.

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- Additionally, I would like to work with you and the Department on ways we can address water storage needs and how to implement technologies like pumped storage and aquifer recharge to address these needs.

Response: If confirmed, I would look forward to having those discussions and to working with you and other members and stakeholders on this matter.

Question 4: TRIBAL QUESTIONS

29 federally recognized Tribes are located in Washington state, and each Tribe is culturally unique and face complicated economic and resource challenges that need to be addressed. As part of the end of year COVID package, we were able to secure a new \$1 billion grant program at the National Telecommunications Information Administration dedicated to increasing broadband connectivity and adoption on Tribal lands.

- If confirmed, can you commit to continuing your work to increase broadband access in Indian Country?

Response: During the pandemic we have seen the disparities that a lot of communities face with regard to broadband Internet service. I understand that access to information and communication, such as educational opportunities for Native children and telehealth for everyone, is a high priority for the Department. I know that broadband access in Indian Country is a very high priority for Secretary Haaland and, if I am confirmed, it will be a high priority for me as well.

70 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in urban settings, and they rely on Urban Indian Health programs for their health care. However, unlike IHS and Tribally-operated health facilities, these organizations do not receive a 100% FMAP. This affects organizations like the Seattle Indian Health Board and the NATIVE Project in Spokane. It also includes First Nation Community Healthsource in New Mexico.

- If confirmed, can you commit to supporting efforts to provide Urban Indian Health Organizations 100% FMAP?

Response: The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. IHS runs the 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) reimbursement program. If confirmed, I look forward to working with IHS and Indian Country on this issue.

Indigenous women and children are experiencing violence at alarming rates.

- Can you talk about what the Department is doing to take actions to address the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls crisis?

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Response: In April, Secretary Haaland announced the formation of a new Missing & Murdered Unit (MMU) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to provide leadership and direction for cross-departmental and interagency work involving missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Department is also designating new positions to support the investigative needs of the MMU, including the collection and analysis of performance data and coordination of services with the families of victims. Secretary Haaland has also announced that she is moving forward to implement the *Not Invisible Act*, which calls for the Department to coordinate prevention efforts, grants, and programs related to missing and murdered Indigenous peoples. I look forward to becoming more involved in these important issues, if I am confirmed.

- **If confirmed, can you commit to working with myself and other advocates to provide more resources to our Tribes and Tribal organizations that are on the ground serving victims and victims' families?**

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I would look forward to becoming more involved in these efforts to provide important services to victims and victims' families.

Question 5: COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

The Columbia River Treaty impacts the Pacific Northwest hydropower system, flood control in the Columbia River basin and the habitat of endangered Columbia River salmon and other species. Interior plays a critical role in the negotiations with Canada and it is greatly important that this Administration make the Treaty a high priority.

- **If confirmed, will you commit to making the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty a priority for the Department of the Interior?**

Response: I know this issue has been a priority for you for and that negotiations on modernizing the Treaty between the United States and Canada are ongoing. If confirmed I would commit to learning the current status of the negotiations, which I understand are being led by the Department of State. I would also work with Secretary Haaland to ensure the priorities and interests of the Department are considered as this important process moves forward.

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Questions from Senator Lisa Murkowski

Question 1: Department of Interior career staff in Alaska provide a wealth of technical and practical expertise across the full spectrum of complex land management issues unique to our state. They have been strong voices for the people and lands of Alaska throughout multiple administrations, and have deep and trusted boots-on-the-ground relationships with Alaskans. Can you ensure that you will work with career DOI staff in Alaska to understand fully the impacts of your decisions that affect the state, prior to making any decisions?

Response: As I noted in my statement to the Committee at my hearing, my previous experience at the Department showed me the value of the dedicated career staff there. The expertise and technical knowledge of Departmental and bureau career staff will be invaluable to decision-making and the implementation of the Department's programs.

Question 2: Alaska has world-class deposits of many of the minerals that make up the building blocks of our modern life. Do you believe that the lack of domestic production of critical minerals is an economic and national security threat to the United States?

If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the responsible development of these supply chains, including traditional mining in Alaska?

Will you support the continued work of the USGS in preparing and updating lists of critical minerals and their partnerships with state geological surveys?

Response: Critical minerals play a role in advanced technology development as well as renewable energy and are central to unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland are promoting. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work on the Department's role in overseeing hard rock mining, including critical minerals, wherever they are located to ensure those resources are responsibly developed, in an environmentally sensitive way that is considerate of and avoids impacts to cultural and historic resources. I also support the work of the USGS on this important topic.

Question 3: I have been working for almost two decades now to secure authorization to build a small gravel road between the Aleutian communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. This life-saving road will allow the Aleuts in King Cove to have access to an all-weather airfield. For far, far, too long, King Cove has been denied ease of access to basic healthcare and other essential services. I was, to be completely frank, appalled at former Secretary Jewell's callousness and indifference to the people of King Cove when she visited the community with me and ultimately decided not to authorize the road. With your Alaskan background, I know you can appreciate how difficult it is to live off of the road system. Do you think the King Cove road should be built?

Response: I agree that all our people should have access to adequate medical services and that this can be a very serious matter for those living in remote areas and under difficult conditions. It has always been my hope that a solution that works for all can be achieved, and I am committed to making that happen, if confirmed.

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If confirmed, will you advocate within the Department for the people of King Cove to have their road constructed and continue to defend the Interior's current position on the pending litigation?

Response: As I stated in the response to the previous question, I agree that everyone should have access to adequate medical services and that this can be a very serious matter for those living in remote areas and under difficult conditions. It has always been my hope that a solution that works for all can be achieved, and I am committed to making that happen.

I was frustrated to hear that FWS delayed the issuance of special use permits to the State of Alaska this spring. I've asked them to work quickly to issue the permit, and am counting on support from the Department as well. Are you familiar with section 1110(b) of ANILCA, which was used to declare King Cove an inholding?

Response: I am aware of the ANILCA authority you reference in your question.

If you are confirmed, will you work to bring the Fish and Wildlife Service up to speed on that authority, and exercise your authority as Deputy Secretary to order the FWS to grant such permits as necessary for the road to be constructed?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with the Solicitor's Office and career staff on these issues.

Question 4: I have been upset with the Fish and Wildlife Service's treatment of the Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation. Earlier this year, FWS announced that they were not able to issue a special use permit to KIC for their IHA application due to KIC's supposed lack of submitting information in a timely manner. KIC strongly denied that accusation, and after the Alaska delegation sent a letter expressing our frustration, FWS acknowledged that KIC was not at fault. The Service has yet to issue a retraction of their statement.

Can you commit to providing a full accounting of the proceedings between KIC and the FWS on the recent application process before the FWS, as it concerns their application for Incidental Harassment Authorization permits in the 1002 Area?

Response: Yes. If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it.

Can you commit to holding follow up meetings, including yourself, senior career and appointed staff overseeing the USFWS, and KIC and the Alaska delegation?

Response: If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it and I believe the Department should stay engaged with these stakeholders.

Can you commit to ensuring the permit is issued in time for KIC to participate in the 2022 winter season?

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Response: If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it. I commit to be responsive to requests from stakeholders and will maintain communication with your office regarding the issue.

Question 5: Section 207 of the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act of 2004 (ALTAA) mandated a Secretarial review of outstanding d(1) withdrawals, which were created 50 years ago, in section 17(d)(1) of ANCSA. The review and subsequent report under this section was produced in 2006 in which the Bureau of Land Management recommended revoking the d(1) withdrawals on approximately 50.1 million acres.

What is your understanding of ANCSA withdrawals? Are they supposed to be revoked once their purpose has been fulfilled?

Response: I would want to be fully briefed on this issue, if confirmed. I understand that the Public Land Orders issued pursuant to ANCSA withdrew and removed lands from operation under the public land laws while the ANCSA corporations made their land selections. The PLOs required those lands not conveyed to ANCSA corporations remain withdrawn for study and classification for future uses. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing this issue with the BLM.

Are you aware if the Bureau of Land Management has changed their recommendation?

Response: While I am not at the Department or involved with this matter, I look forward to discussing this issue with BLM.

Do you believe that the Federal government has an obligation to expeditiously execute these withdrawals in order?

Response: Yes, and I look forward to discussing this issue with the BLM.

How do you plan to expedite the conveyance and patent of Statehood and ANCSA entitlements, and can you commit to making Native veterans' allotments a priority?

Response: I know that land conveyance and entitlement issues have been a priority for many years. Secretary Haaland is committed to working on these efforts and, if confirmed I will also commit to ensuring that the Department is addressing these matters so important to the State of Alaska and to Alaska Natives in an expeditious manner.

Question 6: As I know you are personally aware, Alaska's oil and gas resources are the foundation of our state's revenues, jobs, wages, and development. These benefits are pronounced in communities, such as across the North Slope Borough, where oil and gas investment has brought services such as modern healthcare, education, lodging, and infrastructure to a place where they were scarce or did not exist prior to North Slope development. The average upstream oil and gas worker in Alaska makes over \$150,000 a year.

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What is your opinion on oil and gas development in Alaska?

Response: I am the son of an Alaska oil and gas worker, so I have a deep appreciation for the importance that the energy industry carries in the State and the support that it provides for working families and rural Alaskan communities.

Conoco's proposed Willow project was developed under the Obama administrations IAP and has gone through years of review and public process. Do you believe the pause on the Willow project should be lifted?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to overseeing an objective permitting process, consistent with law and regulation, for all projects on BLM lands in the State and to keeping your office informed. I understand that this project is in litigation and was specified for review in the fact sheet that accompanied Executive Order 13990.

Question 7: Do you believe that states should retain supremacy in their right to manage fish and game?

Response: While the Endangered Species Act provides the Secretary of the Interior with certain authorities in administering the Act, in general the states are the primary managers of fish and wildlife. I believe that states are critical partners in species conservation and recovery and they bring important expertise and resources to the table in the overall effort of wildlife and habitat management and conservation. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department engages with states, Congress, Tribal Nations, and other important stakeholders as we carry out our responsibilities for wildlife management.

Question 8: We have a big milestone coming up this year – the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This landmark legislation “settled” the aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives and intentionally set up a different structure compared to the tribes in the Lower 48. This structure allows for a unique version of self-determination and economic empowerment. When Alaska Natives settled their land claims, part of the bargain was that services to them would not be cut off. ANCSA was amended to eliminate all doubt whether the federal service obligation to Alaska Natives remained after the passage of ANCSA. ANCs, along with the sovereign tribes and tribal nonprofits, provide a wide array of services and benefits to Native people.

What is your understanding of their role in Alaska? How have they supported communities across the state and what essential services do they provide?

Response: Having grown up in Alaska and worked at the Department, I am very familiar with ANCs and their unique role in the State and on behalf of their Alaska Native shareholders. ANCs are corporations that carry out important functions and provide important services at the village and regional scale for the Alaska Natives, including providing jobs and economic opportunity for their shareholders. ANCs are one of the important stakeholders and partners in Alaska.

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What is Interior's role under ANCSA?

Response: Generally, I understand that ANCSA created the framework for the corporations, establishing regional boundaries. The Department had an early role in assisting in the determination of Alaska Native eligibility for participation in ANCSA. It also established the land selection process, managed by the Department, that continues today. This includes the conveyance of approximately 40 million acres of land to the ANCs. The Department also exercises its trust responsibility to Alaska Natives and will consult, including with Alaska Native Corporations, when considering an action that may affect their interests.

Question 9: The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act was enacted more than two years ago. Sec. 1113 of that Act, which required the Chugach Lands Study, Recommendations for Land Exchanges, and Report to Congress, was due to Congress more than 7 months ago. Completing the Study/Recommendation/Report to Congress is a top priority for me and my colleagues in the Alaska Congressional Delegation because the provision creates a realistic pathway for the Alaska Native people of the Chugach Region to finally see fairness and equity achieved in the fulfillment of the promises of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) for Chugach Alaska Corporation, the ANCSA Regional Corporation for the Chugach Region. Will you commit to working with me in doing all you can to bring this to an expeditious conclusion and to provide for racial equity for the Native people involved?

Response: Yes. If I am confirmed I will work to ensure that the Department complies with the law and releases this report as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

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Questions from Senator Mazie Hirono

Question 1: May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, which serves to highlight the contributions and influence of AAPIs to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

What activities does the Department have planned for AAPI Heritage Month and if confirmed, will you and the Department work with me and my office on some of the planned activities?

Response: I am not yet at the Department, so I am not aware of the plans the Department has to celebrate AAPI Heritage Month. If confirmed, I look forward to working with your office and joining in honoring the history, culture, and achievements of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

Question 2: During the previous administration there were countless allegations of political appointees interfering with the communication and use of science all across the federal government, including at the Department of the Interior. I appreciate the Secretarial Orders that were issued by Secretary Haaland earlier this month to establish a Climate Task Force and to provide guidance on how science will be used in the decision-making process.

As Deputy Secretary you will be responsible for the day to day activities at the Department. What steps do you think are necessary to restore morale within the agency?

Response: It is really important for the Department, which houses the U.S. Geological Survey as well as scientists across the Department and its Bureaus, to have a strong and active scientific community providing reliable science, free from political interference, to support sound policy and decision-making. The President and Secretary have made science and scientific integrity a top priority, and it will be a top priority for me as well. The Department's senior leadership must make it clear that science is valued and that attitude and focus must guide management decisions.

Question 3: Congress and the Administration have historically struggled to identify adequate pay-fors for economic assistance under the Compacts. For example, in 2010 the United States agreed to provide \$216 million in financial assistance to Palau through 2024. However, from 2010-2018, the federal government was only able to provide approximately \$13 million annually to Palau. It was not until 2018 that an agreement was reached to fulfill the U.S.' funding commitments to Palau. This called into question the US' credibility as an ally and a reliable partner in the region.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with your interagency partners and Congress to identify acceptable pay-fors to fulfill commitments made to the Freely Associated States under the renewed Compacts of Free Association?

Response: Among the most important responsibilities that Department and the Secretary have are with respect to the U.S. territories in the freely associated states, subject to those compacts. I believe it is extremely important to make sure that those relationships are supported, healthy, and that the compacts work for the communities. If confirmed, I look forward to working on this issue.

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Question 4: After the Second World War, the United States was charged with promoting the social, economic, and political development of what are now the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

If confirmed, how will you and the Department work to advance these goals and strengthen our alliances with the Freely Associated States?

Response: It is one of the Department's most important responsibilities to make sure that these relationships are supported, healthy, and that the compacts work for the communities. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Department's staff in the Office of Insular Affairs about the Department's specific role and responsibilities with regard to the Freely Associated States and ensuring our duties are executed in a way that advances national goals and strengthens alliances.

Question 5: You served as the first director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

What lessons did you learn about leasing areas of the Atlantic for offshore wind projects that you would apply as Deputy Secretary in supervising BOEM's process for leasing areas in the Pacific for offshore wind development? If you are confirmed as Deputy Secretary, will you commit to working with other federal departments and me to address any issues related to potential offshore wind leasing near Hawaii?

Response: Yes, if confirmed I look forward to working with you, other departments, and stakeholders on issues related to potential wind energy leasing near the State of Hawaii. I believe that transparency and communication are important considerations in moving these types of projects forward. Given the complexity of the federal permitting process it is important to have strong leadership to carry out this type of coordination, to meet the regulatory requirements, and to ensure that this is carried out in a timely fashion. Secretary Haaland has an excellent team working on these issues, and I look forward to joining that effort, should I be confirmed.

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Questions from Senator James Lankford

Question 1: Do you support legislation in response to the 2009 Supreme Court decision *Carcieri v. Salazar*? If so, what would be your policy preference for that legislation?

Response: President Biden has made clear that he supports a clean *Carcieri* fix to make it easier to place land into trust. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Haaland, the Department, and Congress on these issues related to the *Carcieri* decision.

Question 2: Do you intend or expect to make any changes to the Department's rules concerning the Indian Child Welfare Act? If so, what changes would you make?

Response: President Biden supports the Indian Child Welfare Act. If confirmed, I will work to support the implementation of ICWA and enforcement of its regulations. I understand that complex and sensitive situations can arise, and I will work to support the best interests of children and Tribes, consistent with the law.

Question 3: If confirmed, will you commit to publishing a map showing generally (and without divulging confidential information or specific addresses) where and how much land is held in trust throughout the country?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with appropriate personnel in the Department to evaluate options in consideration of this question.

Question 4: Should land-into-trust applications be approved automatically?

Response: Placing land into trust for the benefit of a Tribe is an important responsibility. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Solicitor's Office on fulfilling this responsibility.

Question 5: Do you support off-reservation tribal gaming?

Response: I support tribal economic development, including off-reservation gaming, as may be provided under the law. I look forward to working with the Department through its established legal process for considering off-reservation gaming.

Question 6: As we discussed in our earlier conversation, the American burying beetle was downlisted from endangered to threatened last year; it remained on the list because Fish & Wildlife Service determined that at some point in the future it could be threatened by climate change. Basing these decisions on what *could* happen in the future would create an environment in which no species would ever be delisted because there's always a chance the circumstances for that species will decline.

- a. Mr. Beaudreau, do you believe that species should maintain protection because of a theoretical threat they may face 20 years into the future? 50 years into the future? 100 years into the future?

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Response: I am committed to implementing the Endangered Species Act in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species. If confirmed, I will work with the FWS and follow science and the law on listing questions.

- b. Do you believe that species should be de-listed if they've reached their population target? If not, what type of success metrics would you propose to set at the time of a listing decision?**

Response: If confirmed, I will work with the FWS and be guided by the science to understand criteria necessary for delisting a particular species and how those criteria would inform the delisting decision.

Question 7: In parts of the country that have large swaths of federal lands, there can exist something of a checkerboard of jurisdiction in which private lands, state lands, and lands under the jurisdiction of multiple federal agencies all exist in the same region. Some drilling spacing units are actually split between two different federal agencies. This creates a lot of confusion for operators in that region.

- a. Mr. Beaudreau, does it make sense to have a myriad of different federal rules governing federal lands, as is the case throughout much of the federal lands in the West?**
- b. Would you support DOI making regulations and permitting more streamlined for companies operating on this checkerboard?**

Response to a. and b.: It is important to ensure that the various actions and activities that Congress has authorized on the public lands are managed in a manner that meets the requirements of the applicable authorities and is systematic, fair, and efficient. I also agree that it is important to ensure that regulatory processes that are put in place should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient, and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

Question 8: Congress has continued to maintain the Hyde Amendment on a bipartisan basis each year in annual funding bills since 1976. If confirmed, will you continue to uphold and enforce the restrictions of the Hyde amendment – that no federal funding can pay for abortions except in the case of rape, incest or to protect the life of the mother – as enacted by Congress?

Response: If confirmed I will follow the law.

Question 9: A [report](#) from the Obama administration in 2010 reinforced the importance of faith-based partnerships. Among the recommendations put forward in the report was to draw *more* on the local expertise and relationships of faith-based organizations as a way of filling gaps in the provision of essential services. Faith-based organizations are excellent, effective, and efficient at meeting the needs of our most at-risk populations. The report also highlighted the need to ease overly-burdensome reporting and regulation requirements placed on social service agencies. Do you agree that it is important to continue pursuing ways to engage and expand faith-based partnerships as a way of effectively addressing some of the most critical social service needs in our country?

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Response: As I mentioned at my confirmation hearing, like Secretary Haaland I support engaging with stakeholders and the public, and I believe that partnerships are essential to realizing many of the Department's priorities and fulfilling its responsibilities.

Question 10: The Supreme Court has, in multiple decisions, reiterated that religious organizations cannot be discriminated against in the distribution of a public benefit for which they otherwise qualify because of their religious beliefs or identity. Will you commit to ensuring that no policy of your Department will disqualify a religious organization from receiving aid or participating in grant programs simply because of the organization's religious beliefs or because the organization receives statutory protections for religious freedom like those in Title VII and Title IX?

Response: If confirmed I will follow the law.

Question 11: An important part of prompting and expanding faith-based partnerships is providing clarity on the legal obligations that will be expected of faith-based organizations when they partner with the government. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects the ability of religious organizations to hire employees that support its religious beliefs and mission. Do you agree that it is both logical and appropriate that religious organizations should be able to hire employees that support the religious mission and beliefs of the organization? Do you agree that it is inappropriate for the federal government to dictate to a house of worship or a religious organization what tenets of the faith should be observed? Will you commit to ensuring that any nondiscrimination policy implemented by your agency will reinforce the hiring protections that Congress has passed in Title VII for religious organizations?

Response: If confirmed I will follow the law.

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Questions from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto

Question 1: In recent years, the BLM has spent an inordinate amount of time and resources offering vast acreages for oil and gas development on lands where the oil and gas industry doesn't really have any development interest, and on lands that have little to no potential for development.

Making these lands available for leasing only fuels the speculation industry and wastes BLM resources while locking up the land from being managed for other purposes, like wildlife habitat preservation, outdoor recreation and grazing.

I introduced the End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act that prohibits BLM from offering leases on lands determined to have low or no drilling potential.

- a. **Do you think we should reevaluate the policy when it comes to allowing these low potential lands be available for oil and gas leasing? Should we outright focus leasing on lands with higher potential and reprioritize management of lands with low development potential?**
- b. **If the federal oil and gas leasing program focused its resources on lands with higher potential for development, how would that benefit BLM's mandate to administer lands for multiple-use purposes?**

Response: As was discussed at my hearing, the federal oil and gas leasing program needs reform and modernization. I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking and looking at, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands. I appreciate your interest in reviewing these programs and proposing reforms, and I look forward to learning more about your legislation and to working with you on these issues, if confirmed.

Question 2: When oil and gas leases are bought for speculative purposes, they are hardly ever developed for actual oil and gas production. How does speculative leasing impact better management of our federal lands? If confirmed, how would you take action within the Department to curb speculative leasing?

Response: As I noted in response to the previous question, I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands.

Question 3: In many cases, speculators purchase leases on the non-competitive market. If parcels that were put up for potential lease at a quarterly lease auction and do not receive a minimum bid, then leases for those parcels can still be available on a non-competitive basis for another two years at a reduced price.

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- a. How is non-competitive leasing harmful to multiple-use management? What is the impact on the taxpayer? And what methods and safeguards should BLM consider to eliminate the adverse effects of non-competitive leasing?

Response: As I noted in response to the previous questions, I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands.

Question 4: Regarding the large military installations in Southern and Northern Nevada...both the Air Force and Navy have sought to significantly expand the footprint of their installations, which would have substantive impacts on lands managed by the Interior Department, including the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, popular recreational areas, federally-owned grazing lands, and important tribal and cultural resources. The Department of the Interior must be actively engaged in these discussions and finding reasonable, workable, and collaborative solutions with the military and local stakeholders.

- a. Can I have your commitment that in your role as Deputy Secretary, that you will work with all stakeholders to find such solutions?

Response: Yes. My approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach in this instance, if I am confirmed, including ensuring the Department is engaged with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy to reach collaborative solutions.

- b. In the FY21 NDAA, I included an amendment creating Inter-governmental Executive Committees between the military and the Interior Department to allow local, state, and tribal governments a public forum to collaborate with the military in providing advice and exchanging information on the management of natural and local resources on federal lands in Nevada currently used for military purposes. Will you ensure that Interior is an equal and active partner in these Committees?

Response: Yes, I will.

Question 5: As included as part of the FY20 Omnibus, the Energy Act of 2020 established a national goal for renewable energy production on federal land. In collaboration with relevant federal agencies, the Interior Secretary is tasked with issuing permits that authorize the production of no less than 25 gigawatts of electricity from solar, wind, and geothermal energy projects on public lands by 2025.

- a. If confirmed, what actions would you take to support Secretary Haaland in achieving this goal?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will support Secretary Haaland and her team in the Department to achieve the ambitious goals that President Biden has set for addressing the climate crisis and creating good-paying union jobs by developing renewable energy on our public lands and waters.

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Questions from Senator Bill Cassidy

Question 1: During a 2018 event at the University of Chicago, you said it didn't sit well with you when Obama political staff said things such as "*Republicans won't like anything we do so we should do X regardless of the detrimental or unnecessary impact it may have.*" You said, "*that's not what we're here to do.*"

- **How will you ensure hasty, politically driven decisions are not made which may negatively impact U.S. workers, the economy or programs funded by activities managed and regulated by the Department?**

Response: To clarify, the portion of the interview you cite did not reference "Republicans" but was a general discussion of my belief that decisions should be made on the merits, not based on whether elected officials from a particular part of the country may or may not support the administration politically. As your question notes, I do not believe that decisions affecting millions of Americans should be politically motivated. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of a team that makes decisions based on sound policy, the law, and that are informed by science.

Question 2: In May 2017, you were a guest on a podcast hosted by Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy to discuss an executive order signed by President Trump in April of that year titled "Implementing an American First Offshore Energy Strategy". On that podcast, you and the host began discussing the BP Gulf oil spill and you said,

"Industry has stepped up in a big way to improve safety and performance of drilling operations to help ensure this doesn't happen again."

- **Do you still stand by your 2017 statement about industry efforts? Please expand further on how industry has "stepped up."**

Response: Yes. The discussion surrounding this issue in the podcast was focused on the previous administration's review of the well control rule. My comments reflected my view that, following the Deepwater Horizon incident, industry and government had responded in a largely positive way to increase drilling safety standards, culminating in the issuance of the well control rule in 2016. The dialog in the interview explored, in part, my hope at the time that safety would be kept front and center in the oversight of offshore oil and gas activity.

Question 3: The Department of the Interior is still operating under the 5-year OCS drilling programs finalized when you previously served there. A November 2016 report published by the Department on potential lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions and social cost of carbon from OCS oil and natural gas said,

"America's GHG emissions will be little affected by leasing decisions under BOEM's 2017–2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program ... and could, in fact, increase slightly in the absence of new OCS leasing ... for purposes of this analysis and the analysis that forms the basis of the

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2017-2022 Program, foreign sources of oil will substitute for reduced OCS supply, and the production and transport of that foreign oil would emit more GHGs."

- **Do you believe the United States is in a stronger place to lead the world in emission reductions if we are producing domestic energy rather than importing fuel from a country with fewer environmental regulations?**

Response: While I am not currently in a position to evaluate other countries' environmental regulations related to oil and gas production, if I am confirmed I commit to ensuring domestic energy production overseen by the Department of the Interior is done in an environmentally responsible way including with respect to GHG emissions, is informed by science, is subject to strong safety oversight, and incorporates the best available technologies and practices. I fully support the administration's review of the oil and gas leasing programs on federal lands and waters, to ensure they are operating in the best interests of the taxpayers and the need to respond to the climate crisis. I am not aware that this administration has any intent to replace domestic oil production with foreign imports.

Question 4: During a recent hearing this Committee held on the onshore oil and leasing program, the BLM witness repeatedly said existing permits and applications have not been adversely impacted despite internal memos which direct and elevate certain Departmental reviews and decisions from the career to the political staff. However, Occidental's CEO said roughly 300 lease extension requests have been submitted and none have been approved.

- **What assurances can you offer to those lease holders concerned the Department is going to take action that adversely impact permits and applications or through inaction accomplish the same?**

Response: I am not at the Department and I am not aware of the circumstances of the extension requests you mention. However, my understanding is that the Secretary's Order 3395 provided for the temporary suspension of delegated authority, which expired in March. It is appropriate that leadership in the Department continue to track permitting issues and have the opportunity to review them as necessary. If confirmed I will seek to avoid any undue delay of decisions that I am involved in.

Question 5: One of the most important laws for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is the Outer continental shelf Lands Act (OSCLA). OSCLA says the national policy for the Outer Continental Shelf is, subject to environmental safeguards, to expeditiously and orderly develop the national resource reserve. My constituents are concerned the Administration is moving away from the stated policy of this law.

- **What do the words expeditiously and orderly mean to you?**

Response: It is appropriate that the Department review of its federal oil and gas programs, including through the lens of climate change and ensuring a fair return to the taxpayer, as articulated by the President. President Biden supports America's energy security, and as Secretary Haaland has stated oil and gas development will be a part of that mix for years to come. I understand the significance of offshore oil and gas production to

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Louisiana, and I know that the administration takes jobs and the economy very seriously.

Question 6: The Administration has been, when referring to the OCS, using the talking point that more than 12 million acres of public waters are under lease and over 9.3 million (or 77%) of those acres are non-producing.

As you know, it takes several years, a sizeable investment and significant regulatory compliance to make an offshore non-producing lease productive. This is very different from an inactive lease where there is no effort being made to bring the lease in to production.

- **If you are confirmed, how will ensure mischaracterizations such as these do not continue?**

Response: I understand that nonproducing does not necessarily mean inactive, and that activities to bring leases into production can take time. In my communications I will always strive to explain myself and the administration's policies with the facts. I also understand that the pause on new leasing directed by Executive Order does not affect operations on existing leases, including production and new permitting. Among other things, this means existing leases that are not currently producing may be brought into production through diligent development consistent with law and regulation.

Question 7: The Department has said, "*it is time for the Interior Department to take steps to better manage our public lands*" criticizing the last Administration for offering more than 78 million acres offshore for oil, gas and mineral development.

First, these 78 million acres encompass roughly 5 percent of the total offshore acreage around the entire country including the territories and possessions and was available acreage in planning areas where lease sales were authorized under the current Obama-era 5-year OCS program. Second, during the Obama Administration the Department of Interior changed the OCS leasing policy for lease sales to include entire leasable areas region wide across the Gulf, meaning more acreage could be made available in a single lease sale.

The Department also routinely says just 5 million acres were purchased in lease sales. In a 2018, you wrote a paper for Columbia's Center on Global Energy Policy regarding one of the Department's lease sales where you said,

"... the offshore industry has mostly moved away from bidding speculatively on acreage in the GOM. This more strategic, value-driven approach to leasing decisions also has contributed to the decline in recent years in the number of tracts that receive bids, as well as the number of tracts that receive multiple bids. Companies are focusing on lease blocks that are in prospective areas, fit well with their portfolio, and are close to existing, accessible infrastructure and facilities ... [Lease Sale 250] should not be viewed as a disappointment or sign that the GOM is not attractive for industry investment. On the contrary, last month's region-wide GOM lease sale reflects an industry that evaluates the GOM in the context of a diverse set of global opportunities, remains disciplined in managing costs even as

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commodity prices have ticked upwards, and is focused on making strategic investments in pursuit of value. Those are all positive signs."

- Is this criticism about the amount of offshore acreage made available by the previous administration fair given the small percentage it encompasses of total offshore acreage and that it was already available under the current 5-year OCS drilling program?
- Do you believe making less acreage available could hinder the ability for companies to make strategic, value-driven decisions when bidding on leases thus potentially impacting the return to taxpayers?

Response: At my hearing I noted that, in my view, it is appropriate for the Secretary to undertake this review of the oil and gas programs, including through the lens of climate change and ensuring a fair return to the taxpayer, as articulated by the President. It would be appropriate for that review to include how lease sales should be structured.

Question 8: Do you agree that Geophysical and Geological permitting remains integral to development on existing leases and providing data for future hydrocarbon development and locating places for carbon capture and storage, alternative energy siting and infrastructure monitoring?

Response: In general, the acquisition of G&G data is an important part of the offshore oil and gas exploration process.

Question 9: If confirmed will you commit to the timely issuance of Geophysical and Geological permits in the Gulf of Mexico?

Response: The Secretary has made clear that the Department will continue to advance permits and plans associated with existing leases.

Question 10: Section 18 of OCSLA includes a consultation requirement with affected Governors as each leasing program is developed.

- What is your view of what it means when there's a consultation requirement with an affected stakeholder and what you think is necessary for the consultation to be meaningful rather than merely telling someone what's going to happen?
- If confirmed, will you commit to complying with NEPA, to consult with the Governors of affected states, and to consult with directly impacted stakeholders – including leaseholders – before making another decision to cancel or otherwise modify the number of future lease sales?

Response: As I said at the hearing, my approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. If

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confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department complies with NEPA and the requirements under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and Coastal Zone Management Act.

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Questions from Senator Cindy Hyde Smith

Question 1: Mississippi is home to a rich and varied cross section of our Nation's history. Part of that history tells the painful story of the trade in enslaved people, including the Forks of the Road Slave Market, which is part of the Natchez National Historical Park. In 2017, Congress authorized the National Park Service to acquire land at Forks of the Road. In FY2021, we appropriated \$400,000 within the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase private property within the authorized park boundary. The City of Natchez is also donating city property to support this effort. Remaining updated on the status of NPS's due diligence relating to this donation of city property is highly important. If confirmed, will you commit to work with me to see the bipartisan Forks of the Road project come to fruition?

Response: Yes, if confirmed I will work with you to see that the land acquisition at the historic Forks of the Road site, including the proposed donation by the city of Natchez, is completed and that your office is updated on the process. The site makes an important contribution to telling the full, and in this case painful, story of our nation's history.

Question 2: Do you agree that the offshore leasing plan requires consultation with the coastal governors, and if confirmed, could you explain how you would incorporate said consultation within the Department of Interior on offshore lease sales?

Response: Yes, I agree that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act contains consultation provisions for the Secretary during preparation of a proposed offshore program. As I said at the hearing, my approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach and follow the law, if I am confirmed.

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Questions from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Mr. Beaudreau, the Little Shell Tribe in Montana is the most recent federally recognized tribe in the nation. There were three months between federal recognition and a global pandemic and this has left the Little Shell Tribe in a tough situation as they are still in the process of establishing themselves. Will you commit to reaching out to the Little Shell Tribe and working with them to establish services for their tribal members?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Indian Affairs works with the Little Shell Tribe to support their new Tribal government and operations.

Question 2: Mr. Beaudreau, there is an ongoing public safety crisis in much of Indian Country. BIA law enforcement is severely understaffed and infrastructure problems have created highly unsafe environments. Places like Northern Cheyenne need your support. The Northern Cheyenne are working diligently to reopen the Lama Deer Jail as a holding facility. Can you commit to working with the Tribe to get the holding facility open as quickly as possible?

Response: If confirmed, I would look forward to learning more about this specific facility, as I know that Tribal justice facilities have serious staffing and infrastructure needs that I believe the Department must take seriously. I would be briefed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department and would ensure that we are working with the Tribe as we determine how best to address the issue.

Question 4: Mr. Beaudreau, the Biden Administration has yet to respond to the request by myself and 13 other Senators for a briefing on the 30 X 30 Initiative. The Department of the Interior has been exceedingly sparse on details for what this initiative will encompass which has many Montanans concerned about what it means for working lands, private property rights, and how the Administration intends to utilize authorities under the Antiquities Act. If confirmed, will you commit to communicating with my office frequently on this initiative?

Response: I understand that the 30x30 initiative is meant to be an inclusive approach to comprehensive conservation, that would take into account the good conservation work that does exist on working lands. The administration's report on this initiative was released on May 6. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with your office, and other stakeholders, to accomplish the Administration's goal of conserving 30% of lands and waters by 2030.

Question 5: Mr. Beaudreau, if confirmed will you advocate to include working lands, such as those being managed for grazing or timber or reclaimed lands, in the 30 X 30 initiative and will you commit to a no-net-loss policy for sportsmen and recreational access under this initiative?

Response: As I discussed at the hearing, the 30x30 initiative is intended to be an inclusive approach – providing opportunities at the state and local levels, as well as for private landowners to participate voluntarily in conservation partnerships if they wish to. I also understand that the Department has engaged with landowners, Tribes, hunters, anglers, farmers, ranchers and other key stakeholders in the development of the 30x30 strategy. If confirmed, I would look forward to becoming involved in the 30x30 conservation initiative.

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Question 6: Mr. Beaudreau, the 2015 Cottonwood decision was decided while you were Chief of Staff at the Department of the Interior. Following the case, the Obama Administration filed a petition of certiorari that stated the case had the potential to “cripple forest management.” What was your role in determining how the Obama Administration responded to this lawsuit and do you agree with this assessment on the impacts to forest management?

Response: My recollection is that the Department was not a party to that lawsuit, which primarily involved the U.S. Forest Service. While it would be important to understand the specific legal and program impacts of that decision on the Department’s forest management programs in recent years, I agree that efficiency and predictability are important factors for effective, science-based forest management programs.

Question 7: Mr. Beaudreau, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a joint draft rulemaking last January seeking to address the implications of the 2015 Cottonwood decision via rulemaking. The majority of comments received on the rulemaking have been supportive. If confirmed, what factors will you consider when determining whether to proceed with finalizing this draft rule?

Response: I am committed to finding collaborative, science-based approaches to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests. While I’m not yet at the Department, I understand that the FWS is in the process of responding to comments on the proposed regulation and is determining next steps forward. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of the team involved and learning more about next steps on this matter.

Question 8: Mr. Beaudreau, Western states have invested unprecedented resources and time to conserve sage grouse. Wildlife biologists report, however, that the benefits of habitat conservation efforts won’t be realized for around thirty years due to ecosystem and sage grouse dynamics. If confirmed, how will you consider state conservation efforts—particularly those expected to yield longer term species’ benefits—in listing decisions?

Response: I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency in making decisions that affect state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state and tribal wildlife agencies, which are primary managers of wildlife with significant expertise to offer, to implement the ESA. As I mentioned at the hearing, states and state plans have been essential to sage grouse conservation, in my view.

Question 9: Mr. Beaudreau, last month the Fish and Wildlife Service released the 5-year status review of the grizzly bear in the lower 48-states. The review concluded that the grizzly bear had biologically recovered in the Northern Continental Divide and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystems. The status review only provided a status recommendation for the bear in the lower 48-states since that is how the species is listed, however, the agency can and frequently has moved to list and delist distinct population segments. What is your perspective on the Fish and Wildlife Service’s distinct population segment policy?

Response: As we discussed at my hearing, I would be guided by the science and the law, and would want to understand better what the outlook is for recovery, management, and resiliency for the species. If I am

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confirmed, I would work with the FWS to fully understand these criteria and how they inform the decisions on this particular species and its population areas.

Question 10: Mr. Beaudreau, since the Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the grizzly bear has biologically recovered in the NCDE and GYE and met recovery criteria, do you foresee anything that would prevent the Department of the Interior from moving forward with delisting these two population segments?

Response: The ongoing recovery of the grizzly bear is a remarkable success of the Endangered Species Act. As we discussed at my hearing, I would be guided by the science and the law, and would want to understand better what the outlook is for recovery, management, and resiliency for the species. If I am confirmed, I would work with the FWS to understand these criteria and how they inform the decisions on this particular species and its population areas. It is my understanding that the status of the listing has been the subject of recent litigation and I look forward to learning more about that as well.

Question 11: Mr. Beaudreau, there are a number of new wind and solar projects being developed in Montana. However, we have heard from stakeholders that they chose to locate on private land as working with federal agencies on permits is lengthy and expensive. What actions should the department take to streamline permitting and attract more renewable energy projects on federal lands?

Response: President Biden has made clear his intention to address the climate crisis that we face, and the Department's renewable energy programs are a significant component of the Administration's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and build a clean-energy economy. Regulatory processes that are put in place should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I also believe that it is important to be transparent and to work with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments, when making these decisions and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

Question 12: Mr. Beaudreau, storage will be an essential part of any expansion of intermittent energy resources. Pumped hydro storage is one of these technologies and Montana is leading the nation on the development and use of this technology. What actions should the Department take to facilitate storage projects on federal lands?

Response: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an important part of our clean energy future. I understand that pumped storage hydropower accounts for the vast majority of energy storage currently on the grid. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower and pumped hydro storage on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to a changing climate.

Question 13: Mr. Beaudreau, when speaking of a clean energy future, would you include hydropower as important component in a carbon free energy grid?

Response: Yes. As I noted in the response to the previous question, hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an important part of our energy future, and it can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid.

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Question 14: Mr. Beaudreau, when speaking of a clean energy future, would you include a coal or natural gas plant fitted with CCUS technology as an important component in a carbon free energy grid?

Response: Like Secretary Haaland, I believe it is fundamental that we tackle the climate crisis by innovating, harnessing our technology and creating jobs. I understand that the Biden Administration is open to many technologies that support carbon capture and sequestration, and other technologies to meet the net zero goal by 2050. I support that approach and I understand that the administration is working to support the development of CCUS technology.

Question 15: Mr. Beaudreau, do you believe we should build more hydropower dams and units on public lands and waters or do you think we should remove existing dams?

Response: I do not believe this is an either/or proposition. President Biden strongly supports clean energy generation, including from hydropower sources. At the same time, some dams could be appropriate candidates for removal based on age, impact on other resources, or other factors. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on our public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change, and consider specific situations as they arise in their own specific circumstances.

Question 16: Mr. Beaudreau, do you support the breaching of hydropower dams in the Columbia Snake River System?

Response: I am aware of the proposal that you reference, and I look forward to working with experts at the Department and with stakeholders to the extent that this issue arises, if confirmed.

Question 17: Mr. Beaudreau, do you believe we should streamline permitting for offshore marine and in-stream hydrokinetic power?

Response: As I said in response to an earlier question, regulatory processes should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed, including for offshore marine and hydrokinetic power.

Question 18: Mr. Beaudreau, where else do you see opportunities to streamline permitting on federal lands?

Response: I believe that the Department's leaders should always be looking for opportunities to make the permitting and other processes that the Department and its bureaus carry out more effective and efficient. If confirmed, I commit to taking this approach in my role at the Department and to ensuring that our regulatory processes are always coordinated, transparent, and efficient.

Question 19: Mr. Beaudreau, unlike oil and gas development on federal lands, wind and solar development on federal lands does not create direct revenue for local communities. Do you support creating a revenue sharing arrangement for wind and solar like there is for oil and gas?

Response: That is an interesting question and, if confirmed, I will look forward to discussing this issue further.

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Question 20: Mr. Beaudreau, What actions should the Department or Congress take to ensure communities get a fair return from renewable energy projects on federal land?

Response: It is important that the public get a fair return for the use of its land and resources for energy development. If I am confirmed I would look forward to exploring specific examples and ideas that may be appropriate for renewable resources.

Question 21: Mr. Beaudreau, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture were incorporated into a “wildfire subcabinet” during the Trump Administration to increase coordination with the agencies during wildfire season. If confirmed, would you support keeping a wildfire subcabinet? How do you intend to coordinate wildland firefighting efforts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

Response: I am not yet part of the Administration and I am not deeply familiar with the specific action referenced in your question, but throughout my career in federal service I have been clear in my belief that coordination among federal agencies is critical to success, and that is particularly important with regard to wildland firefighting efforts. If I am confirmed I will make communication and coordination with the USDA and state and local agencies a priority. I would encourage strong, high level coordination among wildfire agencies and look to learn from best practices from across past administrations.

Question 22: Mr. Beaudreau, as ranking member of the National Parks subcommittee and growing up in the shadow of Yellowstone National Park, I know how important our park system is for conservation and tourism.

a) How can we better promote our smaller, less visited parks?

Response: Our parks and public lands are a national treasure. If confirmed, I would encourage these parks to continue the work that many are currently engaged in, such as working with tourist agencies to promote visitation, hosting special events, developing more robust online information, and taking advantage of programs such as Every Kid Outdoors. The Department of the Interior and its leadership have a platform and we can use that to promote all of our public lands, not just the most visited ones, to broaden the economic benefit and equitable access to the outdoors across the nation.

b) What actions will you take to implement the Great American Outdoors Act?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to getting to the Department and working with career staff to ensure that they have the tools necessary to implement the Great American Outdoors Act and to begin addressing the maintenance backlog and improving our federal lands. I will also ensure that the Department in implementing the Land and Water Conservation Fund program. The passage of the Act was a bipartisan success and if confirmed I would be honored to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that implementation is as successful as possible.

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c) **How can the Park Service be better partners with gateway communities?**

Response: Understanding the interdependency between parks and gateway communities, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the National Park Service leadership, and individual park managers, continually look for ways to work together with gateway community leaders on issues that affect the quality of life for residents, park employees, and visitors. The Park Service can benefit from partnerships with local communities that can leverage resources and in turn, engage in close communication and collaboration on matters of joint interest like planning.

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

In Wyoming and across the West, management strategies of the wild horse and burro populations have been largely unsuccessful. This has resulted in significant rates of overstocking in both designated Herd Management Areas (HMA) and holding facilities, poor herd health, and established herds in non-HMA locations.

We write today to support the active management of these herds by applauding the recent Environmental Assessment (EA) that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released entitled: Wild Horse Gather to Appropriate Management Levels on the Adobe Town, Salt Wells Creek, Great Divide Basin, White Mountain, and Little Colorado Herd Management Areas.

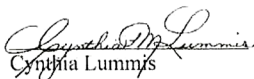
BLM estimates there are 5,105 wild horses across the five specified HMAs in SW Wyoming. The high Appropriate Management Level (AML) for these populations is 2,145. Based on BLM's analysis and data, wild horse populations within these HMAs exceed high AML by 2,960. This means the current total population is more than double the established high AML. The BLM has determined that 3,555 excess wild horses are present within the HMAs and need to be removed in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance, as well as maintain the health of the population.

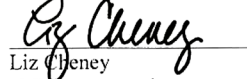
After much study, research and analysis, the AML was established by specialists to help ensure a thriving natural ecological balance to support multiple-use relationships. Swift action to reduce the population is critical. Absent such action, continued use of forage and water resources is expected to have a detrimental impact to rangeland health and overall thriving natural ecological balance, likely to be worsened if current drought conditions on the HMAs persist.

We support full implementation of BLM's proposed action to remove the 3,555 excess wild horses and urge that it be completed in 2021. If the implementation occurs over multiple years, the BLM will need to adjust the number of wild horses to be gathered, removed, or treated as the population is increasing rapidly. This action will help restore Wyoming's rangelands for sustainable multiple uses.

Sincerely,


John Barrasso, M.D.
U.S. Senator


Cynthia Lummis
U.S. Senator


Liz Cheney
U.S. Representative

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Oppose Tommy Beaudreau for Deputy Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our organizations, and our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to oppose the nomination of Tommy Beaudreau for Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior and we urge you to vote no on his nomination. Tommy Beaudreau simply possesses too many conflicts of interests with the fossil fuel industry and a lackluster record within the Department of the Interior during the Obama administration to serve in such a critical role managing our nation's public lands and irreplaceable natural heritage, not to mention tackling the climate crisis that has been caused by the very industry that Mr. Beaudreau has represented for years.

Mr. Beaudreau's financial disclosure report reveals numerous, deeply-troubling conflicts of interests with the fossil fuel industry. After leaving the Obama Administration, Mr. Beaudreau entered private practice as a Partner in Latham & Watkins's environment, land, and resource department. During this time, he represented numerous coal mining, oil and gas, pipeline development, and mining companies including: Arch Resources, Total, Beacon Offshore Energy, Epic Midstream, Unocal Pipeline, and BHP.¹

Mr. Beaudreau also appears to have done work for two Saudi Arabian companies² — Red Sea Development³ and NEOM — the latter of which is connected to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.⁴ Reports indicate that the NEOM megacity project will result at least 20,000 members of the Huwaitat tribe being evicted from their tribal land.⁵ Mr. Beaudreau's many, deep

¹ Beaudreau, Tommy, Public Financial Disclosure Report (Mar. 17, 2021) <https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/C41A98393C66DBB4852586BF002EB529/%24FILE/Beaudreau.%20Tommy.%20%20final278.pdf>.

² *Id.* at 6, 7.

³ His Royal Highness The Crown Prince Announces The Launch Of 'The Red Sea' Project As An International Tourist Destination As Part Of The Kingdom's 2030 Vision (Jul. 31, 2017) <https://www.pif.gov.sa/en/MediaCenter/NewsAttachments/The%20Red%20Sea%20-%20Press%20Release%20-%20English.pdf>.

⁴ HRH the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announces: NEOM – The Destination for the Future (Oct. 23, 2017) <https://www.pif.gov.sa/en/MediaCenter/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=31>.

⁵ Ruth Michaelson, 'It's being built on our blood': the true cost of Saudi Arabia's \$500bn megacity, The Guardian (May 4, 2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/04/its-being-built-on-our-blood-the-true-cost-of-saudi-arabia-5bn-mega-city-neom>.

connections to the fossil fuel industry stand in stark contrast to Secretary Haaland's disclosure report.⁶

Eleven years ago, the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster killed 11 oil workers and spewed more than 210 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for nearly three months, killing thousands of marine mammals, sea turtles, and birds. Mr. Beaudreau joined Interior shortly after the Deepwater Horizon disaster to help oversee the reform of offshore oil and gas, including the design and implementation of new regulations establishing standards for blowout preventers.⁷

Mr. Beaudreau failed to ensure that the strongest possible regulatory safeguards were implemented post-Deepwater Horizon. The rules failed to require the use of crucial safety technology such as blind shear rams on all blowout preventers by excluding them on existing floating drilling units and those currently under construction. The administration even admitted the new rules did not make the blowout preventers completely fail-safe, and it provided the industry up to seven years to comply with many of the requirements.

Mr. Beaudreau also failed to adequately address systemic problems that led to the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe. The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling identified systemic breakdowns in the environmental-review process for oil and gas activities as another major problem, as the Interior Department had excluded the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig from an in-depth environmental review. Although the Commission called for significant revisions, meaningful changes never occurred at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), which Mr. Beaudreau oversaw at the time. Instead, Mr. Beaudreau as the Director of BOEM, which is responsible for all offshore leasing and development at Interior, continued to rubber-stamp offshore drilling with no real review.

Tommy Beaudreau is too cozy with the industry that is most responsible for the escalating climate crisis, and would likely undermine the President's stated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030. His conflicts of interest and industry ties, which stand in stark contrast to Secretary Haaland, are incompatible with the Department, and his confirmation would greatly hinder the protections of our most cherished natural and cultural resources.

Sincerely,

1. Center for Biological Diversity
2. 2degrees Northampton Mass
3. 350.org
4. 350 Eugene
5. 350 Hawaii
6. 350 Kishwaukee (Illinois)

⁶ Haaland, Debra Anne, Public Financial Disclosure Report (Dec. 23, 2020) <https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/626D6068E15C3FFF8525865C00317974/%24FILE/Haaland%20Debra%20Anne%20%20final278.pdf>.

⁷ Secretary Jewell Praises President Obama's Intent to Nominate Tommy Beaudreau as Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (Apr. 26, 2016) <https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-praises-president-obamas-intent-to-nominate-tommy-beaudreau-as-assistant-secretary-for-policy-management-and-budget>.

7. 350 Pensacola
8. Anthropocene Alliance
9. Clean Energy Action
10. Climate Action Now Western Mass
11. Coalition Against Pipelines
12. Conejo Climate Coalition
13. Dogwood Alliance
14. Earth Action, Inc.
15. Elders Climate Action
16. Empower our Future
17. Food & Water Watch
18. FracTracker Alliance
19. Friends of the Earth
20. International Indigenous Youth Council, Los Angeles
21. Kickapoo Peace Circle
22. Milwaukee Riverkeeper
23. Publish What You Pay--United States
24. Rachel Carson Council
25. Revolving Door Project
26. Seeding Sovereignty
27. The Enviro Show
28. The Freedom BLOC
29. WildEarth Guardians
30. Zero Hour