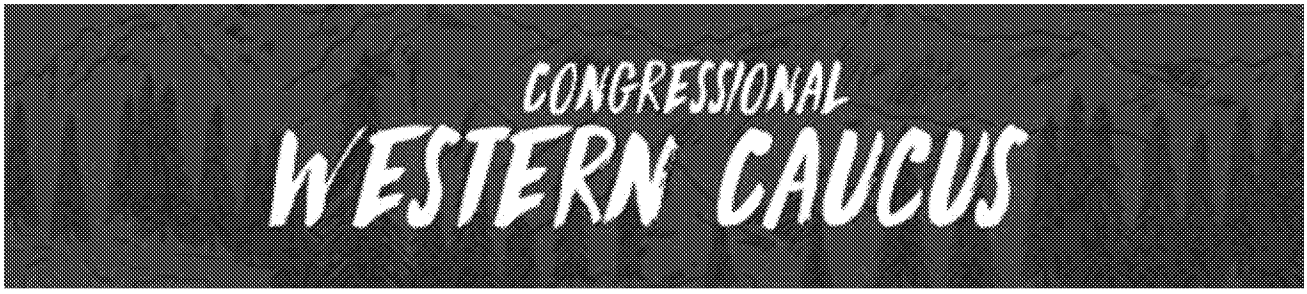
Message

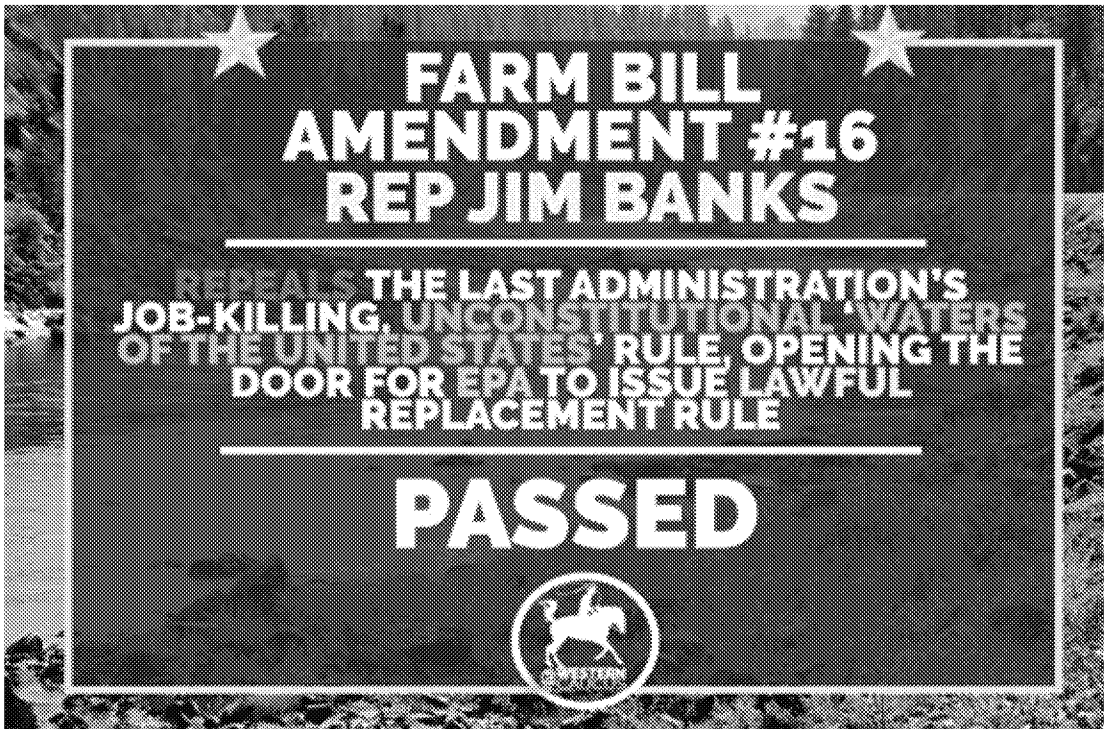
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/21/2018 4:49:14 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: ICYMI: Rep. Banks' WOTUS Repeal Amendment Passes House Floor



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 21, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

In Case You Missed It: Rep. Banks' WOTUS Repeal Amendment Passes House Floor



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Jim Banks (IN-03)** released the following statements after Congressman Banks' Amendment #16 to H.R. 2 - which would repeal the 'Waters of the United States' rule issued by the Obama Administration - passed the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by a bipartisan vote of 238-173:

Congressman Jim Banks stated "While I am glad to see my colleagues support my amendment to repeal this onerous regulation, I am disappointed that the farm bill ultimately did not pass. The WOTUS rule gave unelected bureaucrats at the EPA the power to broadly interpret what is a navigable waterway, leading to mass confusion for farmers in northeast Indiana and across the country. We are getting closer than ever to providing much-needed clarity to the American people, and I am hopeful that the House will advance my amendment to the Senate in the near future."

Chairman Paul Gosar said: "A permanent, legislative fix for WOTUS is crucially necessary, and my friend and colleague Jim Banks' amendment would allow one by paving the way for EPA to write a definition of 'navigable waters' under the Clean Water Act that is both Constitutional and commonsensical. By expanding EPA jurisdiction to transient waters and tiny ditches, the Obama-era definition is neither of those - and it must go. Congress must return regulatory certainty to our nation's farmers, ranchers, broader industry and private landowners by repealing this behemoth of a regulation."

Background:

On Friday, May 18, 2018, Congressman Banks' Amendment #16 to H.R. 2 - colloquially known as the 'Farm Bill' - was agreed to by a vote of 238-173 on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Rep. Banks' amendment had strong bipartisan support with 13 Democrats voting in favor of final passage.

If made law, the amendment would repeal the Obama-era definition of 'navigable waters' under the Clean Water Act that unconstitutionally expanded the EPA's jurisdiction over transient and insignificant waters, and in a way that was also inconsistent with the underlying Clean Water Act.

The previous Administration's Waters of the U.S. rule, commonly referred to 'WOTUS', attempted to assert Clean Water Act jurisdiction over nearly all areas with even the slightest connections to water resources, including man-made conveyances.

The language of the rule is drafted so vaguely as to encompass nearly all water sources with any hydrologic connection to downstream navigable waters, including ditches, pipes, farmland ponds, groundwater, as well as other waters traditionally regulated by the state. Although the agencies maintained that the rule was narrow and clarified Clean Water Act jurisdiction, it would in fact aggressively expand federal authority under the Clean Water Act while bypassing Congress and creating unnecessary ambiguity. In fact, even the Obama Administration admitted when announcing the final rule that WOTUS would expand agency control over 60% of our country's streams and millions of acres of wetlands which were previously non-jurisdictional.

This proposed water grab runs contrary to Supreme Court decisions as well as state and tribal water laws. If implemented, this misguided regulation would have devastating economic consequences for farmers, ranchers, small businesses, and communities throughout the country.

As the late Justice Scalia wrote in the plurality opinion in the case of Rapanos v. United States, which concerned this definition: "In applying the definition to 'ephemeral streams,' 'wet meadows,' storm sewers and culverts, 'directional sheet flow during storm events,' drain tiles, man-made drainage ditches, and dry arroyos in the middle of the desert, the Corps has stretched

the term 'waters of the United States' beyond parody. The plain language of the statute simply does not authorize this 'Land Is Waters' approach to federal jurisdiction."

See the text of Rep. Banks' amendment here. A press release by Congressman Banks on the amendment's passage can be found here.

- -

Amendment Sponsors & Cosponsors (17):
Jim Banks*, Mark Amodei, Kevin Cramer, Jeff Duncan, Ron Estes, Paul Gosar, Jaime Herrera-Beutler, Trey Hollingsworth, Duncan Hunter, Markwayne Mullin, Steve Pearce, Dana Rohrabacher, Todd Rokita, Jason Smith, Scott Tipton, Mark Walker, Jackie Walorski

Endorsed by:
American Energy Alliance, American Exploration & Mining Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Forest & Paper Association, Americans for Tax Reform, Edison Electric Institute, FreedomWorks (Key Vote), Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Independent Petroleum Association of America, Industrial Minerals Association, National Association of Home Builders (Key Vote), National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Cotton Council, National Club Association, National Taxpayers Union (Key Vote), National Water Resources Association, National Stone Sand and Gravel Association, Public Lands Council, Women's Mining Coalition, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona, Alaska Miners Association, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Arizona Cattlemen's Association, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Mining Association, Arizona Pork Council, Arizona Rock Products Association, AZ , BASS Nation, The Bass Federation-AZ, Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee, Colorado Pork Producers Council, Golden Vertex Corp., Grand Canyon Electric Cooperative Association, International Council of Shopping Centers, Irrigation and Electrical Districts' Association of Arizona, Pima Natural Resource Conservation District, SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Arizona State Senator Sylvia Allen, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/21/2018 3:23:50 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: ICYMI: Rep. LaMalfa's Wireless Broadband Streamlining Amendment Passes House Floor

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 21, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

In Case You Missed It: Rep. LaMalfa's Wireless Broadband Streamlining Amendment Passes House Floor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Western Caucus Member **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at CTIA Kelly Cole,** and **President and CEO of the Wireless Infrastructure Association Jonathan Adelstein** released the following statements after Congressman LaMalfa's amendment to H.R. 2 - which would streamline the permitting process for rural broadband

infrastructure - passed the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by unanimous voice vote:

Congressman Doug LaMalfa said: "Broadband coverage in rural areas has been a challenge for quite some time. As providers build newer infrastructure to support 5G services, it will require more antennas spaced more closely together. While wireless providers generally locate antennas and facilities on private property, they also require access to Federal land to ensure more complete coverage, including for providing emergency services. Unfortunately, the process for securing access to federal land and property has been problematic – providers have faced long delays and uncertain procedures. My bipartisan amendment aims to streamline this process and help bring better broadband coverage to Rural America, and I thank my colleagues for the unanimous support."

Chairman Paul Gosar said: "Many families in the West still lack basic broadband. Streamlining the bureaucratic process that is hampering broadband infrastructure development will create jobs, improve education and grow our economy. I applaud Rep. LaMalfa for his leadership and tireless efforts to close the broadband availability gap."

Kelly Cole, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at CTIA, said: "We support Congressman LaMalfa's amendment to the House Farm Bill. Modernizing outdated deployment rules for federal lands will help spur the build out of faster 5G wireless networks to meet rising connectivity demands from consumers and business, particularly in rural communities."

Jonathan Adelstein, President and CEO of the Wireless Infrastructure Association, called the amendment: "...an important step toward streamlining and expediting wireless broadband siting on federal property controlled by the Forest Service" He continued, "For decades, infrastructure developers have found it extremely difficult to use these lands to deploy wireless broadband facilities, which has an especially negative impact in or near rural communities. Your amendment will provide a streamlined and expedited regulatory framework that is necessary to utilize federal lands for broadband infrastructure deployment and improve wireless broadband service in Rural America."

Background:

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, Congressman LaMalfa's Amendment #31 to H.R. 2, colloquially known as the Farm Bill, was agreed to by voice vote on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

If made law, the amendment would streamline and expedite the regulatory framework necessary to utilize federal lands for broadband infrastructure deployment and improve broadband coverage in Rural America.

The purposes of this amendment are in keeping with President Trump's recognition that arbitrary and duplicative permitting delays are responsible for important projects by government and private entities alike being subject to unprecedented delays and cancellations.

In order to stay on-pace with other advanced Western economies, it is incumbent on our federal government to strategically pinpoint and removing unnecessary barriers to development and growth. Rep. LaMalfa's amendment is part and parcel of this aim - an effort that will require Congressional and Executive action alike before it is completed.

See the text of Rep. LaMalfa's amendment here. A press release by Congressman LaMalfa on the amendment's passage can be found here.

- -

Amendment Sponsors & Cosponsors (4):
Paul Gosar, Doug LaMalfa, Steve Pearce, Jason Smith

Endorsed by:
American Farm Bureau Federation, CTIA, The Internet & Television Association (NCTA), National Stone Sand and Gravel Association, Alaska Miners Association, Arizona Cattlemen's Association, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Pork Council, AZ BASS Nation, The Bass Federation-AZ, Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee, Colorado Pork Producers Council, SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., Arizona State Senator Sylvia Allen, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley

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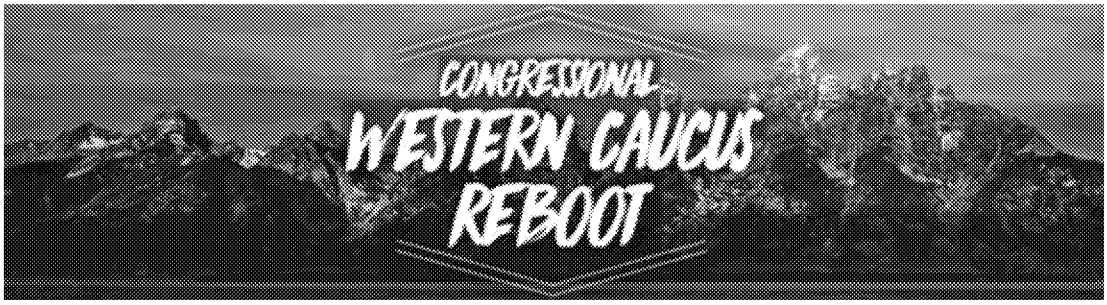
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/29/2018 7:47:07 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 04.29.18



Week of 04.29.2018

30 Members Urge Addition of Copper, Zinc & Others to Critical Mineral List

On Thursday, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Regulatory

Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Western Caucus Member **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and the **American Exploration & Mining Association** released statements after Members of the Western Caucus led an effort supported by 30 Members of Congress and endorsed by dozens of business representatives, elected officials and resource experts requesting that the final composition of the 'critical minerals' list include aggregates, copper, molybendum, gold, zinc, nickel, lead, silver and certain fertilizer compounds additional to the 35 originally contained in the draft list.

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "President Trump and Secretary Zinke have done a great thing by opening up the critical mineral designation process and really listening to the input of experts, Congress, industry and members of the public in order to examine the economic and geopolitical ramifications of certain minerals being placed in or excluded from the 'critical minerals' list. This is a list of those minerals that have sensitive international supply chains but are of extreme importance to our economy and national security. The good news is that for so many of the minerals which may be designated 'critical', we enjoy substantial reserves at home. There is no need for the United States to be import-reliant on adversaries and foes for these valuable materials. Today, we ask that those who are making decisions about 'critical' status make sure that obviously-critical minerals like copper, gold, molybdenum, zinc and others make the final list. Given the incredible domestic need for these minerals, it's no exaggeration to say that the very security and stability of our country depend on the United States prioritizing permitting and development for our vast reserves right here in America."

To see our full press release click HERE. The letter can be seen HERE.

Members of Congress (30) who signed the letter include:
Mark Amodei, Andy Biggs, Dave Brat, Mo Brooks, Ken Buck, Paul Cook, Scott DesJarlais, Jeff Duncan, John Duncan, Tom Emmer, Ron Estes, Greg Gianforte, Louie Gohmert, Paul Gosar, Jody Hice, Duncan Hunter, Raul Labrador, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Alex Mooney, Ralph Norman, Steve Pearce, Scott Perry, Keith Rothfus, David Schweikert, Jason Smith, Lamar Smith, Chris Stewart, Daniel Webster and Ted Yoho

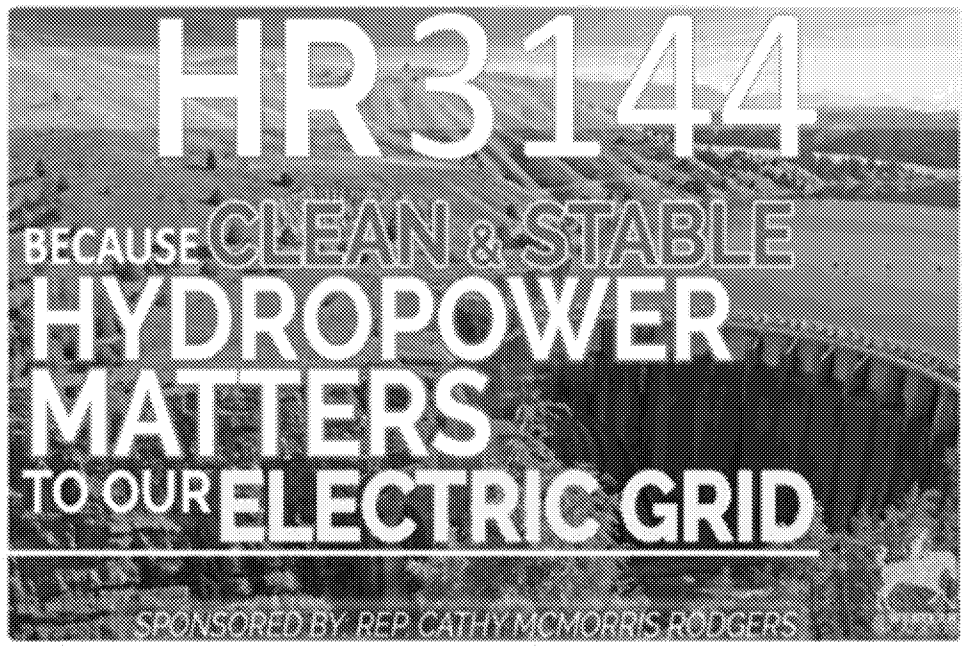
Dam Protection Bill Holds Water on House Floor

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Apr 25

Western Caucus applauds the passage of @cathymcmorris's H.R. 3144 which passed 225-189 on floor today.

3144 bill protect 4 dams in accordance with best available science and extant federal policy by past Administration.

Read the full press release here: bit.ly/2KeqSZt



Rep. Paul Gosar, DDS, Rep. Greg Walden, Rep. Kurt Schrader and 4 others

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3144 - a bipartisan bill introduced by Representatives **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)**, **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, **Greg Walden (OR-02)** and **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** that protects the operations of the four Lower Snake River Dams in accordance with the best available science - on the floor by a vote of 225-189.

H.R. 3144 seeks to provide certainty for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) by keeping in place the current bipartisan operations plan and salmon mitigation measures that are consistent with multiple agency processes and opinions developed and approved by the Obama Administration.

House GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers stated, "Dams and fish can coexist, and after more than two decades in the courtroom, let's let scientists, not judges, manage our river system and get to work to further improve fish recovery efforts. When the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow, our dams provide critical baseload energy to power homes and businesses all across Eastern Washington and the Pacific Northwest. Not only that, they provide transportation and irrigation benefits for our farmers, flood control for our communities, and recreational opportunities that fuel our economy. This isn't about the merits of protecting salmon, we all agree on that. This is about providing certainty and letting experts and scientists in the region, who know the river best, work collaboratively to meet that goal. I'm proud to usher this legislation through the House."

See our full press release HERE. A bipartisan dear colleague can be found HERE. Bill text can be found HERE**.** The Committee Report can be found HERE**.**

#ZinkeInTheHouse

On Thursday, our Members were joined by U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke for discussion at the Western Caucus Monthly Member Meeting!

As always, Members and the Secretary had a lively discussion on important issues that matter to our Members and the people they represent. The Secretary also discussed Interior reorganization as well as NEPA and permitting reform.

Reps. Rob Bishop, Paul Gosar, Scott Tipton, Ralph Norman, Jason Smith, Liz Cheney, Dan Newhouse, Don Young, Tom McClintock, Ralph Abraham, Garret Graves, Tom Emmer, Greg Gianforte, Bruce Westerman. Aumua Amata, Rep. Brian Babin, Roger Marshall, M.D., Kurt Schrader, Jody Hice and Mike Johnson were all in attendance!

Pruitt Signs Proposed Rule to End 'Secret Science'

On Tuesday, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt signed a proposed rule to strengthen the science used in regulations issued by EPA. Per the Agency press release, the rule will ensure that the regulatory science underlying Agency actions is fully transparent, and that underlying scientific information is publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent validation.

"The era of secret science at EPA is coming to an end," **said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.** "The ability to test, authenticate, and reproduce scientific findings is vital for the integrity of rulemaking process. Americans deserve to assess the legitimacy of the science underpinning EPA decisions that may impact their lives."

Conservative groups including Freedomworks are lauding the Agency's steps towards requiring new policy be based on publicly-available study and data.

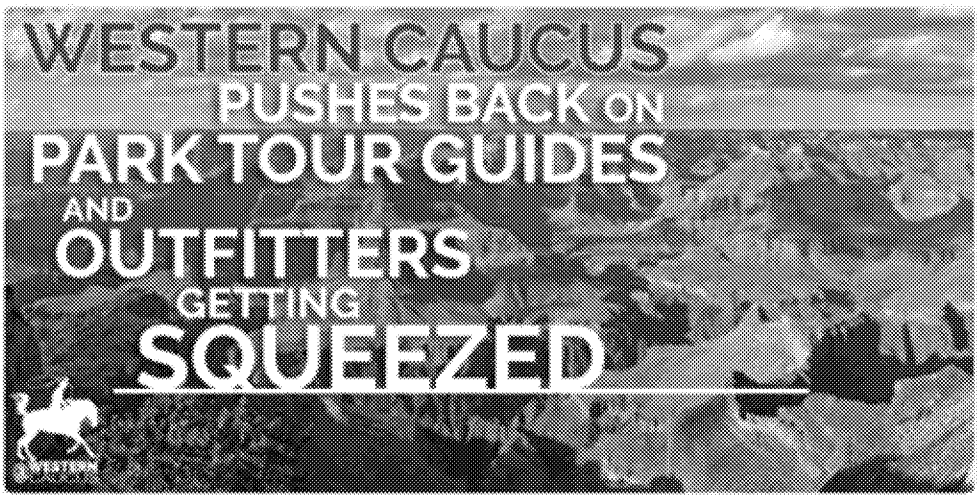
20 Bipartisan Lawmakers Led by Gosar, Bishop & O'Halleran Call for Park Outfitters & Guides Fee Fix

Pinned Tweet

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Apr 27

Today, 20 Members of Congress sent a letter to @Interior @SecretaryZinke and @NatlParkService Acting Director Smith requesting they reevaluate ballooning NPS outfitter, guide and river rafting contract fees.

Read the letter HERE: bit.ly/2JBsE5Y



Kyrsten Sinema, Rep. Tom O'Halleran, Rob Bishop and 6 others

On Friday, a bipartisan group of 20 Members of Congress led by Reps. **Paul Gosar**, **Tom O'Halleran** and **Rob Bishop** signed and sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Acting Director of the National Park Service Paul Daniel Smith requesting that they consider revising the prospectus for the award of new contracts to service-providing entities including outfitters and guides operating within Grand Canyon National Park.

Unfortunately, the National Park Service has issued a prospectus for the award of new contracts that represents a substantial increase in the minimum franchise fee payment - and one that appears inconsistent with the aforementioned Act - from a tiered structure requiring payment of 4% to 18% of certain gross receipts, to one requiring 5% up to 22.5% of gross receipts.

The letter makes clear that, as Members are hearing from multiple contract-holders, the change in franchise fee structure will seriously imperil the sustainability of contract-holding businesses present and future, thereby potentially compromising the ability of park visitors to participate in the many activities and experiences that are dependent on the services of contract-holding businesses.

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "It's important that the National Park Service keep in mind that its responsibility is to serving the American people first. Any focus on revenue generation should come only after meeting - and *exceeding* - that goal. It makes good sense for the Park Service to charge reasonable rates so that service-providers have skin in the game and the best companies win the contracts. What doesn't make sense is for the Park Service to price outfitters and guides out of business by imposing unsustainably high rates. For our Parks visitors to get the full experience they deserve, they invariably need to rely on these service providers. We should empower these passionate small-business owners instead of gouging them out of the market for a little short-term revenue. I'm hopeful that Secretary Zinke and Acting Director Smith respond favorably to this request."

See the full press release HERE. Click HERE to read the full letter with signatures.

Letter Signers (20): Rob Bishop*, Paul Gosar*, *Tom O'Halleran**, Brian Babin, Andy Biggs, Liz Cheney, John Curtis, Greg Gianforte, Garret Graves, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Mia Love, Roger Marshall, Martha McSally, Mark Meadows, *Kyrsten Sinema*, Chris Stewart, Scott Tipton, Bruce Westerman, Ted Yoho

POST OF THE WEEK...

STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING US!

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Message

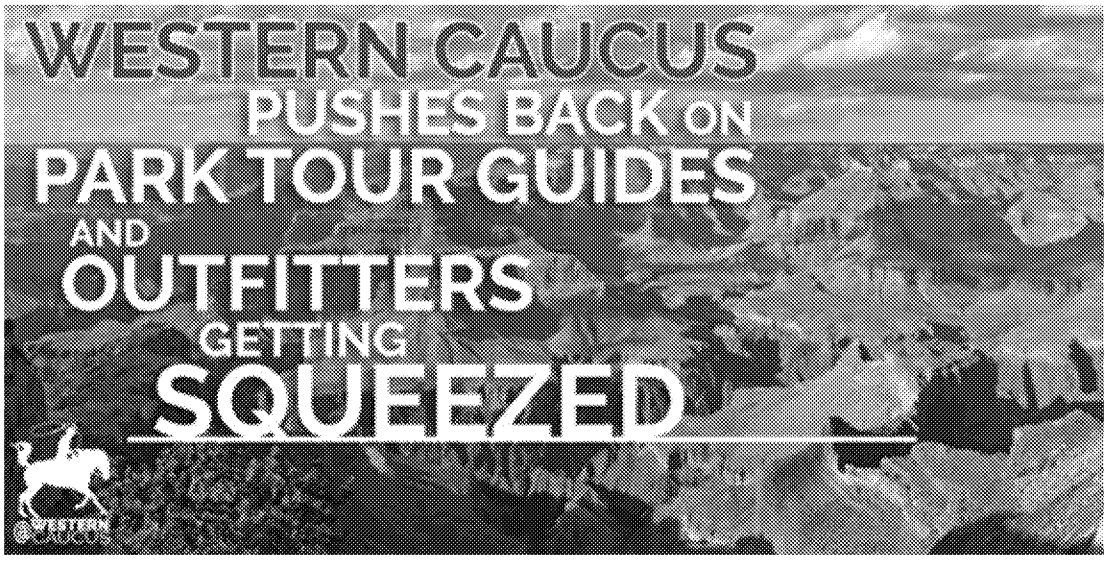
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/27/2018 9:19:15 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Caucus Calls on DOI & NPS to Fix Unsustainable Park Franchise Fees

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: April 27, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Caucus Calls on DOI & NPS to Fix Unsustainable Park Franchise Fees



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** and Executive Director of the **Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association John Dillon** released statements after 20 Members of Congress led an effort to ensure the National Park Service sets fair franchise fees for outfitter, guide and other service-providers within National Parks:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "It's important that the National Park Service keep in mind that its responsibility is to serving the American people first. Any focus on revenue generation should come only after meeting - and *exceeding* - that goal. It makes good sense for the Park Service to charge reasonable rates so that service-providers have skin in the game and the best companies

win the contracts. What doesn't make sense is for the Park Service to price outfitters and guides out of business by imposing unsustainably high rates. For our Parks visitors to get the full experience they deserve, they invariably need to rely on these service providers. We should empower these passionate small-business owners instead of gouging them out of the market for a little short-term revenue. I'm hopeful that Secretary Zinke and Acting Director Smith respond favorably to this request."

Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs said, "This cost increase will hit the consumer's wallet, meaning fewer visitors will be able to afford a Colorado River tour. In a time of tax relief and less government interference, the NPS's action does not fall in line with what the American people voted for in 2016. I am hopeful that Secretary Zinke and Deputy Director Smith will see through the NPS's bureaucratic pursuit of taxpayer money, and respond favorably to our constituents' request."

Executive Director of the Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association John Dillon stated, "Sixteen river outfitting businesses are honored to provide professional guided backcountry whitewater rafting trips to over 18,000 people a year on the mighty Colorado River through the Grand Canyon National Park. Those Outfitters are small family-owned and operated multi-generational companies, some with origins back as early as the late twenties and early thirties. For decades they have worked in partnership and under concessions contracts with the National Park Service to provide visitors with an experience of a lifetime while helping preserve and protect this special place. And for that privilege, Outfitters pay a reasonable fee to the Park Service as outlined by Congress called a 'franchise fee'. It is a certain percentage of gross revenues. Unfortunately, the latest contract renewal prospectus issued by the Park Service is proposing massive unjustified and unexplained increases to our franchise fees. These much higher fees are extremely burdensome to our small businesses, and come on top of other large increases in the general costs to operate such trips including those associated with a new Department of Labor rule issued by the previous administration. Outfitters will have no choice but to pass these added costs on to the customer, raising prices substantially in the process and making river trips unaffordable to many. Equally concerning, the proposed franchise fee increases are so extreme that they could cause many outfitters to have to close their doors, killing jobs and reducing the overall visitor experience in the Park. We're hopeful the Park Service will heed these concerns and reverse course."

Background:

On Friday, a bipartisan group of 20 Members of Congress led by Reps. Paul Gosar, Tom O'Halleran and Rob Bishop signed and sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Acting Director of the National Park Service Paul Daniel Smith requesting that they consider revising the prospectus for the award of new contracts to service-providing entities including outfitters and guides operating within Grand Canyon National Park.

Click HERE to read the full letter with signatures.

Pursuant to an act of Congress - the Concessions Management Improvement Act - the National Park Service (NPS) must consider whether the franchise fees they set for contracting businesses that offer outfitting, guide and other services on NPS lands facilitate those contract-holders in running a business based on projected costs and revenues. NPS must further subordinate the objectives of producing revenue to providing necessary and appropriate services for visitors at reasonable rates through the aforementioned contracting businesses.

Unfortunately, the National Park Service has issued a prospectus for the award of new contracts that represents a substantial increase in the minimum franchise fee payment - and one that appears inconsistent with the aforementioned Act - from a tiered structure requiring payment of 4% to 18% of certain gross receipts, to one requiring 5% up to 22.5% of gross receipts.

This letter makes clear that, as we are hearing from multiple contract-holders, the change in franchise fee structure will seriously imperil the sustainability of contract-holding businesses present and future, thereby potentially compromising the ability of park visitors to participate in the many activities and experiences that are dependent on the services of contract-holding businesses.

These franchise fee increases come simultaneously with required overtime and minimum wage hikes affecting the same contracts per Department of Labor regulations issued during the last Administration, even though NPS has previously cited those same labor cost increases as a factor which should lead to *reduced* franchise fees. The NPS is contradicting itself with the new fee increases, potentially violating the law in so doing – and failing to provide any explanation for these actions in the process.

These increased costs will have to be passed onto Park visitors, effectively constituting an additional “rate hike” on Park attendees and decreasing Park attendance.

Letter signers asked that the NPS revise its prospectus such that it becomes consistent with its statutory mandates which facilitate contract-holders to run workable business models while privileging NPS visitors receiving appropriate services at reasonable rates.

The broader danger of these particular tiered rate increases is that they set a precedent whereby any National Park in the country can impose substantial fee hikes on contract-holders - hikes which are inconsistent with the statute in question and detrimental to the long-term mission of the Park. By addressing this problem for Grand Canyon National Park, the Department of Interior can set a clear precedent whereby it demonstrates the value it places on issuing rate structures nationwide that are consistent with the law and take into consideration the needs and interests of park visitors.

- -

Letter Signers (20): Rob Bishop*, Paul Gosar*, *Tom O'Halleran**, Brian Babin, Andy Biggs, Liz Cheney, John Curtis, Greg Gianforte, Garret Graves, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Mia Love, Roger Marshall, Martha McSally, Mark Meadows, *Kyrsten Sinema*, Chris Stewart, Scott Tipton, Bruce Westerman, Ted Yoho

(* indicates letter-lead)

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/10/2018 8:45:31 PM
To: Davis, Matthew [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=84111ec08c504b6baae0510b2d2ce46a-Davis, Matthew]; Rodrick, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6515dbe46dae466da53c8a3aa3be8cc2-Rodrick, Ch]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Graham, Amy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=26722dfde5b34925b0ad9a8dd4aff308-Graham, Amy]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Block, Molly [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=60d0c681a16441a0b4fa16aa2dd4b9c5-Block, Moll]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Upcoming Meetings & Events
Attachments: Upcoming 2018 Congressional Western Caucus and Western Caucus Foundation Events updated 4.6.18.pdf

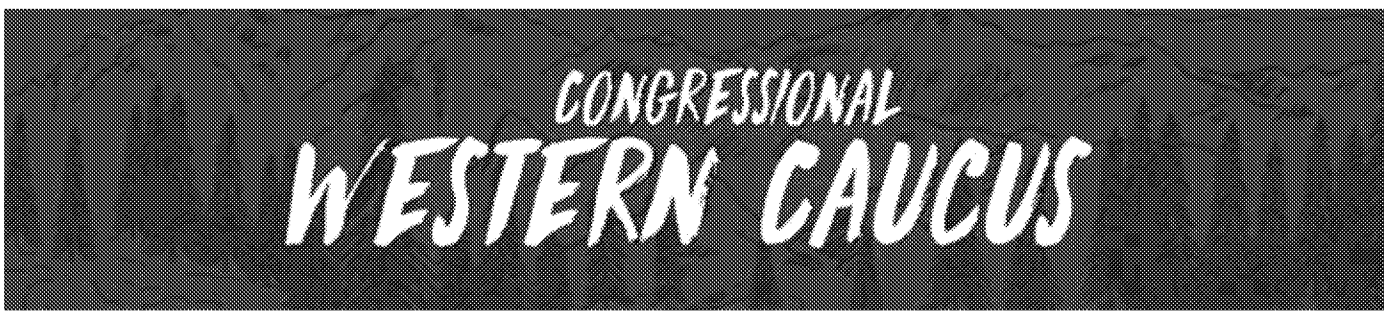
Hope you all are having a good week.

Circling back to see if any of you can make the staff policy breakfast Friday morning and/or if you'd like to be on the agenda if you can make it?

1. **Western Caucus Foundation Staff-Only Monthly Bicameral Policy Meeting** | Friday, April 13th, 2018 | 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 209-08 | Breakfast & coffee provided
   80-100 House and Senate staffers, staff from multiple federal agencies, leadership and committee staff as well as speakers from industry attend this monthly staff policy meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.



Upcoming Meetings & Events…

1. **Western Caucus Foundation Staff-Only Monthly Bicameral Policy Meeting** | Friday, April 13th, 2018 | 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 209-08 | Breakfast & coffee provided
   80-100 House and Senate staffers, staff from multiple federal agencies, leadership and committee staff as well as speakers from industry attend this monthly staff policy meeting.

2. **Western Caucus Monthly Member-Only Meeting with Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman** | Tuesday, April 17th | 12:00-1:00 p.m. | 2247 RHOB | Catered lunch provided
   Commissioner Burman will present, take questions and engage in discussion with our members on their priorities for the entirety of this lunch.
   - Please RSVP or send regrets to Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov and Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov.

3. **Western Caucus Monthly Member-Only Meeting with Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke** | Thursday, April 26th | 12:00-1:00 p.m. | 2247 RHOB | Catered lunch provided
   Secretary Zinke will present, take questions and engage in discussion with our members on their priorities for the entirety of this lunch.
   - **Just added**. *Rescheduled from 2.28.18 lunch meeting that was cancelled due to the floor schedule change.*
   - Please RSVP or send regrets to Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov and Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov.

The full draft schedule for the remainder of the year is attached. EPA Administrator Pruitt is tentatively confirmed for our May Member-Only Meeting and DOT Secretary Chao is confirmed for our June Member-Only Meeting.

Let us know if you have questions. Have a great Easter weekend.

Jeff Small
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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/26/2018 11:34:55 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Members Urge Administration To Include Copper, Other Minerals in Final Critical Minerals List

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: April 26, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Members Urge Administration To Include Copper, Other Minerals in Final Critical Minerals List

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Western Caucus Member **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and the **American Exploration & Mining Association** released statements after Members of the Western Caucus led an effort supported by 30 Members of Congress and endorsed by dozens of business representatives, elected officials and resource experts requesting that the final composition of the 'critical minerals' list include aggregates,

copper, molybendum, gold, zinc, nickel, lead, silver and certain fertilizer compounds additional to the 35 originally put in the draft list:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "President Trump and Secretary Zinke have done a great thing by opening up the critical mineral designation process and really listening to the input of experts, Congress, industry and members of the public in order to examine the economic and geopolitical ramifications of certain minerals being placed in or excluded from the 'critical minerals' list. This is a list of those minerals that rely on sensitive international supply chains but are of extreme importance to our economy and national security. The good news is that for so many of the minerals which may be designated 'critical', we enjoy substantial reserves at home. There is no need for the United States to be import-reliant on adversaries and foes for these valuable materials. Today, we ask that those who are making decisions about 'critical' status make sure that obviously-critical minerals like copper, gold, molybdenum, zinc and others make the final list. Given the incredible domestic need for these minerals, it's no exaggeration to say that the very security and stability of our country depends on the United States government prioritizing permitting and development of our vast reserves right here in America."

Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs said, "The Trump Administration is doing great work on critical minerals. Arizona is home to one of the largest reserves of copper in the world, and should be included in the Administration's final list. Expanding the critical minerals list will enhance our national security, infrastructure, and economy. I urge Secretaries Zinke and Ross to strongly consider our constituents' requests to include copper and other vital minerals."

"The Administration's report proves what we have known for a while: the United States irresponsibly depends on foreign nations for critical minerals. We have the option to shift away from this alarming 100 percent reliance by optimizing our nation's own deposits, the largest of which can be found in my home state of Minnesota. To this day, the largest copper-nickel deposit in the world in northern Minnesota remains untapped. The report illuminates the dangerous costs of continuing down this road, the most serious of which is the risk to our national security, which is why I urge action on my MINER Act to allow for environmentally-appropriate exploration of one of the world's most valuable precious metal deposits," said **Congressman Emmer**.

"The Trump Administration is on the right track to recognize the importance of critical minerals in the American Economy. However, the time is ripe to complete the task and end our foreign dependence when we are ready to responsibly mine here at home. $9.2 Billion and 16,500 jobs are waiting to be unleashed benefiting rural economies," stated the **American Exploration & Mining Association**.

Background:

Today, 30 Members of Congress signed and sent a letter to relevant Administration officials including Secretaries Zinke and Ross as well as the White House Council on Environmental Quality Acting Chair Neumayr requesting that they consider the addition of other minerals to the 'critical minerals' list.

Additional requested minerals include: aggregates, copper, molybendum, gold, zinc, nickel, lead, silver and certain fertilizer compounds.

To see the full letter, including explanations for the possible inclusion of each of the above minerals, as well as Members' signatures click HERE.

On December 20, 2017 President Trump issued Executive Order 13817, in which he directed the Secretary of the Interior in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and consultation with heads of other relevant agencies to determine and publish a list of critical minerals.

Under the Executive Order, a 'critical mineral' is one which is identified to be a non-fuel mineral or mineral material essential to the economic and national security of the United States, the supply chain of which is vulnerable to disruption, and that serves an essential function in the manufacturing of a product, the absence of which would have significant consequences for the economy or for national security.

An initial draft list was produced by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) within the Department of the Interior (DOI) in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Managmennt and published on February 16, 2018 seeking public comment on changes to the list.

See the press release issued by the DOI upon the release of the initial draft list here.

While 35 total materials which meet the definition of a 'critical mineral' were included in that initial list, many resource and foreign policy experts believe that several others, including copper, zinc, molybdenum, gold, silver, several fertilizer compounds and others should be considered as potential additions due to factors including the United States' net import reliance, trends in importation, the questionable or unfriendly diplomatic status of countries from which importation is significant or likely to grow, or other factors which could imperil the stability of supply chains of minerals which are of significant economic or national security importance to the country.

Members of Congress (30) who signed the letter include:
Mark Amodei, Andy Biggs, Dave Brat, Mo Brooks, Ken Buck, Paul Cook, Scott DesJarlais, Jeff Duncan, John Duncan, Tom Emmer, Ron Estes, Greg Gianforte, Louie Gohmert, Paul Gosar, Jody Hice, Duncan Hunter, Raul Labrador, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Alex Mooney, Ralph Norman, Steve Pearce, Scott Perry, Keith Rothfus, David Schweikert, Jason Smith, Lamar Smith, Chris Stewart, Daniel Webster and Ted Yoho

Letter endorsed by:
American Exploration & Mining Association, Women's for Mining Coalition, Americans for Limited Government, Arizona Mining Association, Alaska Miners Association, American Resources Policy Network, APEX, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Arizona Cattlemen's Association, Arizona Pork Council, Arizona Rock Products Association, ASARCO LLC, AZ BASS Nation, Bass Federation-AZ, Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce, Hudbay Rosemont Copper Project, Idaho Mining Association, Jobs For Minnesotans, MiningMinnesota, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Wool Growers Inc., SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Utah Mining Association, Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Arizona District 6 Senator Sylvia Allen, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley and Yavapai County Supervisors Thomas Thurman and Rowle Simmons

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/25/2018 10:22:44 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Dam Protection Bill Holds Water on House Floor

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: April 25, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Dam Protection Bill Holds Water on House Floor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House GOP Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Chair **Greg Walden (OR-02)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chair **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, and Western Caucus Members **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)**, **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large)** issued the following statements after H.R. 3144 - legislation sponsored by Rep. McMorris Rodgers that protects the operations of

the four Lower Snake River Dams in accordance with the best available science - passed the House floor by a vote of 225-189:

House GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers stated, "Dams and fish can coexist, and after more than two decades in the courtroom, let's let scientists, not judges, manage our river system and get to work to further improve fish recovery efforts. When the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow, our dams provide critical baseload energy to power homes and businesses all across Eastern Washington and the Pacific Northwest. Not only that, they provide transportation and irrigation benefits for our farmers, flood control for our communities, and recreational opportunities that fuel our economy. This isn't about the merits of protecting salmon, we all agree on that. This is about providing certainty and letting experts and scientists in the region, who know the river best, work collaboratively to meet that goal. I'm proud to usher this legislation through the House."

"I have heard from countless constituents expressing strong support to defend the clean energy and many economic benefits provided by the dams in Central Washington, which is why I introduced this bipartisan legislation with Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Pacific Northwest colleagues," said **Chief Rules Officer Dan Newhouse**. "The current Biological Opinion was negotiated with input from a diverse group of local stakeholders and provides a collaborative framework for dam operations that balances energy production with fish recovery efforts. I strongly encourage my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to act to preserve our dams and maintain low energy rates that families rely on in the Mid-Columbia region. I am grateful for the support from my House colleagues on both sides of the aisle in approving this legislation to save our dams on the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers."

House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop stated, "This bill is a logical solution to the illogical regulatory mess facing communities of the Pacific Northwest. It will save tax payers $16 million and protect fish by preventing a potentially deadly environment. I commend Rep. McMorris Rodgers for bringing up this bipartisan, common sense piece of legislation."

"Our bill finally codifies that science, not politics or the courts, should dictate the best way to balance fish recovery and the power needs in the Pacific Northwest," said **Congressman Schrader**. "Scientific experts steeped in fish recovery and clean renewable energy will be able to do their job based on good science rather than an ideological crusade to eliminate dams on the river system resulting in the loss of our region's best carbon free energy asset. Simply put, the Columbia River Power System will be managed according to the 2014 Obama Administration approved biological opinion until a new BiOp can be completed by 2022, saving ratepayers millions of dollars. I am pleased to have worked with Rep. McMorris Rodgers, and our Pacific Northwest colleagues, on this bill to bring science back into the equation for our Oregon and Pacific Northwest Salmon recovery efforts."

House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden stated, "In Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest, we are blessed with a river system that allows goods to flow to market and provides renewable hydropower that generates 43% of electricity in our state. River operations that have been guided by years of research by federal agencies, tribes and other cooperators have now been threatened by court order, and Northwest families and our communities will likely pay the price in higher power rates. This legislation provides needed certainty for power generation and river operations while federal agencies update the biological opinion and court proceedings continue. This is important for our ag communities, renewable energy generation and power users across our region. I was glad to work with my colleague from Oregon, Kurt Schrader, to pass this legislation through the House, and I hope the Senate will act promptly on this bipartisan plan."

Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "The United States Congress has a vested interest in insuring that *it,* rather than the judiciary, promulgates Federal policy. Hydropower is a clean source of energy and its reliability and cost-effectiveness are just a few of the reasons it enjoys the stature it has today. It needs to maintain that stature, including the requirement of careful, science-based policy-crafting when changes to hydroelectric policy are at question, if we are to guarantee a reliable energy future for our country. The judge who ordered the dam spills took the opposite track, devising and issuing brand new policy from the bench which lacked the justification scientific study would bring to his actions. H.R. 3144 fixes this problem by reasserting that Congress wields federal policymaking power and clarifying that we prefer the 'science first, policy after' approach when hundreds of millions of our citizens' dollars are at stake."

"There's only one sensible way to balance the health of our salmon runs with residents' need for low-cost, hydropower energy in the Northwest – and that's to restore a scientifically-backed operations plan. On behalf of our salmon, our Northwest ratepayers, our economy, and our environment, passing H.R. 3144 is vital to ensure that we're relying on collaboration and science to best manage our river system," said **Congresswoman Herrera Beutler**.

Congressman LaMalfa stated, "Despite favorable opinions from federal agencies serving under the Obama Administration, an activist judge is still attempting to hamper operations of four important dams in the Pacific Northwest. While this is hardly surprising, it does risk setting a precedent that dam operations can be influenced, or even ceased, at the whim of an overeager judicial system. We shouldn't be placing unproven environmental science above the needs of local communities. This legislation provides some certainty for the operations of these particular dams, while also putting in place measures to protect federal dams from politically biased judges. Under this legislation, only Congress can decide to remove a federal dam, and that's how it should be."

Congressman Gianforte said, "The Federal Columbia River Power System has provided generations of Montanans with clean, low-cost energy. Environmental red tape and litigation, however, threaten that reliable source of affordable energy and our Montana way of life. The legislation passed today brings needed certainty to the management of the system and needed relief to Montana ratepayers."

Background:

H.R. 3144 seeks to provide certainty for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) by keeping in place the current bipartisan operations plan and salmon mitigation measures that are consistent with multiple agency processes and opinions developed and approved by the Obama Administration.

A bipartisan dear colleague can be found **HERE**. A full list of endorsements can be found **HERE**. A Committee summary can be found **HERE.** Bill text can be found **HERE.** The Committee Report can be found **HERE.**

Specifically, this legislation provides for the continued operations of the four Lower Snake River Dams in the Pacific Northwest through September 30, 2022 in accordance with the best available science and a biological opinion previously approved by the previous Administration. Under the bill, only an act of Congress or a subsequent final biological opinion could cause a departure from current operations or make structural modifications to the four dams addressed by this legislation. A clarifying amendment that was adopted allows for the Secretaries involved in operating the

dams to conduct operation and maintenance activities and make necessary capital improvements. Finally, H.R. 3144 allows for the continuation of an underway National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process while avoiding an extremely costly spill experiment that may prove harmful to the very fish it claims to benefit.

The current biological opinion that governs operations at the FCRPS is based on the best available science and was produced as the consequence of bipartisan collaborative efforts undertaken by local stakeholders, tribes, ranchers, irrigators utilities, federal agencies and elected officials. It was implemented by the previous administration and made express efforts to carefully balance environmental and economic priorities while protecting crucial energy sources.

The FCRPS generates approximately 40 percent of total U.S. hydroelectric generation and provides energy to fifty-four rural cooperatives in seven different states. This clean source of energy produces stable baseload power without emitting carbon and serves as backup generation for intermittent wind and solar sources.

The four Lower Snake River Dams – the Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite dams – have now come under siege due to an agenda-driven District judge in Oregon issuing an arbitrary and poorly-reasoned court order.

The judge is attempting to force operators to ignore the federally-authorized scientific consensus represented by the current operations plan in order to spill water downstream – a change that will cost $40 million dollars in lost power sales and harm other infrastructure operations so as to "speed migrating salmon to the Pacific Ocean."

Finally, the judge has ordered a new environmental review that he presumably hopes will retroactively justify his spill order when it is completed in several years. The judge has put the cart before the horse in ordering major policy changes first and seeking scientific backing afterwards; the effect is to set poor precedent in which judges are empowered to ignore a scientific consensus on major energy or infrastructure projects so long as they do so while posturing in the service of empty talking points.

The judge's order comes as part and parcel of claims that mandatory spills will improve the movement of salmon along the Columbia River. The status of these claims remains unverified scientifically, with research showing that large spills such as those the judge ordered can be substantially harmful to the population levels of the very fish they aim to protect.

H.R. 3144 accomplishes two important goals: 1) Ensuring the continued operation of the Snake River Dams until 2022 or until the NEPA review concludes and determines a new operation plan, and; 2) Establishing that it is the intent of Congress that major changes to operations plans which are themselves undergirded by recent science and the sign-offs of multiple federal agencies be avoided when the scientific study on which such a change must be based is incomplete or contradictory.

The continued, regular operation of these dams is of interest for Pacific Northwest states as well as California, Nevada, Wyoming and Montana as significant components of the economies of said states, and for overall energy grid reliability.

Codifying the provisions in H.R. 3144 provides certainty and sends a strong signal to the judicial branch that Congress does not intend to allow agenda-driven judges to legislate by overturning

longstanding, statutorily-guided federal policy when the relevant scientific studies, the direction of federal agencies and the will of Congress contradict such a conclusion.

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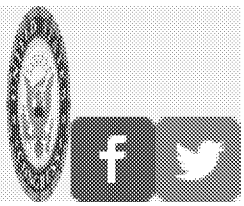
WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE



Message

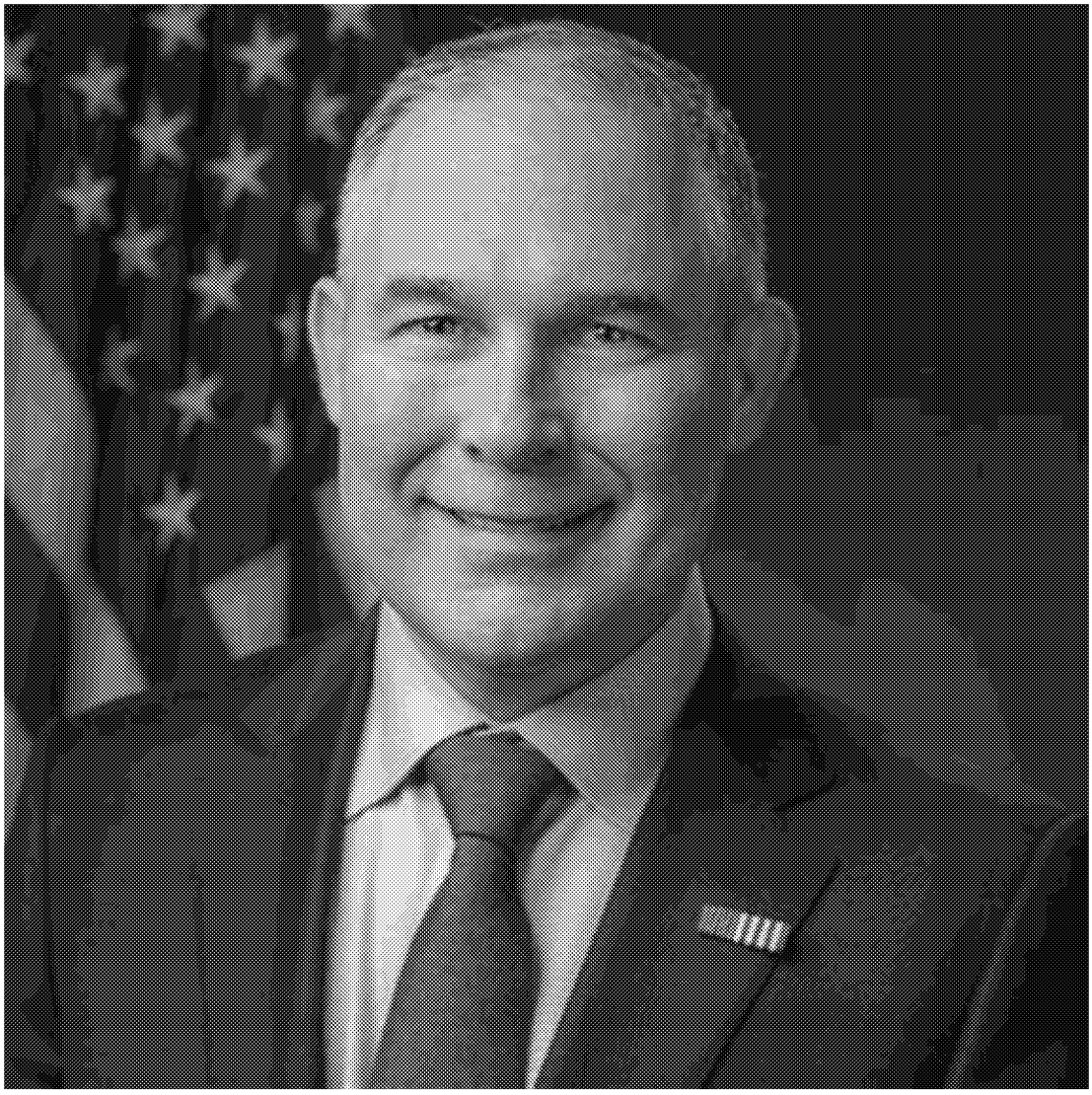
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/6/2018 9:30:05 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Members of the Western Caucus Support Administrator Pruitt

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: April 6, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Members of the Western Caucus Support Administrator Pruitt



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman **Lamar Smith (TX-21)**, House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Chairman **Ken Calvert (CA-42)**, and Western Caucus Members **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Louie Gohmert (TX-01)**, and **Markwanye Mullin (OK-02)** issued the following statements in support of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt:

Congressman Gosar stated, "EPA Administrator Pruitt has proven himself one of the most effective Cabinet Members in the Trump Administration. His track record on energy, the environment, deregulation, the rule of law and science-based decision-making is exceptional. Because he is an important part of the 'Make America Great Again' agenda, it should come as no surprise that a lynch mob of opportunistic politicians and certain members of the media are doing everything they can to attempt to remove him from office. The job of a successful agency head should not be called into question due solely to allegations from political opponents when important underlying facts remain unknown. I stand with EPA Administrator Pruitt and am grateful for everything he has done for the American people to get our economy going again."

"Administrator Pruitt has served America exceptionally well during his first year in office. He has implemented President Trump's America First policies, rolled back burdensome and unnecessary regulations, increased the independence of agency advisory boards, and is working toward making the agency's rulemaking process more open to the American people," said **Congressman Smith**. "Scott Pruitt has returned the EPA's focus to its rightful place – on ensuring clean air and water for all Americans through policies that are based on good science, not science fiction. I thank him for his work thus far, and I anticipate many more achievements from the EPA with Administrator Pruitt at the helm."

"Keeping our air and water clean with balanced and careful policies is a challenging task. I know EPA Administrator Pruitt and the Administration are working every day to achieve these important goals," stated **Congressman Calvert**.

"It's no surprise that many Democrats and left-leaning members of the media would like to see EPA Administrator Pruitt gone - that's because he's good at his job. His commitment to slashing unnecessary regulations and cleaning up the agency while simultaneously boasting a strong track record on energy and the environment is impressive, and it has made him one of the most effective members of the President's cabinet. The allegations against Administrator Pruitt leave a lot of questions unanswered, and it should not cost him his job - especially when far more serious allegations against former administrators were largely brushed aside. I stand with many of my colleagues in support of Administrator Pruitt," said **Congressman LaMalfa**.

Congressman Gohmert said, "Scott Pruitt is one of President Trump's most effective cabinet members. He has been uniquely effective in rolling back onerous regulations that are strangling our American economy and dramatically killing jobs. We all want and are getting cleaner air and water, but when red tape kills jobs and puts Americans in poverty for no discernible difference, we need Scott Pruitt. Not only has he blessed our economy and jobs in general, minorities' unemployment is at an all time historical low. It is no wonder the left is attempting to take him out, because he is doing far too much to help Americans in a Republican administration."

"As the head of the EPA, Administrator Pruitt is responsible for rolling back dozens of job-killing regulations put in place over the 8 years of the Obama Administration. By returning the EPA to its rightful role, Administration Pruitt's policies have significantly reduced regulatory costs for taxpayers and given farmers, ranchers, and small business owners a chance to thrive again. I support EPA Administrator Pruitt and the good work he will continue to do to bring regulatory relief to all Americans," concluded **Congressman Mullin**.

Background:

Today, Members of the Western Caucus issued statements in support of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt, rejecting calls from opportunistic politicians and some members of the media for President Trump to remove the Administrator from office.

Scott Pruitt is the 14th Administrator of the EPA. During his short tenure, EPA Administrator Pruitt has established a strong track record on energy, environment, deregulation, the rule of law and science-based decision-making. He has also taken significant steps to clean up lawlessness and dysfunction within the agency.

The EPA's 2017-2018 Year in Review can be found HERE. Highlights of the report include:

- In his first year, Pruitt finalized 22 deregulatory actions saving job creators and hard-working Americans more than $1 billion in regulations costs.

- Administrator Pruitt also put an end to "sue and settle" practices within the EPA.

- Under Pruitt's leadership, the EPA also rejected the Obama Administration's new and unnecessary financial responsibility requirements for certain hardrock mining facilities.

- Pruitt also took numerous actions to benefit the environment including: eliminating seven contaminated sites and taking significant actions to clean up contaminated lands, improve water quality and ensure polluters were held accountable.

The Western Caucus also reminded those calling for the removal of Pruitt of ten major scandals involving the EPA during the Obama Administration. In the midst of those transgressions - most of which represented far greater malfeasance than any of the accusations levelled against EPA Administrator Pruitt - these same politicians and outlets largely failed to call for Obama EPA Administrators Jackson and McCarthy to be removed.

1. **"Richard Windsor (of course)**: "The one, the only—Richard Windsor, a.k.a. Lisa Jackson. I mean, she corresponded exclusively in an alias. The only thing sketchier than that is what Hilary did." Read more here.

2. **"Text gate:** Here's what we know: EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy conducted business via text and then destroyed the records of her correspondence, in blatant contravention of federal recordkeeping laws." Read more here and here.

3. **John Beale**: "John C. Beale masqueraded as a CIA agent to steal in total $900,000 in government pay, bonuses and expenses." "On April 30, 2013, [EPA Administrator Gina] McCarthy had cause to fire Beale, but instead elected to allow him to voluntarily retire with full benefits." "A U.S. Senate investigation blasted McCarthy, [Beale's] boss at the time at OAR, for not taking action for months after learning that Beale committed fraud." Read more here and here.

4. **EPA child molester:** "A child-molesting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) official who was paid $55,000 to retire is only one of many bad agency employees who skirted termination, according to a congressional committee. The Daily Caller had more detail on this situation, noting that this 'convicted child molester — was on EPA's payroll for years, even after EPA learned of his offense.'" Read more here.

5. **Acting Associate Administrator Peter Jutro**: "Mr. Jutro was the acting associate administrator for the EPA Office of Homeland Security, he also happens to be a serial sexual harasser. As a result of an inspector general investigation, we now know that Mr. Jutro sexually harassed at least 16 women while working at the EPA," explained Chaffetz. "Even worse, EPA senior management was aware of his history of harassing women but continued to promote him." Read more here.

6. **WOTUS lobbying that broke the law: "**The Environmental Protection Agency engaged in 'covert propaganda' and violated federal law when it blitzed social media to urge the public to back an Obama administration rule intended to better protect the nation's streams and surface waters, congressional auditors have concluded. The ruling by the Government Accountability Office, which opened its investigation after a report on the agency's practices in The New York Times, drew a bright line for federal agencies experimenting

with social media about the perils of going too far to push a cause. Federal laws prohibit agencies from engaging in lobbying and propaganda." Read more here.

7. **WOTUS rule generally:** According to a 182-page Committee Report, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy shoved a terrible rule down the throats of the American people that was "rife with legal shortcuts, predetermined conclusions, and politically-driven timelines." Amongst other flaws the EPA, "pushed the rule through on an accelerated timeline that appeared to have been motivated by political considerations… made no effort to ensure the rule was based on sound science…pushed the rule through despite strong objections from senior Corps leadership…did not consider appropriate alternatives to the rule…did not fully consider public comments before finalizing the rule…failed to comply with various rulemaking obligations." Read more here.

8. **Flights of Obama EPA Administrators**: "Lisa Jackson, EPA director from 2009 to 2013, racked up more than $332,000 on four overseas trips. Gina McCarthy, the chief in 2013-17, spent nearly $630,000 on flights and security in her 10 international travels. None of which made headlines, even on the web — though their yearly average bill was a bit above Pruitt's one-year total. Maybe Pruitt should pass on the junkets and save the taxpayers some money, but he's not costing them any more than the Democrats who held the same job." Read more here.

9. "**Ignoring the Flint Water Crisis**: In April 2014, a state-appointed manager switched Flint's drinking water source to save money. Residents of the impoverished town soon started to complain about the new water's color and odor: Testing showed it contained high levels of lead and other poisons in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Although McCarthy's EPA was first notified of the problem in April 2015, she did not declare a state of emergency until January 2016." Read more here.

10. "**Causing the Gold King Mine spill**: In 2015, EPA workers destroyed a plug that was holding water at the abandoned Gold King Mine in Colorado. Despite knowing the risk of a blowout (and subsequently covering up the fact they had that knowledge), the work continued at the abandoned mine until a breach unleashed three million gallons of toxic waste into the Animas River, polluting a waterway serving three Western states. While McCarthy apologized for the disaster—calling it a "tragic and unfortunate incident"—her agency declined to accept full responsibility and attempted to deflect any scrutiny from Congress and the media." Read more here.

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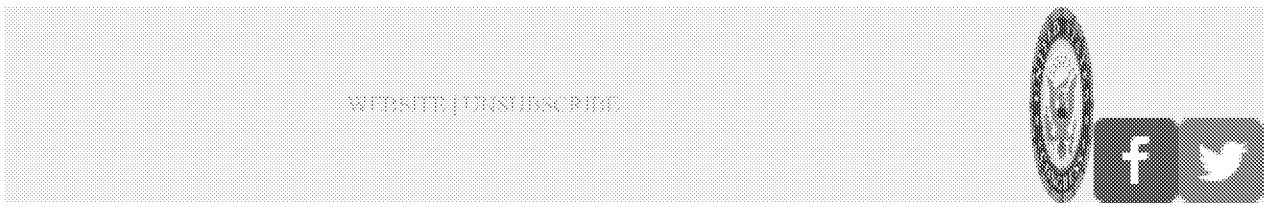
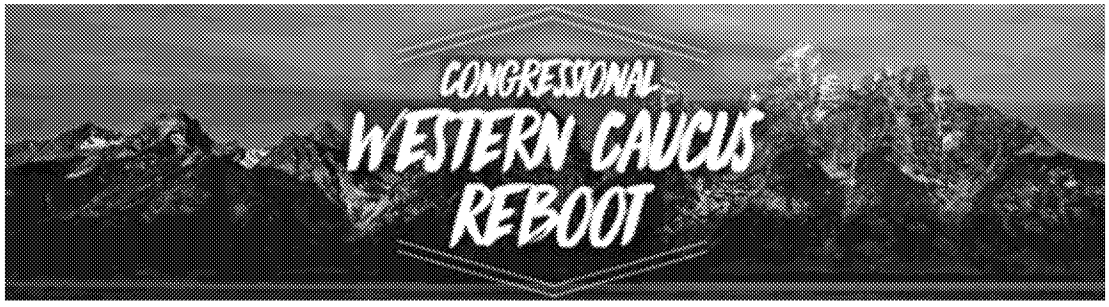


Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/15/2018 8:30:00 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 04.15.18



Week of 04.15.2018

Farm Bill Released - Caucus Members Weigh In

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Apr 12

The 2018 Farm Bill is now public, and our Members are speaking out about what they like in the text.

Read statements by Chairman @RepGosar, @HouseAgNews Chairman @ConawayTX11, @NatResources Chairman @RobBishop and many more HERE: bit.ly/2HhRESc

On Thursday, the House Committee on Agriculture released the draft text of its 2018 Farm Bill, which will be considered by the Committee shortly. Several Western Caucus members issued statements following the announcement:

House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway (TX-11) stated, "The Farm Bill keeps faith with our nation's farmers and ranchers through the current agriculture recession by providing certainty and helping producers manage the enormous risks that are inherent in agriculture. The farm bill also remains faithful to the American taxpayer and consumer. Under the farm bill, consumers will continue to enjoy the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world, and taxpayers will reap the more than $112 billion in budget savings projected under the current law."

Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04) stated, "However you've thought about the Farm Bill in the past, at first glance this text appears to include several seriously beneficial changes. In particular, conservative Members of Congress can be relieved that the Committee stuck with its commitment to ensuring that the nutrition program includes more than 35 improvements, including by instituting meaningful work requirements so that heads of households have real incentives to remain productive members of society. But I'm most impressed with the inroads the Committee makes tackling enduring problems related to Endangered Species Act consultation, which routinely requires farmers and foresters to comply with a generous helping of senseless bureaucratic steps that provide no benefit to listed species. From the regulatory standpoint, farmers and forestry win in this package, which means rural America wins as well. Congressman Conaway should be commended for the very tough task of introducing a smarter Farm Bill, and I look forward to reviewing the details with my constituents."

House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01) said, "It's great to see that folks realize the job isn't done on forest management reform. Millions of acres have been needlessly lost each year because Congress wouldn't get serious about preventing catastrophic wildfires. With this farm bill, we have an opportunity to take meaningful steps forward in addressing the problems behind severe, uncontrollable wildfires. We look forward to working with the House Agriculture Committee and other Members to ensure that we will not end up having the Schumer fires of 2018 on our hands."

See the full Western Caucus press release with all 13 Member statements HERE.

Click HERE to read the full legislative text of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Click HERE to read the section-by-section summary of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Click HERE to read policy highlights in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Click HERE for audio of Chairman Conaway's remarks from this week's press conference.

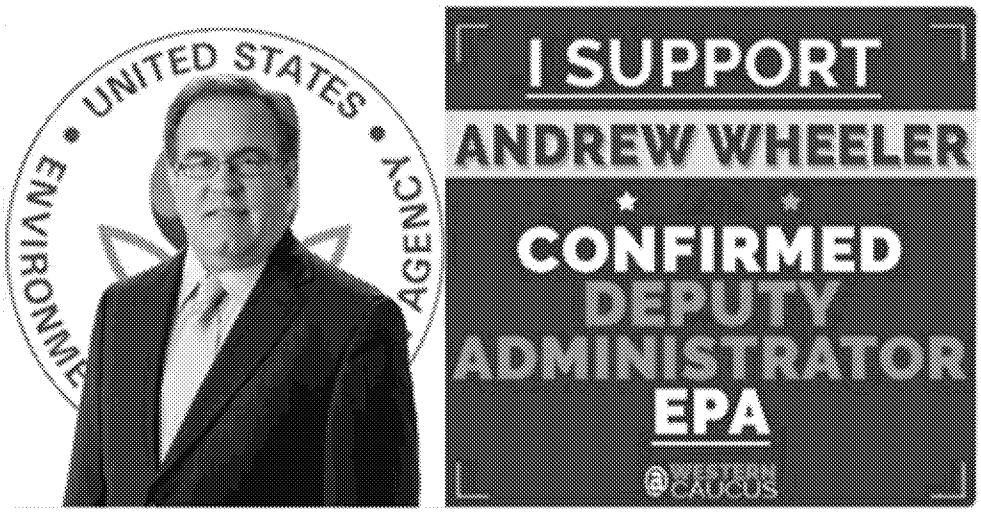
See the Committee on Agriculture's 2018 Farm Bill information page HERE.

Andrew Wheeler Confirmed for EPA 2nd-In-Command Post

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Apr 12

Congratulations to Andrew Wheeler, the just-confirmed Deputy Administrator of @EPA and @EPAScottPruitt's now-top Deputy!

He was confirmed by a vote of 53-45 after months of obstruction and delay in the Senate. Now he can get to work! @realDonaldTrump



On Thursday, the U.S. Senate confirmed **Andrew Wheeler** as the Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Andrew will serve as Administrator Pruitt's #2 within the agency, a post which has been unfilled since Pruitt took the helm of the Agency on account of unprecedented Senate Democrat obstruction and delay.

Prior to confirmation, Andrew was the principal and the head of the energy & environment team at Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting. He served for 14 years on the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and previously worked at the Environmental Protection Agency as a special assistant in the toxics office.

Bipartisan H.R. 3144, Balancing Dam Security with Fish Recovery, Passes Through Committee

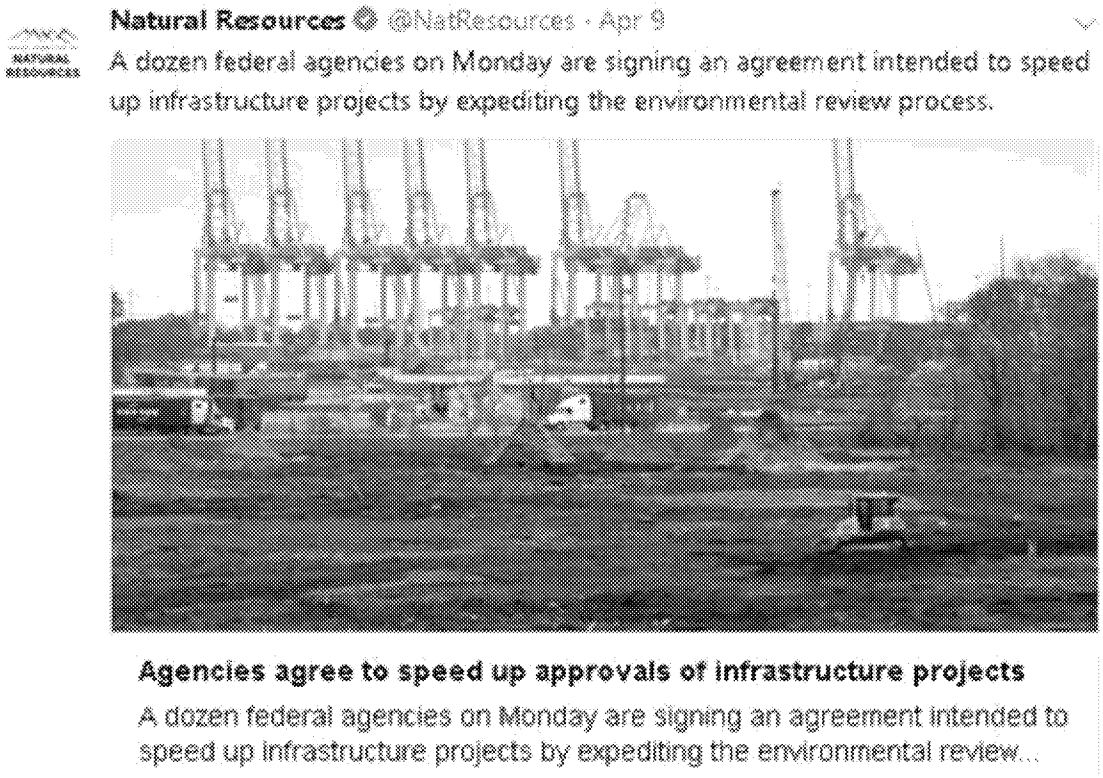
On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed H.R. 3144. This important legislation protects critical dams that provide reliable and affordable water and power, prevents power costs from being increased by hundreds of millions of dollars, and rejects extremist efforts that threaten the energy security of the entire country.

"Hydropower helped build the Northwest, and still today it offers us clean, renewable, reliable, and affordable energy to help power our homes, businesses, and communities," **said House GOP Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-04).** "I'm proud to see this bipartisan legislation pass the House Natural Resources Committee today and look forward to it coming before the full House in the coming weeks. My goal is to ensure that dams and fish can co-exist, and this Biological Opinion provides a collaborative approach so we can continue to improve technology and fish recovery efforts, while supporting the clean energy produced on our dams. I'm proud to lead this effort along with the support of organizations and people all across Eastern Washington."

"Without Snake and Columbia river dams and the many benefits they provide, life in Central Washington as we know it would be unrecognizable," **said Rep. Dan Newhouse (WA-05).** "I represent communities that actually live with the consequences of forced increased spill or potentially breaching dams, whether through higher electricity rates, higher transportation costs, reduced access to irrigation water, reduced flood control, and more. I appreciate the support from colleagues on both sides of the aisle for this bipartisan legislation to preserve the benefits of dams that communities in Central Washington depend on. We need to safeguard our dams while continuing to invest in fish recovery efforts because the cost of the alternative is too high for rural communities. I am grateful to Chairman Bishop for his support in committee as this legislation moves forward."

For more information click HERE.

Trump Administration Moves to Streamline Lethargic Federal Permitting Process



On Monday, a dozen different agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to streamline the permitting process for major infrastructure projects.

The MOU tasks the main federal agency of expertise with leading the permitting review process, setting timelines for the other agencies to complete review and producing a single environmental impact statement for projects.

"Inefficient environmental review processes have led to unnecessary delays, depriving our communities of needed infrastructure projects," the **White House** said Monday in promoting the change.

For more information click HERE.

Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Navajo Generating Station

Natural Resources @NatResources · Apr 12

The Navajo Generating Station & Kayenta Mine support 3,000 jobs and generate billions of dollars for Arizona's economy.

#YestoNGS #SaveNGS

Thursday, Chairman Gosar and the House Committee on Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee held an oversight hearing entitled "The Benefits of the Navajo Generating Station to Local Economies."

The hearing examined the future of the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) and its importance to tribal nations, local communities and the West. According to current ownership, NGS is now in danger of closing prematurely at the end of 2019 despite an original plan to run until 2044. NGS's primary role is to provide the vast majority of power for the Central Arizona Project water distribution system, ensuring that 80% of Arizona's population – including residents of Phoenix and Tucson, amongst other localities – have access to a reliable and affordable water supply. Should NGS close, the future power source for the Central Arizona Project is uncertain.

NGS and the Kayenta Mine support 3,000 jobs and generate billions of dollars for Arizona's economy. NGS and the Mine provide 85% of the Hopi and 22% of the Navajo budgets. The total cost to build the Central Arizona Project and the Navajo Generating Station was more than $4 billion. Approximately $1.1 billion is still owed to taxpayers and this debt is not expected to be paid off for another 28 years. When NGS was designed, it was roundly considered the environmentally friendly trade-off at the time, as the alternative was the construction of two new dams strongly opposed by the Sierra Club and the environmentalist community. It would be a devastating blow to the Native American tribes in question, to surrounding communities and to the state of Arizona to lose the Navajo Generating Station.

Majority witnesses at the hearing included:

- Chairman Tim Nuvangyaoma, Hopi Tribe, Office of the Chairman
- Speaker Lorenzo Bates, Navajo Nation Council, Office of the Speaker

- Seth Schwartz, President of Energy Ventures Analysis
- Representative Mark Finchem, Arizona Legislature, District 11, Arizona State Capitol Complex
- George Bilicic, Vice Chairman of Investment Banking, Global Head of Power, Energy, and Infrastructure
- Marie Justice, President, United Mine Workers

For more information and to watch the full hearing click HERE.

Notes From Our Monthly Bicameral Staff Policy Breakfast

Congressional Western Caucus added 5 new photos. ***
Published by Tanner Hanson [?] · April 13 at 2:57pm ·

Today at the Western Caucus Foundation Bicameral Staff Breakfast, we heard from Pebble Project Updates CEO Tom Collier, Vincent Erfe and Brett Barrus from the API Global, Andrea Travnicek (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science with U.S. Department of the Interior, Staff Director of Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Mike Andrews, and House & Senate leadership. Thanks for coming!

On Friday, we held our monthly bicameral staff policy meeting hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation. More than 100 House and Senate staffers, staff from several federal agencies, leadership and committee staff as well as speakers from industry attended this important meeting.

This month we heard from Pebble Project CEO **Tom Collier**, **Vincent Erfe** and **Brett Barrus** with the American Petroleum Institute, **Andrea Travnicek** (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science with U.S. Department of the Interior), Staff Director of Senate Committee on Indian Affairs **Mike Andrews**, and staff representing House & Senate leadership.

POST OF THE WEEK...

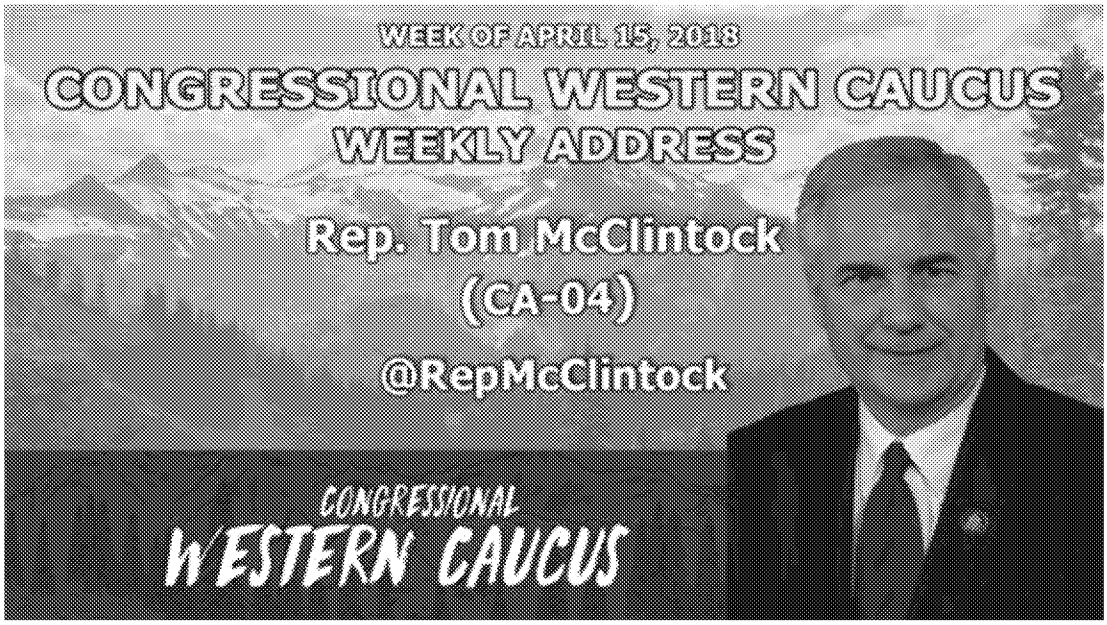
House Ag Committee @HouseAgNews · Apr 13

Chairman @ConawayTX11 delivers his #FarmBillFriday. Watch as he showcases the positive impact a strong farm bill has on farmers and ranchers, as well as consumers and their food budgets. #HouseAg #2018FarmBill

FARM BILL

HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

WEEKLY ADDRESS...



In this week's Western Caucus Address, Congressman Tom McClintock (CA-04) discusses our nation's now-embattled tradition of multiple-use public land access, as well as crucial legislation to improve forest health. Click this link or on the graphic above to watch the full address.

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Message

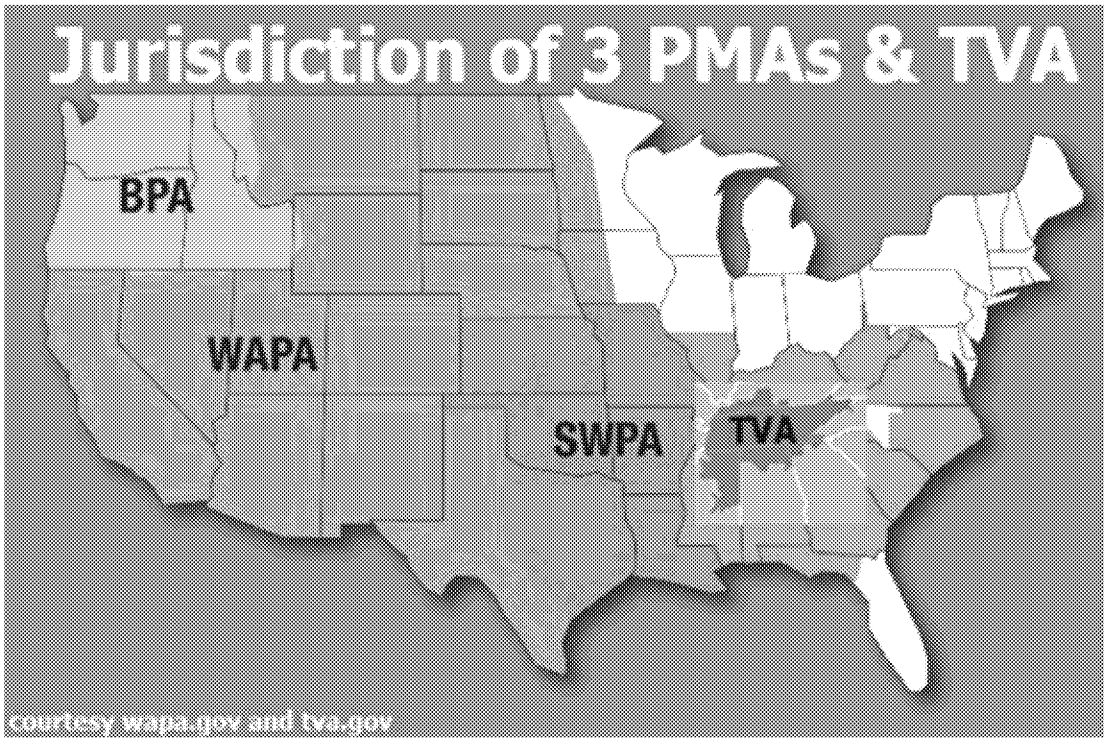
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 3/23/2018 9:45:40 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Caucus & Power Groups Urge Budget Committee to Reject Public Power Asset Sale

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: March 23, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Caucus & Power Groups Urge Budget Committee to Reject Public Power Asset Sale



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)**, as well as the **American Public Power Association** and representatives for the **National Rural Electric Power Association** and the **Mid-West Electric Consumers Association** released the following statements after 59 Members of Congress sent a letter requesting that the House Budget Committee reject proposals for the sale of

the transmission assets of three of the Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as well as proposed changes to pricing structures of the PMAs:

"Privatization is clearly out of step with the needs of WAPA power customers and end users. While they may provide a short-term boost to Treasury revenues, these actions would ultimately prove short-sighted. Any prospective private purchasers would have to raise rates dramatically in order to make a profit. At-cost power, on the other hand, is a win-win both for consumers and the federal government because the PMAs recoup all federal investment plus interest. To my friends on the Budget Committee: let's make a strong statement for power cost stability and work to cut the real dead weight off the budget, instead of those programs and assets which are proven to work," said **Congressman Gosar**.

Congressman Newhouse stated, "My constituents - especially in rural communities - depend on Bonneville Power Administration to provide stable and affordable electricity service. Divesting BPA would create needless uncertainty for regional energy markets and ratepayers in Central Washington."

"Stripping the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) of its assets will only harm Oregon ratepayers," said **Congressman Schrader**. "Pacific Northwest consumers rely on BPA's clean, affordable and sustainable power it provides to the region. This proposal will cause major problems with energy production and delivery, hiking consumer rates and reducing service. It would be catastrophic to the Northwest if this misguided proposal is included in the FY 2019 budget."

"A healthy rural America can be the rising tide that lifts the nation's economy," NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said. "Proposals to sell PMA transmission assets would jeopardize affordable and reliable power for more than 100 million people across the nation. In fact, selling PMA transmission assets would devastate rural economies with absolutely no benefit to the federal budget. We appreciate the House Western Caucus' continued opposition to this proposal," said **Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association**.

"Selling the PMA transmission assets and moving to market-based rates would be devastating for struggling rural economies. We are extremely grateful to our Delegation for again recognizing the short-sighted and misguided basis for these proposals," said **William K. Drummond, Executive Director of the Mid-West Electric Consumers Association**.

"Bad ideas have a habit of resurfacing again and again. This week's letter – signed by 59 members of Congress from across the country – demonstrates the breadth of support for these cost-based, self-funding public enterprises. The American Public Power Association greatly appreciates the willingness of these conscientious lawmakers to stand for what is not only right, but the best policy for all – including the millions of customers receiving power generated by the PMAs," said the **American Public Power Association**.

Background:

The Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request to Congress proposed to sell transmission assets of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as well as three of the Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs) within the Department of Energy (DOE). It further requested - separate from the asset

sale - a switch to market-based pricing structure from the present at-cost pricing structure of the four PMAs.

In response, 59 Members of Congress - lead by by Reps. Dan Newhouse, Kurt Schrader, Paul Gosar, Chuck Fleischmann and Rick Crawford - sent a letter to the House Budget Committee requesting that they reject these misguided proposals to auction off these assets and change pricing structures for the PMAs.

The letter enjoyed massive bipartisan support, including the signatures of 33 Democrats and 26 Republicans, in addition to significant support from local co-ops, irrigation groups and power users that would be negatively affected. To read the final signed letter with signatures click **HERE**.

The House Budget Committee responded to similar provisions in the FY '18 Budget Request by advancing a budget resolution that **did not** privatize these PMA assets after a similarly strong coalition sent a letter requesting as much last year. At the time, these omissions demonstrated that the Committee was interested in solving real fiscal problems and avoiding significant damage to rural and metropolitcan communities alike by introducing uncertainty for the tens of millions of American families and businesses who rely on affordable and sustainable power.

As this year's letter makes clear, nothing about the status or pricing structure of the PMAs and the TVA has changed since the Budget Committee's favorable actions to retain the assets a year ago. As such, the letter urges the Committee to make the right decision once more and preserve these assets as an at-cost, public utility format.

The four federal PMAs help provide affordable electricity service for millions of people throughout the country. There is no cost to taxpayers as these hydropower projects repay to the U.S. Treasury, with interest, all generation and transmission costs of the federal projects. TVA provides affordable power to more than nine million Americans in seven different states, also at no cost to taxpayers.

* * *

FY 2019 Signers (59): Rick Crawford*, Chuck Fleischmann*, Paul Gosar*, Dan Newhouse*, *Kurt Schrader**, Mark Amodei, *Sanford D. Bishop Jr.*, Andy Biggs, *Earl Blumenauer, Suzanne Bonamici, Salud O. Carbajal, Jim Costa,* Kevin Cramer, John Curtis, *Peter DeFazio, Diana DeGette, Suzan DelBene,* Tom Emmer, *Anna G. Eshoo,* Jeff Fortenberry, *Ruben Gallego, John Garamendi,* Greg Gianforte, *Raul Grijalva, Denny Heck,* Jaime Herrera Beutler, *Jared Huffman,* Walter B. Jones, Trent Kelly, *Ro Khanna, Derek Kilmer,* Steve King, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, *Rick Larsen, Dave Loebsack,* Mia Love, Frank Lucas, *Michelle Lujan Grisham, Doris Matsui,* Cathy McMorris Rodgers, *Jerry McNerney,* Martha McSally, *Grace F. Napolitano, Rick Nolan, Tom O'Halleran, Collin Peterson, Ed Perlmutter, Jared Polis,* Dave Reichert, *Jacky Rosen,* David Schweikert, Mike Simpson, *Kyrsten Sinema, Adam Smith,* Scott Tipton, *Dina Titus,* Greg Walden, *Tim Walz.*

FY 2019 Endorsements (14): American Public Power Association; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Arizona Municipal Power Users' Association, Arizona Power Authority, Colorado River Energy Distributors Association; Electrical District #3, Pinal County, Arizona; Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association; Irrigation & Electrical Districts' Association of Arizona; Mid-West Electric Consumers Association; Northwest Public Power

Association; Public Power Council; Southeastern Federal Power Customers, Inc.; Tennessee Valley Public Power Association; Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems.

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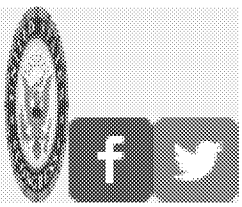


Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/3/2018 10:13:19 PM
To: Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Graham, Amy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=26722dfde5b34925b0ad9a8dd4aff308-Graham, Amy]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Konkus, John [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=555471b2baa6419e8e141696f4577062-Konkus, Joh]; Gunasekara, Mandy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=53d1a3caa8bb4ebab8a2d28ca59b6f45-Gunasekara,]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: RE: Caucus to EPA: Preemptive Project Veto a Tool of Tyranny
Attachments: 5-3 Pebble Final Signed.pdf

Attached is a final signed copy of our letter that went out today to the Administrator.

Below is our press release.

We appreciate the agency's consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

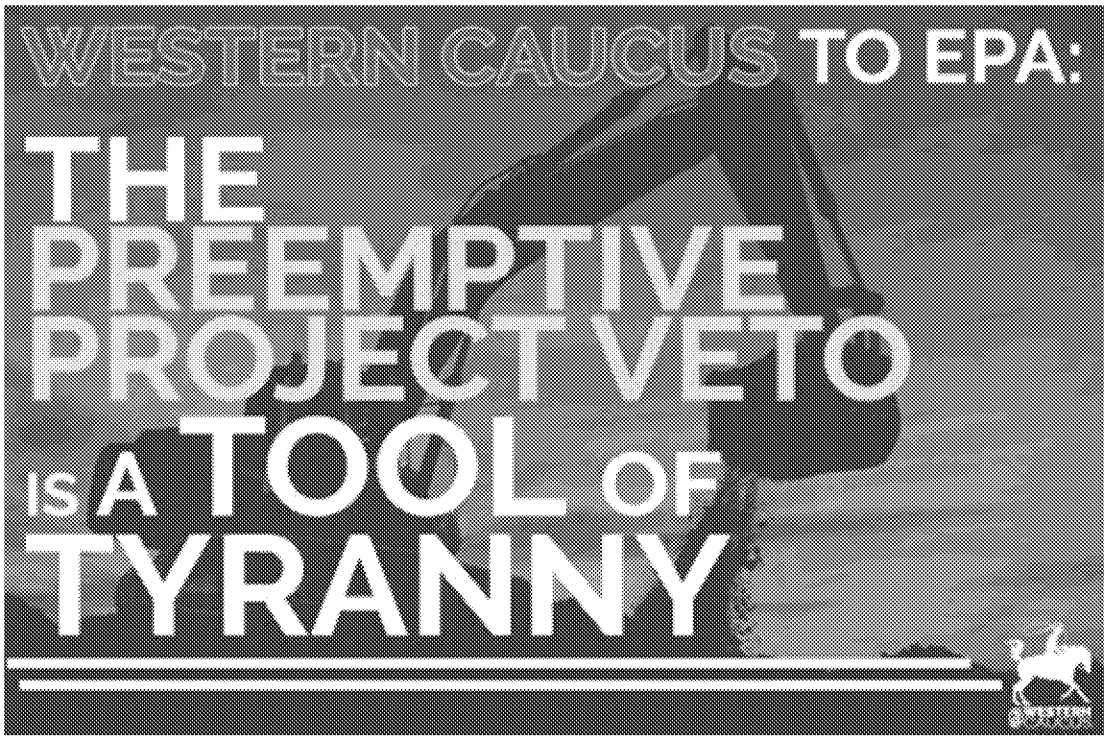
CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 3, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Caucus to EPA: Preemptive Project Veto a Tool of Tyranny

"This power-grab has no place in a Republican administration"



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, **House Committee on Science, Space and Technology Chairman Lamar Smith (TX-21)**, Western Caucus Members **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)** and **Bob Gibbs (OH-07)**, representatives for the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, the **National Mining Association**, **Americans for Limited Government**, the **American Resources Policy Network**, the **Yavapai Cattle Growers Association** as well as the **Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley** released the following statements after the Caucus led a coalition of 18 Members of Congress and dozens of stakeholders requesting that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt reverse a preemptive veto of the Pebble Mine project in Alaska:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "Administrator Pruitt knows what we think of his accomplishments in office, but we'll say it again: they're outstanding. The EPA under President Obama turned into an extra-constitutional legislator in its own right, issuing vast national edicts without statutory authority but requiring total compliance. When the Trump Administration and Administrator Pruitt came in, all that changed, and we have since seen the EPA bring its activity back within statutory boundaries in order to protect the environment with science-based policies. The preemptive veto of the Pebble project in Alaska - a holdover of the Obama EPA - is the one glaring blemish staining Administrator Pruitt's record. This kind of power-grab has no place surviving into a Republican administration - not least because we know future Administrations would be glad to abuse such power in even more severe ways. Today, we've made a clear case for why allowing this unprecedented veto to go forward is an affront to due process, to stable capital markets and to the priorities of the Trump Administration. This is about process, not any particular project. Administrator Pruitt, projects shouldn't be vetoed before they have even been proposed. The Obama preemptive veto has to go."

House Science Committee Chairman Smith said, "Our government is based on the principles of due process and the rule of law. EPA's preemptive veto of the Pebble Mine in 2014 undermined both. The EPA, under new leadership and with a fresh perspective, has an opportunity to reverse the misguided decision and let the rigorous permitting process work. I strongly urge Administrator Pruitt to withdraw the proposed determination."

"Industries in the United States should be able to rely on a transparent, reliable regulatory and permit approval process to operate. EPA and other agencies must not have the ability to deny American companies administrative due process with preemptive veto authority. Allowing regulatory entities to tell a business not to even bother applying for a permit, before any scientific analysis can be completed, will have a chilling and dangerous effect on American entrepreneurship and stifle economic growth. That's why I introduced the Regulatory Certainty Act to prevent the EPA from filing preemptive vetoes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. I join my colleagues in urging the EPA to reverse course and prevent setting a precedent that could do terrible damage to the American economy," said **Congressman Gibbs**.

Congressman Lamborn stated, "Considering the fact that the United States is increasingly reliant on foreign sources of critical and strategic minerals, it would be detrimental to our nation's national and economic security to preemptively veto one of the largest undeveloped deposits of copper and gold resources in the world. Administrator Pruitt should withdraw the preemptive veto and allow the Environmental Impact Statement to proceed in order to restore due process, fairness, and regulatory stability surrounding mining projects in our nation."

Myron Ebell, Director for the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute stated, "The pre-emptive veto of the Pebble mine and of all other potential mining projects in the Bristol Bay watershed should be withdrawn immediately. It conflicts with the Trump administration's proposal to eliminate EPA's veto authority under section 404c of the Clean Water Act entirely, and it sets a dangerous precedent. If one huge area of the country can be closed to natural resource development, what is to stop a future administration from arbitrarily closing off other areas—for example, the Mississippi River watershed?"

"There is no excuse for continuing this Obama administration dramatic expansion of power that threatens all resource development activity in future administrations. You can agree or disagree about the wisdom of the Pebble Mine development but those decisions should be reserved to the NPRM process and not preempted by shoddy political science that overrides the legally established approval process," said **Rick Manning, President of Americans for Limited Government**.

"This Administration has been a leader in showing that the responsible development of our natural resources and environmental stewardship can coexist," said **Hal Quinn, President and CEO of the National Mining Association**. "Given the Pebble Mine Project's potential as one of the largest deposits of copper and gold in the world, our hope is that the EPA will withdraw the prior administration's preemptive, uninformed and improper veto of the project, allowing the project proposal to proceed through the appropriate review channels as intended under the National Environmental Policy Act."

"With the growing recognition that the U.S. is dangerously dependent on foreign supply for scores of critical minerals and metals, the need for a predictable permitting process has never been greater," said **Daniel McGroarty** of the **American Resources Policy Network**. "The pre-emptive veto of the Pebble Project casts a chilling effect over resource development in the

U.S. As the letter says, to allow a pre-emptive veto to stand is 'contrary to the spirit of our environmental protection laws, to due process, and to basic fairness."

"For EPA not to allow due process flies in the face of our country's most important institutional principles. While the old saw of the squeaky wheel gets the most grease, we need to use the environmental and scientific studies that are mandated for environmental issues," said **Larry Parker**, **President of the Yavapai Cattle Growers Association**.

"We can no longer tolerate the damages done by bureaucrats who seek to rule our country via administrative fiat, undermining scientific based due process and the rule of law," said **Doyel Shamley, Apache County Supervisor**.

Background:

Today, May 3, 2018, the Western Caucus led 18 Members of Congress and dozens of stakeholders in sending a letter addressed to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt respectfully requesting he proceed with his original statements and intention to withdraw the Obama Administration EPA's preemptive veto of the Pebble Limited Partnership mining project under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Read the letter with all signers HERE. Be sure to also check out the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board's excellent piece concerning the precedent concerns arising from retaining the preemptive veto.

In particular, the letter responds to the EPA's decision to abruptly change course and opt not to withdraw the Obama Administration's preemptive veto of the project, contrary to Administrator Pruitt's prior stated commitment to do so.

The preemptive veto, initiated under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act, acts as an EPA "failsafe" set outside of the normal Army Corps of Engineers-facilitated NEPA process, along with its requirement of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This, despite that the NEPA EIS takes a full environmental, ecological and chemical inventory of the scope and likely effects of a project as proposed. NEPA EIS's are rigorous and comprehensive, and the eventual EIS for Pebble Mine will be able to accurately determine whether it poses adverse risks to the environment and habitat of Bristol Bay or not.

Rather than allow the EIS to proceed as normal for Pebble Mine, the EPA's actions set a damaging precedent wherein projects that have not enjoyed the scientific and other study required by law can be preempted and shut down by EPA. These actions are contrary to the spirit of our environmental protection laws, to due process, and to basic fairness.

For example, in the five trading days following the recent EPA decision, Pebble's parent company Northern Dynasty Minerals saw its stock fall 40%. This is the predictable market reaction to the EPA's unpredictability, which will wreak havoc in mining-related capital markets if regulatory certainty is not restored.

The issue, therefore, is not about the completion of any particular project – including Pebble – but rather cuts to the core of whether we are a nation of laws in which those laws, rather than arbitrary decisions by politicians or bureaucrats, have the final say.

As such, the letter requests that Administrator Pruitt opt to withdraw the preemptive veto in order to restore due process, fairness and regulatory stability surrounding all mining projects, prospective or proposed, in the United States. This issue only grows in importance in light of President Trump and Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke having made clear our overriding need to reduce reliance of foreign importation of critical and strategic minerals as matters of national and economic security. At a time when domestic mining is critically important, providing regulatory certainty by following established processes is of utmost concern.

- -

Current signers (18):
Amodei, Babin, Biggs, Rob Bishop, DesJarlais, Jeff Duncan, John Duncan, Gibbs, Gosar, LaMalfa, Lamborn, Marshall, McKinley, Mooney, Perry, Lamar Smith, Weber, Yoho

Endorsed by:
American Exploration & Mining Association, National Mining Association, Women's Mining Coalition, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Americans for Limited Government, Arizona Mining Association, Alaska Miners Association, American Resources Policy Network, Arizona Pork Council, Arizona Rock Products Association, AZ BASS Nation, Bass Federation-AZ, Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce, Hudbay Rosemont Copper Project, Idaho Mining Association, MiningMinnesota, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Wool Growers Inc., Southern Arizona Business Coalition, SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Utah Mining Association, Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Arizona District 6 Senator Sylvia Allen, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley and Yavapai County Supervisors Thomas Thurman and Rowle Simmons

###

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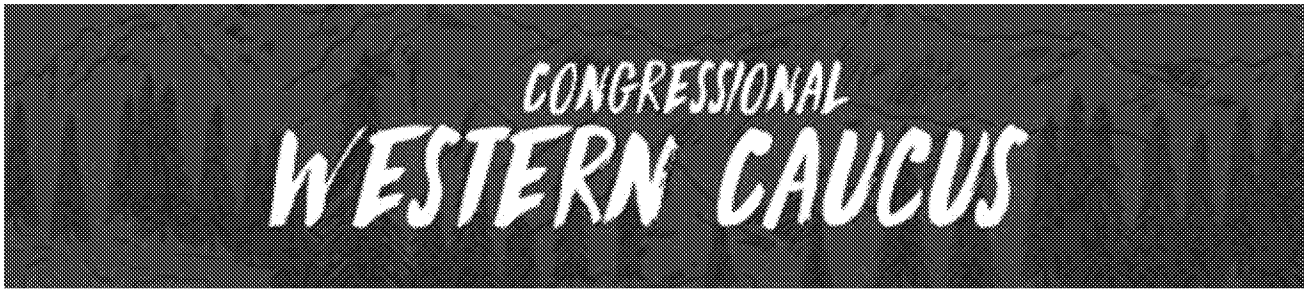
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/12/2018 7:32:07 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Members Applaud Ag. Chairman Conaway's Introduction of 2018 Farm Bill



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: April 12, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Western Caucus Members Applaud Ag. Chairman Conaway's Introduction of 2018 Farm Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Agriculture Chairman **Mike Conaway (TX-11)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Executive Vice-Chairman

Scott Tipton (CO-03), Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, House GOP Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, members of the Agriculture Committee **Roger Marshall (KS-01), Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Rick Crawford (AR-01)** and Caucus members **Ron Estes (KS-04)**, **Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)** and **Markwayne Mullin (OK-02)** issued the following statements after Chairman Conaway and the House Committee on Agriculture revealed the text of the Farm Bill this afternoon:

House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway stated, "The Farm Bill keeps faith with our nation's farmers and ranchers through the current agriculture recession by providing certainty and helping producers manage the enormous risks that are inherent in agriculture. The farm bill also remains faithful to the American taxpayer and consumer. Under the farm bill, consumers will continue to enjoy the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world, and taxpayers will reap the more than $112 billion in budget savings projected under the current law."

Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "However you've thought about the Farm Bill in the past, at first glance this text appears to include several seriously beneficial changes. In particular, conservative Members of Congress can be relieved that the Committee stuck with its commitment to ensuring that the nutrition program includes more than 35 improvements, including by instituting meaningful work requirements so that heads of households have real incentives to remain productive members of society. But I'm most impressed with the inroads the Committee makes tackling enduring problems related to Endangered Species Act consultation, which routinely requires farmers and foresters to comply with a generous helping of senseless bureaucratic steps that provide no benefit to listed species. From the regulatory standpoint, farmers and forestry win in this package, which means rural America wins as well. Congressman Conaway should be commended for the very tough task of introducing a smarter Farm Bill, and I look forward to reviewing the details with my constituents."

House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop said, "It's great to see that folks realize the job isn't done on forest management reform. Millions of acres have been needlessly lost each year because Congress wouldn't get serious about preventing catastrophic wildfires. With this farm bill, we have an opportunity to take meaningful steps forward in addressing the problems behind severe, uncontrollable wildfires. We look forward to working with the House Agriculture Committee and other Members to ensure that we will not end up having the Schumer fires of 2018 on our hands."

Executive Vice-Chairman Scott Tipton said, "I am glad to see substantial investment for broadband and forestry reforms included in the recently released text of the Farm Bill. In Colorado's Third Congressional District, many rural families and businesses still do not have access to the resources they need to prosper. Statewide, wildfires threaten our communities. Targeted investments in broadband and additional tools for the Forest Service will not only ensure that those living in rural areas have more opportunities to succeed, but will also go to great lengths to protect our land and property from dangerous wildfires. I commend Chairman Conway for his good work and I look forward to advancing this legislation in the coming weeks."

Chief Rules Officer Dan Newhouse stated, "The Farm Bill draft released today shows that the legislation touches on all of the priorities I heard from growers and producers during my Farm Bill tour throughout Central Washington last week, and I commend Chairman Conaway for his hard work. It reauthorizes vital trade and agricultural export promotion programs. Also included in the bill is a boost to the very important research programs by fully funding the Specially Crop Research Initiative and increased funding for Specialty Crop Block Grants, which over the years

have proved very beneficial to the state of Washington. I look forward to reviewing the final legislation."

House GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers stated, "The American farmer is the greatest anti-poverty program the world has ever seen. Farmers are hurting though, and I have three priorities for this Farm Bill: to protect crop insurance, to increase market development abroad through trade and market access programs, and to affirm and fund our commitment to agricultural research, like the great work being done at Washington State University in my district. I'm proud to say that all three of these priorities are reflected in this bill and will continue to support Eastern Washington farmers and the food security they provide our country and the world."

"This has been a long time coming, and I am thrilled to have this bill released, and for it to be considered by the committee in the near future. I have heard my producers loud and clear. They want certainty; they want assurance that Washington is still working for them, this bill proves that we are listening," **Congressman Roger Marshall** said.

Congressman Doug LaMalfa stated, "As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, we've spent the past three years working in Congress working to advance a strong Farm Bill. Farm policy is not created for the good years, it's created for the bad ones. California farmers and ranchers have seen a number of difficult years, from a devastating drought, depressed market prices, and unfair trade policies. However, our agriculture community is resilient. This bill today ensures they have the tools they need to weather these difficult years, manage risk, and stay competitive. Importantly, the bill also includes critical infrastructure resources for our rural America, such as new incentives to bring more broadband providers to remote areas – something I've worked very hard to secure. I was also happy to see that common sense forestry policies that encourage responsible forest management were included, as well as provisions to strengthen and streamline vital conservation programs," continued **LaMalfa**. "From the start, I said this committee's bill should reflect the priorities of rural America, and now the public can examine the full text of this bill as the discussion moves forward."

"Producers across America and the 1st District of Arkansas feed and clothe millions here and around the world. With this task comes uncontrollable variables and risks. Today we revealed a new Farm Bill, a step forward in investing in not only our farmers but our nation's future and food security," said **Congressman Rick Crawford**.

Congressman Ron Estes stated, "I applaud Chairman Conaway and the House Committee on Agriculture for putting forward a Farm Bill which addresses many of the top concerns of Kansans including $1.1 billion for broadband infrastructure, amendments to the Endangered Species Act which will streamline pesticide regulations, and protecting crop insurance for our farmers. I also look forward to building on the improvements made to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program included in the bill."

"Alleviating the immense pressure put on our agriculture industry by removing unnecessary and duplicative regulations is a top priority. I look forward to carefully reviewing the recently released Farm Bill and to ensuring the priorities of our farmers, ranchers and those in the forestry industry are well represented in these discussions," said **Congressman Mike Johnson**.

Congressman Kevin Cramer stated, "Our producers deserve to be supported with a strong Farm Bill, and I am pleased to see provisions included that will bring relief to North Dakotans. By fixing the ARC program, and maintaining the crop insurance and livestock forage programs, our agriculture community will benefit from the legislation. I will continue to work with the

Agriculture Committee on the bill and am confident it will move swiftly through the full House and Senate."

"The Farm Bill is essential to ensuring Oklahoma's farmers have the tools they need to feed our country and the world. Many of its programs are crucial to maintain and strengthen our country's agricultural exports, sustain the rare trade surplus for agricultural products, and provide farmers and ranchers credit in trying times. I'm looking forward to working alongside my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee to pass a strong Farm Bill," concluded **Congressman Markwayne Mullin**.

Background:

Today, the House Committee on Agriculture released the text of the long-anticipated 2018 Farm Bill, H.R. 2 - formally known as the 'Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'.

The Congressional Western Caucus is committed to the enduring health and vibrancy of rural America's economy. The Farm Bill is more relevant to rural American, farmers, ranchers and foresters than ever, and the 76 members of the Western Caucus look forward to closely reviewing and discussing the provisions of the 641-page bill.

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board's breakdown of the policy and politics of the nutrition changes can be found HERE.

House Committee on Agriculture 4.12.18 Announcement Press Release:

Chairman Conaway Introduces the Agriculture and Nutrition Act

2018 Farm Bill will help address the economic challenges facing farmers and ranchers, while making historic investments in opportunities for SNAP recipients

Washington, D.C. – Today, House Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11) introduced the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) – critical legislation to address the economic challenges facing the nation's farmers and ranchers, while making historic investments in opportunities for SNAP recipients. Upon introducing the bill in the House, **Chairman Conaway said**:

"Rural America is hurting. Over the last five years, net farm income has been cut in half. Natural disasters and global markets distorted by predatory trade practices of foreign countries, including high and rising foreign subsidies, tariffs and non-tariff barriers, have resulted in huge production losses and chronically depressed prices that are today jeopardizing the future of America's farm and ranch families.

"The farm bill keeps faith with our nation's farmers and ranchers through the current agriculture recession by providing certainty and helping producers manage the enormous risks that are inherent in agriculture. The farm bill also remains faithful to the American taxpayer and consumer. Under the farm bill, consumers will continue to enjoy the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world, and taxpayers will reap the more than $112 billion in budget savings projected under the current law.

"Ensuring an affordable food supply is important to every citizen, but it is absolutely critical to the most vulnerable among us who struggle every week to put food on the table. The

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is reauthorized under the farm bill, is essential to helping many Americans feed themselves and their families.

"The farm bill also keeps faith with these families by not only maintaining SNAP benefits but by offering SNAP beneficiaries a springboard out of poverty to a good paying job, and opportunity for a better way of life for themselves and their families.

"I'm excited to share our vision with the American people – and eager for people to see the details of a proposal that offers people real hope and promise.

"I'm also looking forward to quickly moving this farm bill through the House and working with the Senate to deliver a farm bill to the president's desk that is on time, as the president has asked us to do."

CLICK HERE to read the full legislative text of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

CLICK HERE to read the section-by-section summary of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

CLICK HERE to read policy highlights in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

CLICK HERE for audio of Chairman Conaway's remarks from today's press conference.

For more information on the bill, visit agriculture.house.gov/farmbill.

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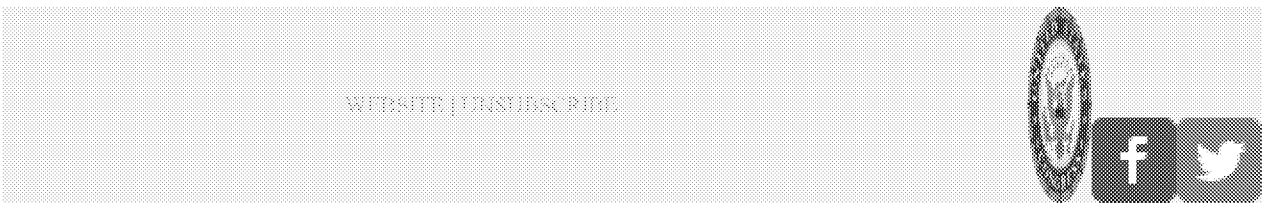

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/23/2018 10:16:29 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Critical Minerals Rock the Vote on House Floor

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 23, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Critical Minerals Rock the Vote on House Floor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Vice-Chairman for Policy and Appropriations **Mark Amodei (NV-02)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Western Caucus Members **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and **Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning** released the following statements after Congressman Amodei's Amendment #122 to the NDAA which would facilitate streamlined permitting for critical and strategic minerals passed the Floor of the House of a Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 229-183:

Chairman Paul Gosar said "A non-classified defense study recently found that failure to identify a reliable supply chain for at least 16 of the 35 critical minerals has already caused significant weapon system production delays for the Department of Defense. And a recent report published by the Department of the Interior and U.S. Geological Survey found the U.S. is 100 percent net

import reliant on foreign countries, including China, for 20 different critical minerals. This irrational overreliance threatens our national security by imperiling our ability to make equipment and weapons integral to mission success. **No other developed country hamstrings themselves the way we do with domestic mining permitting and project delays - let alone a military superpower**. I applaud my colleagues for passing this amendment on a bipartisan basis and reiterate the mission-critical necessity that it become law."

Vice-Chairman for Policy and Appropriations Mark Amodei stated, "No amount of political misinformation will change the fact that in times of regional emergency or national disaster America must have the option to responsibly utilize its own resources to protect the national interest."

Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs stated, "From weapons and ammunition to communications gear, our warfighters' equipment depends on globally sourced mineral commodities. According to the USGS, the gear of one U.S. Navy SEAL contains at least 23 nonfuel mineral commodities, for which the United States relies on its imports. Today, the House streamlined the permitting process to advance the Trump Administration's mission for mineral development in the United States. I thank Representative Amodei for his leadership, and urge the Senate to keep this important provision in the FY19 NDAA."

Congressman Doug LaMalfa said, "In recent years, the U.S. has become dangerously dependent upon foreign countries to provide important metals and minerals that our military needs. We certainly shouldn't be relying on China for precious materials that are critical to our national defense. Unfortunately, the current process can often take over a decade to approve a mining operation in the United States. I was glad to Cosponsor an amendment to the NDAA with Mr. Amodei that will streamline our development of critical minerals at home and create jobs for American workers along the way. Our national security interests should rest solely in our own hands, not China's."

Congressman Tom Emmer stated, "I am proud to support the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act which will bring us closer to fulfilling the United States' strategic and critical minerals potential. These materials are instrumental to America's national defense and economic competitiveness, as is ensuring we can mine them here at home. Across the country, states like Minnesota, which is home to the largest untapped copper-nickel deposit in the world, are ready to step up to end our nation's near 100 percent reliance on foreign countries for strategic minerals."

Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning said, "The development of rare earth metals is critical to the national security of the United States and being competitive in the 21st century economy. Rep. Amodei's amendment is a great step forward in meeting our nation's needs for rare earth metals, and we strongly urge passage."

Background:

On Wednesday, May 23, 2018, Congressman Amodei's Amendment #122 to H.R. 5515 was passed with a recorded vote of 229-183 on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

An essential component of America's national defense engine and competitive advantage over other nations is domestic mineral production. As one of our nation's largest consumers of metals and minerals, the U.S. Department of Defense uses as much as 750,000 ton of minerals each year.

These metals and minerals are key ingredients of military technology as well as other strategic readiness components such as medical devices, energy infrastructure and roads.

Domestic mineral production is also critical to the health of America's economy – especially to technology and manufacturing sectors – as well as in responding to natural disasters.

President Trump's Executive Order 13806, *Assessing and Strengthening the Manufacturing and Defense Industrial Base and Supply Chain Resiliency of the United States,* noted that a healthy manufacturing and defense industrial base and resilient supply chains are essential to the economic strength and national security of the United States.

Unfortunately, the national trend on this issue has been proceeding swiftly in the wrong direction. Over the last 20 years, the U.S. has doubled its import reliance, to the point that the United States is now 100 percent dependent on foreign countries for 20 critical minerals.

Under current practices, it takes on average **seven to 10 years for a mining operation to be approved**. The United States can't afford to wait 10 years for crucial raw materials when reacting to a crisis, and **especially cannot afford to be dependent on adversaries like China and Russia for critical minerals at any time**.

This amendment will allow the United States to more efficiently develop our nation's strategic and critical minerals, including rare earth elements, by centralizing permitting review projects under a lead agency, streamlining permitting time-frames for critical and strategic minerals and preserving necessary environmental protections.

See the text of Rep. Amodei's amendment here.

- -

Amendment Sponsors and Cosponsors:
Mark Amodei*, Andy Biggs, Paul Cook, Paul Gosar, Jody Hice, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Tom McClintock, Martha McSally, David Schweikert, Jason Smith, Scott Tipton, Don Young

Endorsed by:
American Exploration & Mining Association; Americans for Limited Government; Citizens Against Government Waste; International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49; National Mining Association; CEMEX, Inc.; Pershing Gold, Women's Mining Coalition; Alaska Miners Association; Coeur Mining, Inc., Colorado Mining Association; Idaho Mining Association, Jobs For Minnesotans; MiningMinnesota; Nevada Mining Association; Reshoring Initiative; Up North Jobs; Utah Mining Association; Wyoming Mining Association

###

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/23/2018 6:22:15 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: ICYMI: Rep. Cheney's Amendment to Farm Bill Safeguarding Grazing Leases Passes House

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 23, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

In Case You Missed It: Rep. Cheney's Amendment to Farm Bill Safeguarding Grazing Leases Passes House

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Member **Liz Cheney (WY-At Large)** released the following statement after her Amendment #106 to H.R. 2 - which would ensure all efforts are made by grazing lease-issuing agencies to replace or otherwise maintain grazing permits that are rendered valueless due to natural disaster, wildlife conflict or court injunction - passed the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by unanimous voice vote last Thursday:

Congresswoman Cheney stated, "For far too long livestock producers have battled against the federal government's attempts to reduce grazing on public lands. My amendment safeguards ranch families in Wyoming and across the West who graze on federal lands by making vacant allotments available for producers should their existing allotment become unavailable due to frivolous lawsuits or natural disasters. Hard-working ranchers should not have to fear economic ruin from circumstances beyond their control that force them to sell their livestock at fire-sale prices. My amendment ensures they will be able to continue to graze on public lands as they have for generations."

Background:

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, Congresswoman Cheney's Amendment #106 to H.R. 2 was agreed to by voice vote on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

This amendment directs the United States Forest Service and Department of the Interior to make vacant allotments available to grazing permit holders in the event of a natural disaster, injunction, or conflict with wildlife. It would further prevent an injunction on the utilized allotment should the federal land agency be unable to make a vacant allotment available to the permit holder.

Across the country, grazing permit holders are put in untenable and often unfair circumstances when the allotment authorized by a federal land agency becomes unusable due to a natural disaster, court-issued injunction, or conflict with wildlife.

A clear legislative remedy for such cases is to require that grazing lease-providing agencies make all efforts to offer substitute vacant leases, or otherwise maintain existing ones, so that holders of these leases can remain whole.

Rep. Cheney's amendment does just that - and the House of Representative's unanimous assent to its passage indicates the degree to which such legislation becoming law is a commonsense proposition.

See the text of Rep. Cheney's amendment here.

- -

Amendment Original Sponsors:
Liz Cheney, Dan Newhouse

Endorsed by:
American Sheep Industry, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and Public Lands Council, Arizona Pork Council

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/3/2018 9:39:43 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Caucus to EPA: Preemptive Project Veto a Tool of Tyranny

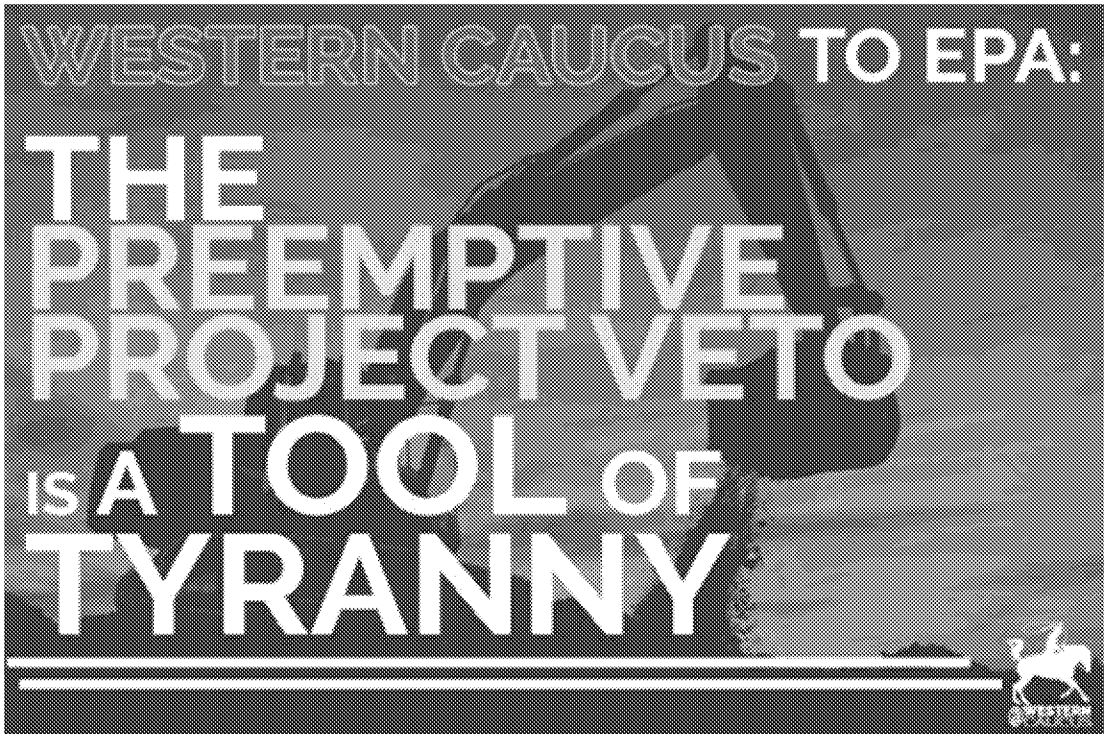
CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 3, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Caucus to EPA: Preemptive Project Veto a Tool of Tyranny

"This power-grab has no place in a Republican administration"



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, **House Committee on Science, Space and Technology Chairman Lamar Smith (TX-21)**, Western Caucus Members **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)** and **Bob Gibbs (OH-07)**, representatives for the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, the **National Mining Association**, **Americans for Limited Government**, the **American Resources Policy Network**, the **Yavapai Cattle Growers Association** as well as the **Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley** released

the following statements after the Caucus led a coalition of 18 Members of Congress and dozens of stakeholders requesting that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt reverse a preemptive veto of the Pebble Mine project in Alaska:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "Administrator Pruitt knows what we think of his accomplishments in office, but we'll say it again: they're outstanding. The EPA under President Obama turned into an extra-constitutional legislator in its own right, issuing vast national edicts without statutory authority but requiring total compliance. When the Trump Administration and Administrator Pruitt came in, all that changed, and we have since seen the EPA bring its activity back within statutory boundaries in order to protect the environment with science-based policies. The preemptive veto of the Pebble project in Alaska - a holdover of the Obama EPA - is the one glaring blemish staining Administrator Pruitt's record. This kind of power-grab has no place surviving into a Republican administration - not least because we know future Administrations would be glad to abuse such power in even more severe ways. Today, we've made a clear case for why allowing this unprecedented veto to go forward is an affront to due process, to stable capital markets and to the priorities of the Trump Administration. This is about process, not any particular project. Administrator Pruitt, projects shouldn't be vetoed before they have even been proposed. The Obama preemptive veto has to go."

House Science Committee Chairman Smith said, "Our government is based on the principles of due process and the rule of law. EPA's preemptive veto of the Pebble Mine in 2014 undermined both. The EPA, under new leadership and with a fresh perspective, has an opportunity to reverse the misguided decision and let the rigorous permitting process work. I strongly urge Administrator Pruitt to withdraw the proposed determination."

"Industries in the United States should be able to rely on a transparent, reliable regulatory and permit approval process to operate. EPA and other agencies must not have the ability to deny American companies administrative due process with preemptive veto authority. Allowing regulatory entities to tell a business not to even bother applying for a permit, before any scientific analysis can be completed, will have a chilling and dangerous effect on American entrepreneurship and stifle economic growth. That's why I introduced the Regulatory Certainty Act to prevent the EPA from filing preemptive vetoes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. I join my colleagues in urging the EPA to reverse course and prevent setting a precedent that could do terrible damage to the American economy," said **Congressman Gibbs**.

Congressman Lamborn stated, "Considering the fact that the United States is increasingly reliant on foreign sources of critical and strategic minerals, it would be detrimental to our nation's national and economic security to preemptively veto one of the largest undeveloped deposits of copper and gold resources in the world. Administrator Pruitt should withdraw the preemptive veto and allow the Environmental Impact Statement to proceed in order to restore due process, fairness, and regulatory stability surrounding mining projects in our nation."

Myron Ebell, Director for the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute stated, "The pre-emptive veto of the Pebble mine and of all other potential mining projects in the Bristol Bay watershed should be withdrawn immediately. It conflicts with the Trump administration's proposal to eliminate EPA's veto authority under section 404c of the Clean Water Act entirely, and it sets a dangerous precedent. If one huge area of the country can be closed to natural resource development, what is to stop a future administration from arbitrarily closing off other areas—for example, the Mississippi River watershed?"

"There is no excuse for continuing this Obama administration dramatic expansion of power that threatens all resource development activity in future administrations. You can agree or disagree

about the wisdom of the Pebble Mine development but those decisions should be reserved to the NPRM process and not preempted by shoddy political science that overrides the legally established approval process," said **Rick Manning, President of Americans for Limited Government**.

"This Administration has been a leader in showing that the responsible development of our natural resources and environmental stewardship can coexist," said **Hal Quinn, President and CEO of the National Mining Association**. "Given the Pebble Mine Project's potential as one of the largest deposits of copper and gold in the world, our hope is that the EPA will withdraw the prior administration's preemptive, uninformed and improper veto of the project, allowing the project proposal to proceed through the appropriate review channels as intended under the National Environmental Policy Act."

"With the growing recognition that the U.S. is dangerously dependent on foreign supply for scores of critical minerals and metals, the need for a predictable permitting process has never been greater," said **Daniel McGroarty** of the **American Resources Policy Network**. "The pre-emptive veto of the Pebble Project casts a chilling effect over resource development in the U.S. As the letter says, to allow a pre-emptive veto to stand is 'contrary to the spirit of our environmental protection laws, to due process, and to basic fairness."

"For EPA not to allow due process flies in the face of our country's most important institutional principles. While the old saw of the squeaky wheel gets the most grease, we need to use the environmental and scientific studies that are mandated for environmental issues," said **Larry Parker**, **President of the Yavapai Cattle Growers Association**.

"We can no longer tolerate the damages done by bureaucrats who seek to rule our country via administrative fiat, undermining scientific based due process and the rule of law," said **Doyel Shamley, Apache County Supervisor**.

Background:

Today, May 3, 2018, the Western Caucus led 18 Members of Congress and dozens of stakeholders in sending a letter addressed to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt respectfully requesting he proceed with his original statements and intention to withdraw the Obama Administration EPA's preemptive veto of the Pebble Limited Partnership mining project under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Read the letter with all signers HERE. Be sure to also check out the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board's excellent piece concerning the precedent concerns arising from retaining the preemptive veto.

In particular, the letter responds to the EPA's decision to abruptly change course and opt not to withdraw the Obama Administration's preemptive veto of the project, contrary to Administrator Pruitt's prior stated commitment to do so.

The preemptive veto, initiated under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act, acts as an EPA "failsafe" set outside of the normal Army Corps of Engineers-facilitated NEPA process, along with its requirement of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This, despite that the NEPA EIS takes a full environmental, ecological and chemical inventory of the scope and likely effects of a project as proposed. NEPA EIS's are rigorous and comprehensive, and the eventual EIS for

Pebble Mine will be able to accurately determine whether it poses adverse risks to the environment and habitat of Bristol Bay or not.

Rather than allow the EIS to proceed as normal for Pebble Mine, the EPA's actions set a damaging precedent wherein projects that have not enjoyed the scientific and other study required by law can be preempted and shut down by EPA. These actions are contrary to the spirit of our environmental protection laws, to due process, and to basic fairness.

For example, in the five trading days following the recent EPA decision, Pebble's parent company Northern Dynasty Minerals saw its stock fall 40%. This is the predictable market reaction to the EPA's unpredictability, which will wreak havoc in mining-related capital markets if regulatory certainty is not restored.

The issue, therefore, is not about the completion of any particular project – including Pebble – but rather cuts to the core of whether we are a nation of laws in which those laws, rather than arbitrary decisions by politicians or bureaucrats, have the final say.

As such, the letter requests that Administrator Pruitt opt to withdraw the preemptive veto in order to restore due process, fairness and regulatory stability surrounding all mining projects, prospective or proposed, in the United States. This issue only grows in importance in light of President Trump and Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke having made clear our overriding need to reduce reliance of foreign importation of critical and strategic minerals as matters of national and economic security. At a time when domestic mining is critically important, providing regulatory certainty by following established processes is of utmost concern.

- -

Current signers (18):
Amodei, Babin, Biggs, Rob Bishop, DesJarlais, Jeff Duncan, John Duncan, Gibbs, Gosar, LaMalfa, Lamborn, Marshall, McKinley, Mooney, Perry, Lamar Smith, Weber, Yoho

Endorsed by:
American Exploration & Mining Association, National Mining Association, Women's Mining Coalition, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Americans for Limited Government, Arizona Mining Association, Alaska Miners Association, American Resources Policy Network, Arizona Pork Council, Arizona Rock Products Association, AZ BASS Nation, Bass Federation-AZ, Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce, Hudbay Rosemont Copper Project, Idaho Mining Association, MiningMinnesota, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Wool Growers Inc., Southern Arizona Business Coalition, SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Utah Mining Association, Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Arizona District 6 Senator Sylvia Allen, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley and Yavapai County Supervisors Thomas Thurman and Rowle Simmons

###

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/3/2018 6:59:57 PM
To: Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Graham, Amy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=26722dfde5b34925b0ad9a8dd4aff308-Graham, Amy]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Konkus, John [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=555471b2baa6419e8e141696f4577062-Konkus, Joh]; Gunasekara, Mandy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=53d1a3caa8bb4ebab8a2d28ca59b6f45-Gunasekara,]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Attend and/or speak at Caucus breakfast next Friday?
Attachments: Upcoming 2018 Congressional Western Caucus and Western Caucus Foundation Events updated 5.2.18.pdf

Hope you all are having a good day.

Wanted to send you all a reminder on next Friday's bicameral Western Caucus policy breakfast.

Do you think someone from the agency can attend and if so would you like a few minutes of speaking time?

DOI has been bringing an Assistant Secretary along with someone from Congressional Affairs to our last couple breakfasts and letting them give a pitch and also get to know our staff.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

Upcoming Meetings & Events…

1. **Western Caucus Foundation Staff-Only Monthly Bicameral Policy Meeting** | Friday, May 11th | 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 203-02 | Breakfast & coffee provided
   100-120 House and Senate staffers, staff from multiple federal agencies, leadership and committee staff as well as speakers from industry attend this monthly staff policy meeting.

2. **Western Caucus Monthly Member-Only Meeting with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt** | Tuesday, May 22nd | 12:00-1:00 p.m. | 2247 RHOB | Catered lunch provided
   EPA Administrator Pruitt will present, take questions and engage in discussion with our members on their priorities for the entirety of this lunch.
   - Please RSVP or send regrets to Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov and Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov.

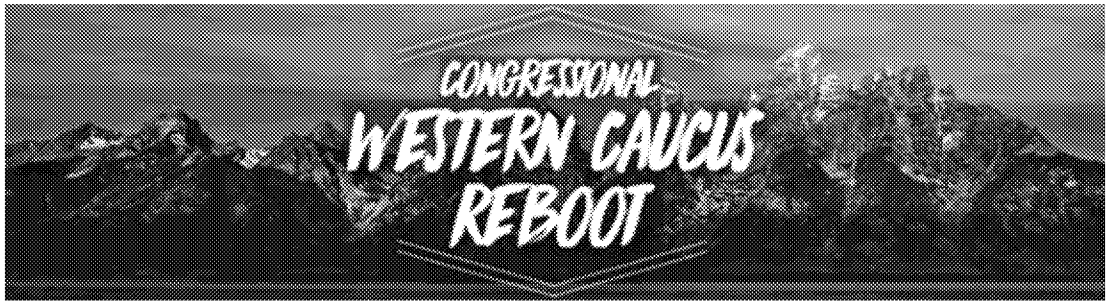
The full draft schedule for the remainder of the year is attached. Department of Transportation Secretary Chao is confirmed for our June Member-Only Meeting.

Let us know if you have questions.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

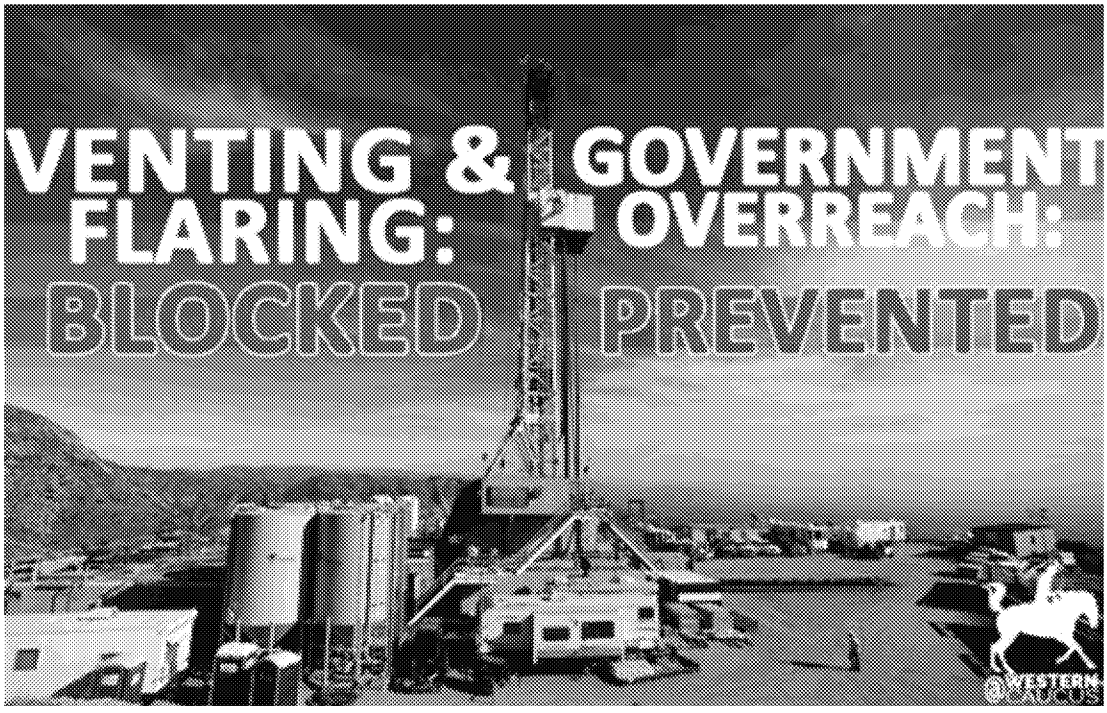
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 2/17/2018 9:33:18 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 02.17.2018



Week of 02.17.2018

DOI & BLM Gut Obama Job-Killing Venting & Flaring Rule



On Monday, members of the Congressional Western Caucus issued statements following the announcement by the Bureau of Land Management that they are taking steps to effectively rescind the Obama BLM's 2016 Venting and Flaring Rule which caused unnecessary economic damage to responsible energy producers.

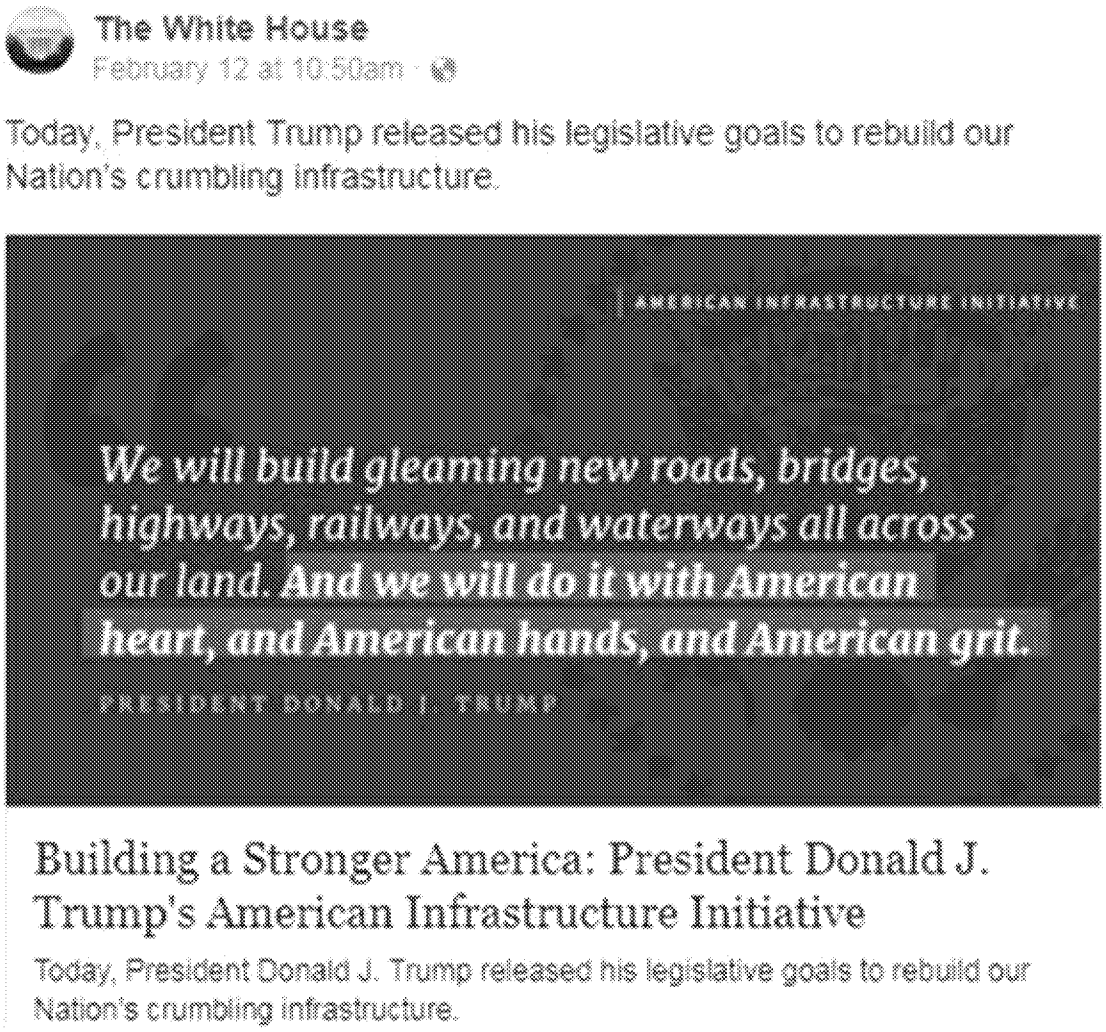
Members Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, House Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, Congressman Mike Johnson **(LA-04)**, Congressman **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, Congressman **Brian Babin (TX-36)**, Congressman **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and Congressman Kevin Cramer **(ND-At-Large)** weighed in on this great decision for American energy dominance.

Congressman Gosar said, "The Obama Administration's costly Venting and Flaring rule was an affront to states' rights, aimed to stifle responsible energy production on federal lands and yielded no real environmental benefit at the cost of good-paying jobs. Accordingly, I applaud the BLM and Secretary Zinke for doing the right thing for our country's ascending energy dominance by scrapping this egregious overreach by the previous administration. Their actions on this front are in line with President Trump's directive to eliminate unnecessary regulations that pose real threats to our economic security."

"Senate Democrats killed the historical opportunity to permanently rid North Dakota of the federal mediocrity that is the venting and flaring rule," stated **Congressman Cramer**. "I appreciate the Administration's intentions - with the many problems associated with Obama's rule, I look forward to closely studying its proposed replacement. It is my hope it addresses North Dakota's issues, as we have expressed both to Interior and to the federal courts. Methane is a commodity, and facilitating its economical transfer to the market is the solution."

To read the full press release, click **HERE**.

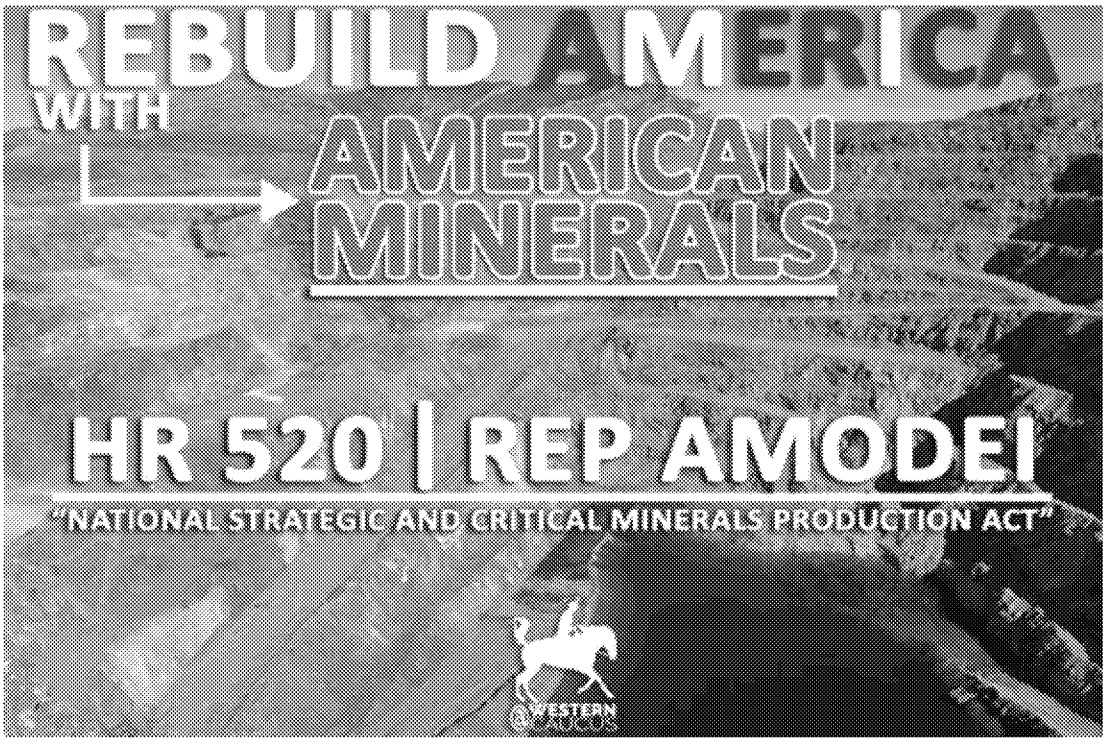
Administration Releases Infrastructure Proposal



On Monday, **President Trump** released a list of his legislative principles outlining the modern infrastructure system that the American people deserve.

To read the full plan click **HERE**.

Amodei Bill to Boost American Mineral Production Progresses



On Thursday, the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources and **Chairman Gosar** held an important legislative hearing on **Vice-Chairman Mark Amodei's (NV-02)** Strategic and Critical Minerals Bill.

H.R. 520 takes serious steps to restore US security by jump-starting critical and strategic mineral development right here at home. If you support American infrastructure, then you support this bill!

"In Montana we have not issued a significant mining permit in over 20 years," **Congressman Greg Gianforte (R-MT)** stressed. "Montana is the Treasure State…we just can't get at our treasure."

Dr. Abraham stated, "If minerals are not mined in the U.S. with strict environmental laws, they will be mined in other countries with less stringent requirements."

Greg Lucero of Arizona Mining Inc. said, "Lack of efficiency in the permitting process has severely threatened the development of our domestic supply of critical & strategic minerals... H.R. 520 is a great start for addressing many of these issues and time delays."

To watch the full hearing and read witness testimony click **HERE**.

Congressional Western Caucus

Published by Jeff Small [?] · Yesterday at 2:45pm ·

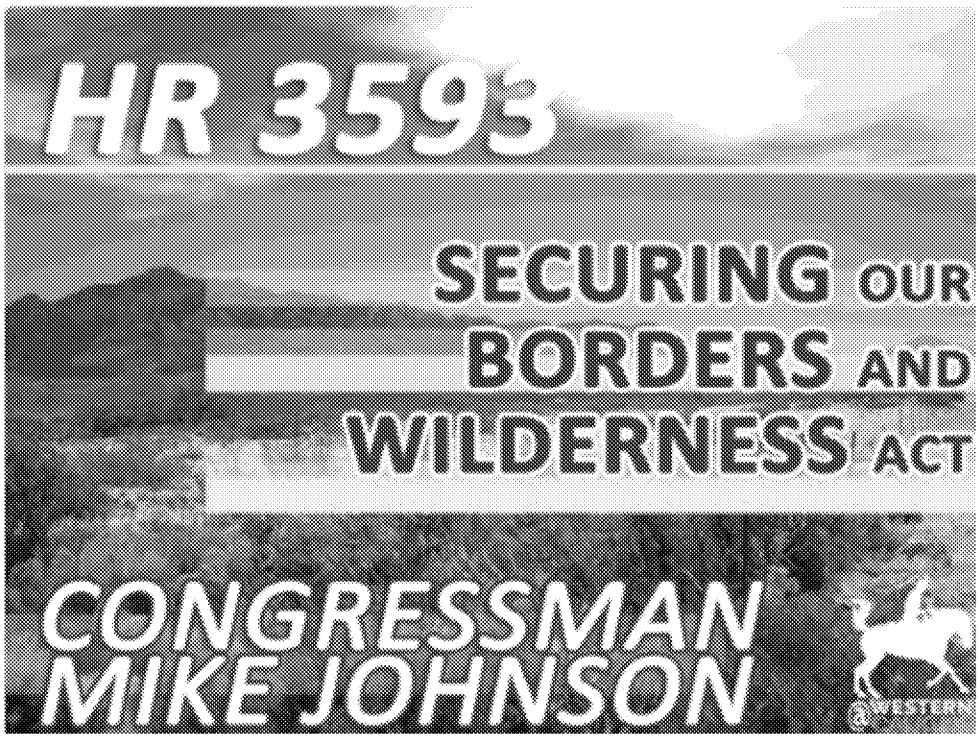
Rep. Paul Gosar, "All told, a mining project in the United States may spend 7 to 10 years waiting for final permitting approval. In fact, permitting delays are considered the greatest risk to mining projects in America." #CriticalMinerals #AmericanSecurity #HR520

Hearing on Environmental and Security Effects from Preventing Border Patrol Access

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Feb 15

The @NatResources hearing has concluded, but the fight to ensure our Border Patrol has adequate access is just getting started.

@RepMikeJohnson's Securing Our Borders and Wilderness Act is the right fix for this pressing problem.



On Thursday, the House Committee on Natural Resources Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee chaired by Congressman **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** held a hearing on the damaging environmental and security effects of denying immigration officers access to critical lands including wilderness areas. Congressman **Mike Johnson's (LA-04)** bill, H.R. 3593 is an important part of the discussion.

Natural Resources @NatResources · Feb 15

.@replouiegohmert "When drug smugglers are destroying our national parks, and federal lands leaving trash and damaging the land, we don't have #BorderSecurity"

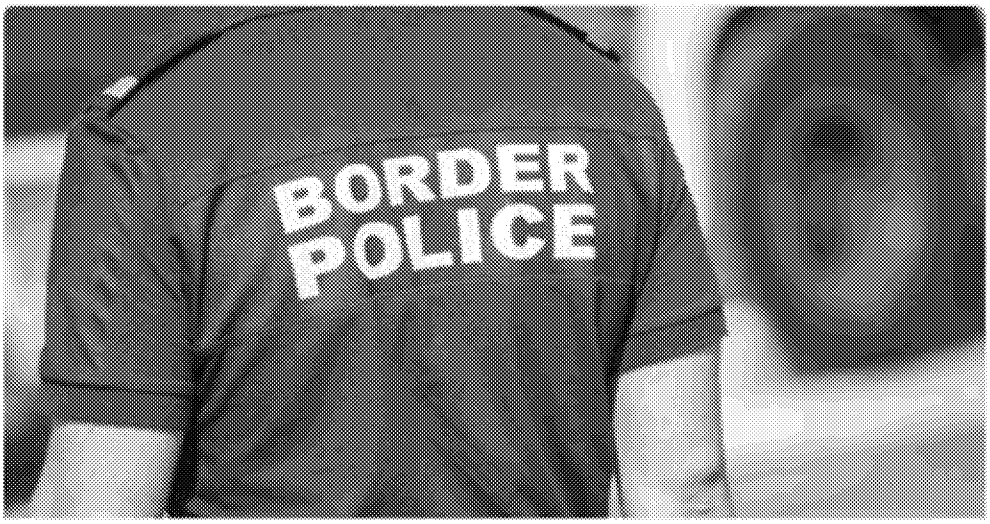
"Cross border violators take advantage of Border Patrol's lack of operational flexibility on federal lands. We need to ensure that our environmental laws do not compromise Border Patrol's ability to detect, identify, track, and respond to cross border violations," Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations **Chairman Bruce Westerman (AR-04) stated.**

"Access is critical. If the Border Patrol does not have access, we cannot do our job with security. Our environmental laws inhibit that access from taking place," **Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01) stated.**

To watch the full hearing and read witness testimony click **HERE**.

Natural Resources @NatResources · Feb 15

.@RepWesterman explains how environmental regulations are making Border Patrol's job a lot harder & our country a lot less safe #BorderSecurity



Environmental Regulations Are Making Border Patrol's Job A Lot ...

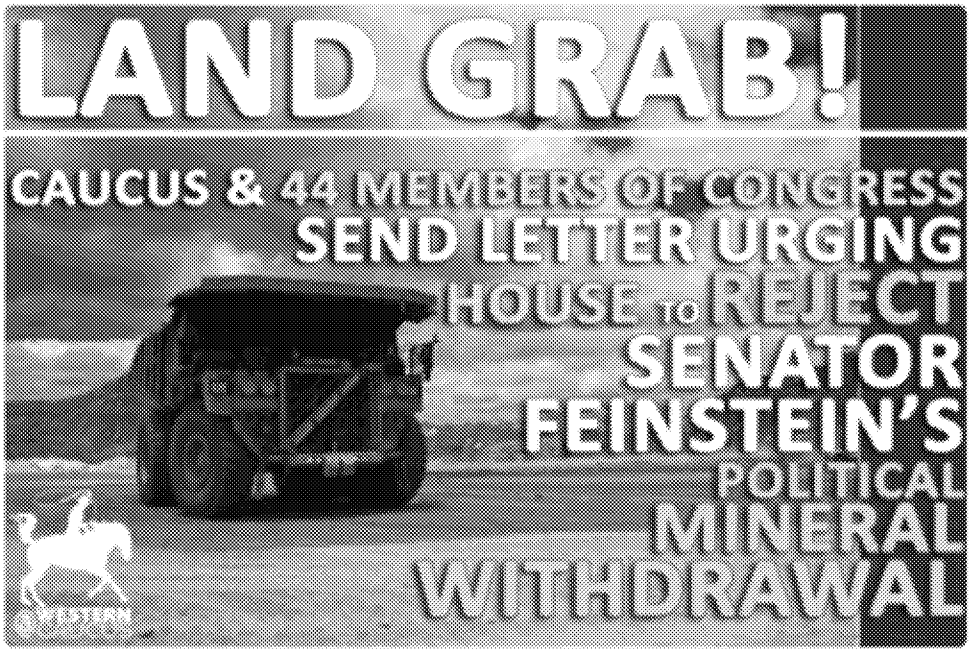
dailycaller.com

44 Members Urge Appropriators: Reject Feinstein Land Grab

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · 6m

44 Members of Congress call on Appropriators to reject a land grab provision proposed by Senator Feinstein that skirts normal permitting processes to prevent a 56-million-ton California sand & gravel mine from opening.

Full press release and letter HERE: bit.ly/2DzBwrZ



Rep. Paul Gosar, DDS, Rep Andy Biggs, Rep. Doug LaMalfa and 7 others

On Friday, Western Caucus led an effort supported by 44 Members of Congress calling on Congressional Appropriators to reject a land grab provision proposed by Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) that would skirt normal permitting processes to prevent a 56-million-ton California sand and gravel mine from opening.

The Caucus sent a press release announcing the letter. Members issuing statements included Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Caucus Members Congressman **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and Congressman **Roger Marshall (KS-01)**, and Congressman **David McKinley (WV-01)**.

Congressman LaMalfa (CA-01) said, "After a lengthy, 10 year review process and ultimate approval from the BLM, my colleagues in the Senate are now threatening to disrupt development contracts for political gain. This would undermine the standard orderly process by which these contracts are reviewed and approved. The contracts in question are in a remote location and would produce 56 million tons of sand and gravel over 20 years. These are essential resources for efforts to modernize and improve America's infrastructure. This is nothing but a political land grab that would disrupt contracts that most agree would be beneficial for California. I urge the Appropriations Committees to take this into account when writing any funding measures."

"The Feinstein land grab is a classic example of everything that is wrong with Washington. I am not surprised that over 10 years of regulatory compliance is not enough for the California Senator. I urge my colleagues to put economic freedom ahead of leftist politics," said **Congressman Biggs (AZ-05)**.

Read the full press release and letter **HERE**.

Interior Publishes Draft list of Critical Minerals

On Friday, the Department of Interior published a draft list of mineral critical to the United States.

President Trump directed DOI to publish this list of critical minerals in the Federal Register via Executive Order 13817.

You may submit written comments:

- at http://www.regulations.gov by entering "DOI-2018-0001" in the Search bar and clicking "Search," or
- by mail to Critical Minerals List, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240

To view the full draft list of critical minerals and receive more information click **HERE**.

POST OF THE WEEK...

Rep. David Valadao @RepDavidValadao · Feb 14

Enjoyed kicking off the @World_Ag_Expo in Tulare w/ Agriculture @SecretarySonny. It's important for those in Washington to fully understand the needs of Central Valley farmers and ranchers.

WEEKLY ADDRESS...

This week, **Rep. Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, discusses important issues for Louisiana's Fourth District including: American Energy Dominance, his "Securing Our Borders and Wilderness Act" that enhances national security, protects the environment and allows emergency response on federal lands, as well as his "SEA Act" which streamlines the coastal permitting process and encourages development of our bountiful offshore resources.

Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch this week's Weekly Address.

STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING US!

WEBSITE

Click Here to view this email in your browser
Click Here to be removed from this list

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/22/2018 9:15:08 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: ICYMI: Rep. Johnson's Amendment to Farm Bill Modernizing ESA Habitat Requirements Passes House

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 22, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

In Case You Missed It: Rep. Johnson's Amendment to Farm Bill Modernizing ESA Habitat Requirements Passes House

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Member **Mike Johnson (LA-04)** released the following statement after his Amendment #94 to H.R. 2 - which would incentivize private conservation efforts to rehabilitate endangered species - passed the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by unanimous voice vote last Friday:

"The ESA has been exploited for decades placing unnecessary burdens on our nation's hard-

working farmers and ranchers," said **Congressman Johnson**. "And while protecting wildlife and their habitats is of the utmost importance, the agriculture community is already proactively and heavily involved in conservation programs that implement critical protections for both. My amendment helps modernize the ESA so we can continue to protect endangered species and let our farmers and ranchers get back to what they do best - providing a safe, sustainable food source for the American people," he concluded.

Background:

On Friday, May 18, 2018, **Congressman Johnson's** Amendment #94 to H.R. 2, colloquially known as the Farm Bill, was agreed to by voice vote on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The amendment clarifies that private conservation efforts that contribute to species recovery should be recognized as such when evaluating and measuring endangered species habitat range and recovery status. Its provisions would result in increased private efforts to help recover endangered species, and could be used to ensure that projects and development which may otherwise be prevented could still go forward if alternative habitat with the requisite characteristics for a given species' conservation is provided.

In recent years, local landowners showed unprecedented support for Lesser Prairie Chicken conservation, and committed approximately 4 million acres and more than $26 million towards these efforts. Unfortunately, current practices do not allow conservation measures that take place outside of designated critical habitat to be weighed in relation to federal actions with an Endangered Species Act nexus - including for project permitting and public works. This unnecessarily disincentivizes non-federal conservation efforts.

To address this, the amendment would allow for the totality of habitat conservation measures underway to be considered, thereby encouraging voluntary conservation and investment that would help recover threatened and endangered species.

Property owners, states, and local communities should be encouraged to be a part of the solution, not pushed aside in favor of federal micromanagement.

This amendment accomplishes just that.

See the text of Rep. Johnson's amendment here.

- -

Amendment Original Sponsors:
Mike Johnson, Paul Gosar

Endorsed by:
American Farm Bureau Federation, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Public Lands Council, National Cotton Council, National Water Resources Association, Golden Vertex Corp., Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona, SRT Outdoors, AZ BASS Nation, The Bass Federation-AZ, Colorado Pork Producers Council, Alaska Miners Association, Arizona Cattlemen's Association, Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley, Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Bullhead Area, Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee, Arizona State Senator Sylvia Allen, Arizona Mining Association, Arizona Rock Products Association.

American Exploration & Mining Association, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Pork Council, Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association

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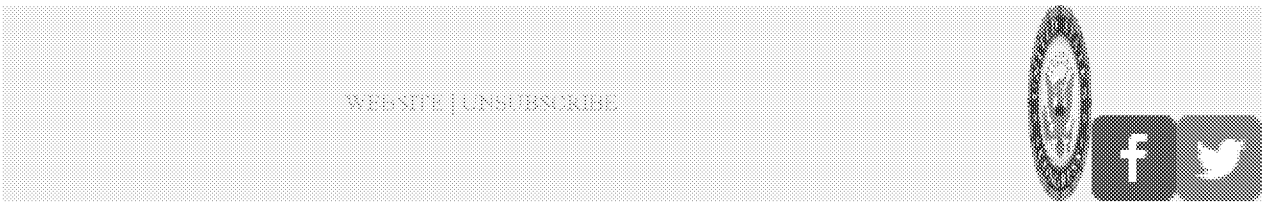


Message

From: Gordon, Stephen [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7C8FB4D82BFF4EEC98F5C5D00A47F554-GORDON, STE]
Sent: 3/7/2018 8:46:37 PM
To: Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Letendre, Daisy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b691cccca6264ae09df7054c7f1019cb-Letendre, D]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Bolen, Brittany [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=31e872a691114372b5a6a88482a66e48-Bolen, Brit]; Dravis, Samantha [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ece53f0610054e669d9dffe0b3a842df-Dravis, Sam]; Lyons, Troy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=15e4881c95044ab49c6c35a0f5eef67e-Lyons, Troy]; Shimmin, Kaitlyn [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=becb3f33f9a14acd8112d898cc7853c6-Shimmin, Ka]; Cory, Preston [preston.cory@mail.house.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Block, Molly [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=60d0c681a16441a0b4fa16aa2dd4b9c5-Block, Moll]; Daniell, Kelsi [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cd867173479344b3bda202b3004ff830-Daniell, Ke]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Hewitt, James [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=41b19dd598d340bb8032923d902d4bd1-Hewitt, Jam]; Feeley, Drew (Robert) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=abae82aa36da4d3383eae19a8efa683c-Feeley, Rob]
Subject: RE: Weekly OP, OCIR, OPE, OPA Check-In

I will reserve our conference room 1433 for the meeting.

-Stephen

-----Original Appointment-----
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, March 7, 2018 3:42 PM
To: Letendre, Daisy; Gordon, Stephen; Bennett, Tate; Bolen, Brittany; Dravis, Samantha; Lyons, Troy; Shimmin, Kaitlyn; Cory, Preston; Wilcox, Jahan; Block, Molly; Daniell, Kelsi; Abboud, Michael; Hewitt, James; Feeley, Drew (Robert)
Subject: Weekly OP, OCIR, OPE, OPA Check-In
When: Occurs every Thursday effective 3/8/2018 until 12/31/2018 from 5:00 PM to 5:30 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).
Where: TBD

Can we get a short, weekly meeting on the calendar with OPA, OPE, OCIR and OP staff to discuss the upcoming policy announcements, so that we can better prepare for rollouts, including: press events, stakeholder outreach, and Congressional heads-up? For example, plan which policy announcements require events, who we should invite and who we need to give heads-up to – and to make sure we aren't duplicating efforts.

The goal will be to have these weekly, and have at least one person from each office attend and then report back to their group.

As these were getting cancelled often when they were on Friday's – let's try for Thursdays. Let's try to be quick and focused on one to two weeks out.

Stephen, can we use your conference room? Will you reserve?

Thank you!!

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/22/2018 7:53:17 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: ICYMI: Rep. Don Young's Amendment to Boost Alaska Forestry Passes House Floor

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 22, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

In Case You Missed It: Rep. Don Young's Amendment to Boost Alaska Forestry Passes House Floor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Western Caucus Member Don Young **(AK-At Large)** released the following statement after his Amendment #69 to H.R. 2 - which would exempt Alaska from the 2001 'Roadless Rule' and thereby boost forestry in several National Forest System units in which it has been artificially suppressed - passed the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 208-207:

Congressman Young stated, "I want to thank my colleagues on the Western Caucus for supporting my amendment to exempt national forests in Alaska from the Roadless rule. The Clinton-era Roadless Rule applies a one-sized-fits all approach to areas where those policies rarely work, especially the federally locked lands of Alaska. In my years living in and representing Alaska, I've watched tens of thousands of jobs in the logging and support industries dwindle down to a few hundred. The economy of Southeast Alaska is hurting, not because of the recession or a poor timber market; but because of radical and ill-advised environmentalism. This amendment ensures the U.S. Forest Service fulfils its multiple-use mandate, which includes providing timber sales in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests."

Background:

On Friday, May 18, 2018, Congressman Don Young's Amendment #69 to H.R. 2 - colloquially known as the 'Farm Bill' - was agreed to by a vote of 208-207 on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

If made law, the amendment would exempt National Forests in Alaska from the 'Roadless Rule' while leaving intact all relevant management authorities including the Tongass Forest Plan. The 2001 Roadless Rule set aside 9.5 million acres of the Tongass National Forest from road development, effectively prohibiting access to mature timber stands.

At 16.8 million acres, the Tongass National Forest is the largest in the nation. Coupled with the Chugach National Forest, Alaska contains over 12% of the total acreage in the national forest system. Over 90% of the Tongass is inaccessible by road. The lack of access to timber not only costs Alaskans good-paying jobs in an important, but artificially declining industry - but also promotes premature tree death and degenerating forest health from disease and infestations. The Roadless Rule also effectively blocks implementation of the multiple-use mandate that applies by law to federal forest lands.

The regulation as it stands limits harvesting to under 8% of the Tongass. This fact makes conservation within the Forest significantly more difficult because locations with less tourism and conservation value are largely precluded from selection for timber. Conservation and logging interests directly compete for the same limited accessible acreage.

The State of Alaska sued for relief from the rule, and was granted a temporary exemption to Roadless in 2003. At that time, the Bush administration concluded that the social and economic hardships to Southeast Alaska imposed under the rule outweighed its potential long-term ecological benefits because the Tongass Forest Plan adequately provided for the ecological sustainability of the Tongass. That exemption was lifted in 2011, and the issue is once again making its way through the courts.

As a consequence, a clear statutory exemption such as is provided with Congressman Young's amendment is the most appropriate means of returning to commonsense policy.

See the text of Congressman Young's amendment here. A press release by Congressman Young on the amendment's passage can be found here.

###

Message

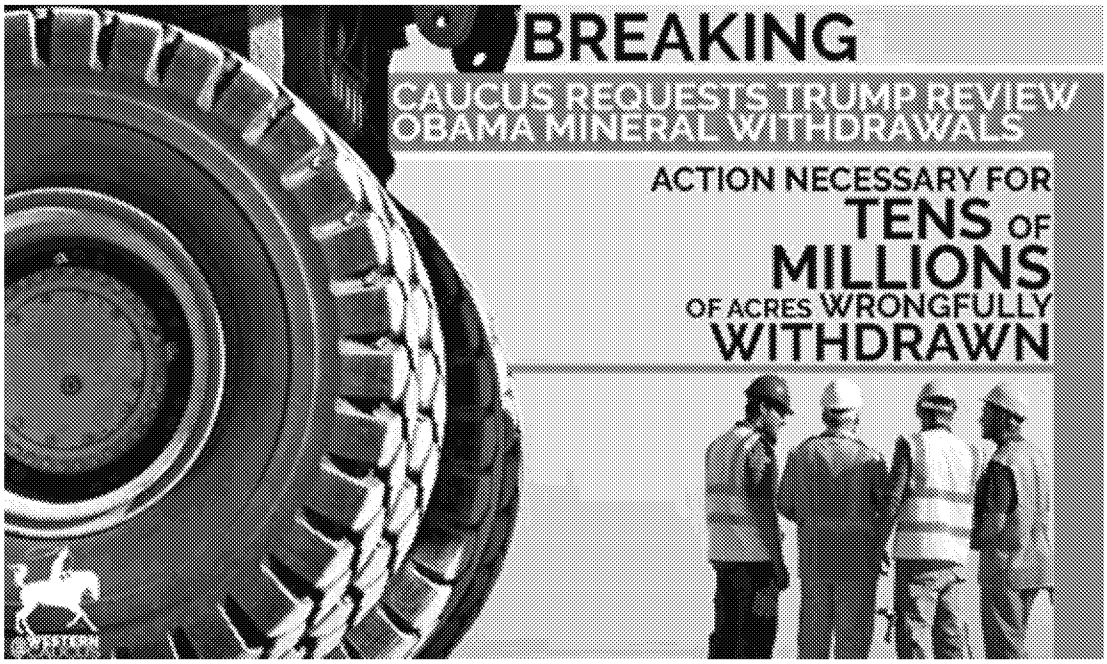
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 5/2/2018 10:20:25 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: More than 50 Members, Stakeholders Call on Admin to Scrap Obama Mineral Withdrawals

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 2, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

More than 50 Members, Stakeholders Call on Admin to Scrap Obama Mineral Withdrawals



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Western Caucus Member **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, and representatives for the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, the **American Exploration & Mining Association**, the **National Mining Association**, the **American Resources Policy Network**, the **Arizona Mining Association**, the **Southern Arizona Business Association**, the **Yavapai Cattle Growers Association** as well as **Apache County Supervisor Doyel Shamley** released the following statements after 23 Members of Congress sent a letter to President Trump and agency heads requesting that they initiate a

comprehensive review of all mineral withdrawals implemented by the previous Administration - and reverse any that are shown to be without merit:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "Today, we implore this Administration to take a closer look at several improper mineral withdrawals that were planned behind closed doors and executed in unprecedented haste by the last Administration. These massive mineral estate removals proved devastating to local communities, imperiling good-paying jobs and shattering investor and mining company confidence. The Trump Administration has done an incredible job signalling that it supports responsible job creation and opposes arbitrary or political violations of the rule of law. The next natural step in acting on that agenda is to reverse these withdrawals in the Superior National Forest, Arizona Strip and Southwest Oregon regions - as well as any of the other Obama-era withdrawals the Administration deems unnecessary and harmful. President Trump: Believe it or not, some of our people still aren't tired of wining. Do this, and you may get Rural America to love you even more than it already does."

Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer Bruce Westerman said, "Domestic minerals are critical to both our national security and economic well being. At no point should either be needlessly harmed for partisan gain. My colleagues and I encourage the swift and thorough review of these clearly political domestic mineral withdrawals."

Congressman Emmer stated, "In their final hours, without hesitation or merit, the Obama Administration put thousands of jobs on notice, threatened the economic foundation of communities around the country, including in Minnesota, and took steps to make it harder for the United States to access minerals and materials critical to our national security. These actions blocked responsible projects from proving they can be done while protecting our environment. It's time this Administration take a deeper look into these politically motivated moves. I look forward to swift action from the Department of Interior and the President to undo the damage of the former administration."

"With more than one-half of the U.S. mineral estate already off limits or subject to severe restrictions, allowing these withdrawals to remain will only increase our Nation's reliance on foreign sources of strategic and critical minerals while shipping high paying jobs overseas," said the **American Exploration & Mining Association**.

"The negative effects of large-scale withdrawals of federal lands from mineral entry extend far beyond depressing mineral production in the United States. These withdrawals also destroy high-paying jobs, undermine rural economies, and contribute to locking up the vast federal estate. Revoking the withdrawals made by the previous administration is a good first step, which should be followed by a comprehensive review of all the lands that have been withdrawn over many decades," said, **Myron Ebell, Director for the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute**.

"America's supply chain is at risk thanks, in part, to political decision-making in recent years that had little to do with good stewardship and everything to do with short-term political expediency," said **Hal Quinn, President and CEO of the National Mining Association**. "Despite being home to rich mineral deposits, less than half of the mineral needs of U.S. manufacturing are met domestically, leaving key domestic industries vulnerable to foreign sources. While some land withdrawals may be necessary, a comprehensive review of mineral withdrawals executed under the previous administration is merited given the unprecedented frequency and scope of past actions locking up important strategic resources."

"Northern Arizona's unique breccia pipe geological formations represent the nation's largest source of high-grade uranium ore. The current reality is that America's nuclear power industry imports approximately 92 percent of the uranium it uses from foreign sources. Given domestic availability of this uranium, importing this material defies all reason. America has more than enough uranium within our borders to supply our own needs. Responsible domestic uranium mining followed by reclamation will provide great benefits for our country's electric power needs, local economies and the environment. America's nuclear power plants are clean and release no carbon emissions, making these deposits in northern Arizona an almost perfect remedy for our electricity-dependent nation," stated **Steve Trussell, Executive Director of the Arizona Mining Association**.

"If we do not repair the damages done by erroneous blockading of mineral utilization, this country will continue to allow itself to be subject to increased threats to our strategic position. Further, failing to overturn political mineral withdrawals by the previous administration will block tens of thousands of jobs and cause significant harm to our economy," said **Doyel Shamley, Apache County Supervisor**.

"Without a strong economic environment and self-sustaining resource development effort the US will not have the ability to lead and support the very freedoms that all want to embrace.
The withdrawal of our much needed mineral resources by the previous administration leaves this country, the leader of freedom and environmental around the world vulnerable to governments that don't respect the human or natural environment," stated the **Southern Arizona Business Coalition**.

"In this day and age, and given our standing in the eyes of the world, it is ridiculous that we should be dependent on so many important minerals and subject to the whim of foreign countries when we can develop most of these resources right here in America. Accordingly, the Trump Administration should act to scrap political mineral withdrawals by the Obama Administration," said **Larry Parker, President of the Yavapai Cattle Growers Association**.

Background:

Today, May 2, 2018, the Western Caucus led 23 Members of Congress in sending a letter addressed to President Trump, Secretaries Zinke and Perdue and U.S. Forest Service Acting Secretary Christiansen respectfully requesting that they initiate a comprehensive review of all mineral withdrawals implemented by the previous Administration, and that they reverse any withdrawals determined to be without merit or to have been initiated in order to block specific development.

Members asked that a review confirm the withdrawals' statutory compliance as well as consider their practicality, necessity and economic and national security impacts.

Read the letter with all signers HERE.

The prior Administration was responsible for more significant withdrawals of the federal mineral estate from exploration, location and entry than any other to date. Tens of millions of acres were withdrawn, with some of the most consequential actions coming at the very end of the Obama Administration in a flurry of rushed orders that wreaked devastation on the communities and companies that were abruptly targeted.

Rather than there being a sudden, increased danger posed by mining that was entirely unknown

prior to the last Administration's arrival in 2008, it is clear from the Obama Administration's land selection choices that they leveraged executive power to lock up land from legitimate development in order to appease environmentalist and other special interest demands.

As House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop noted in a September 28, 2017 letter to Secretaries Zinke and Perdue, “Under the prior Administration, mineral access on Federal land was regularly and systemically blocked, harming our nation’s economic and strategic potential. Indeed, millions of acres of Federal lands were inappropriately withdrawn from mineral access due to false premises of environmental protectionism and the intentional misuse of statutory authority." He also observes that these withdrawals seem to have been inconsistent with statutory requirements regarding mineral withdrawals under the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLMPA), both in their size as well as by potentially failing to meet the FLMPA's "consideration" standard for such withdrawals.

It's the long-stated position of the Trump Administration, on the other hand, that the United States must embark on a policy of securing the domestic production of critical and strategic minerals with sensitive supply chains in order to ward off foreign influence and control over our nation's physical and economic security.

- -

Letter signers (23):
Paul Gosar, Tom Emmer, Bruce Westerman, Rob Bishop, Roger Marshall, Brian Babin, Doug LaMalfa, Chris Stewart, Jody Hice, Mark Amodei, Jackie Walorski, Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M., Mark Meadows, Scott Perry, Paul Cook, Alex X. Mooney, Randy Weber, Kevin Cramer, John Duncan, Jeff Duncan, Scott DesJarlais, Doug Lamborn, Ron Estes

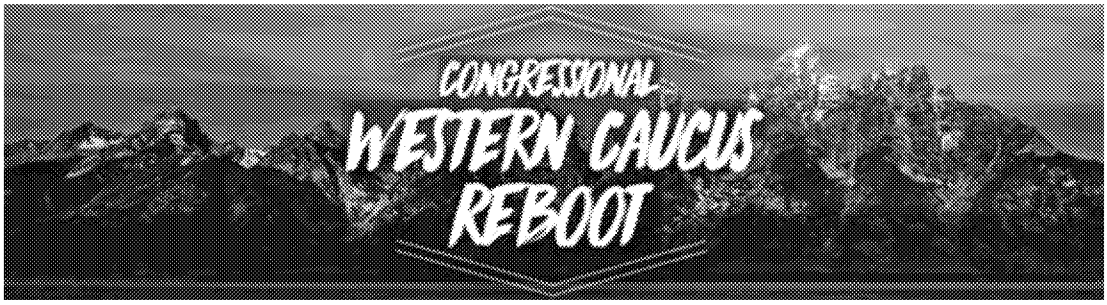
Endorsed by:
American Exploration & Mining Association, National Mining Association, Women's Mining Coalition, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Americans for Limited Government, American Resources Policy Network, Alaska Miners Association, APEX, Arizona Mining Association, Arizona Pork Council, Arizona Rock Products Association, AZ BASS Nation, Bass Federation-AZ, Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce, Hudbay Rosemont Copper Project, Idaho Mining Association, Jobs For Minnesotans, MiningMinnesota, New Mexico Cattle Growers’ Association, New Mexico Wool Growers Inc., SRT Outdoors, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Utah Mining Association, Yavapai Cattle Growers Association, Arizona District 6 Senator Sylvia Allen and Yavapai County Supervisors Rowle Simmons and Thomas Thurman

###

WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 3/18/2018 8:48:25 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 03.18.2018



Week of 03.18.2018

"A Congressional Journey to the Center of the Earth"

The Western Caucus policy tour of Arizona was a rocking success

Last weekend, the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses participated in a trip - coordinated by the Western Caucus Foundation - in which Members of Congress and Congressional staff scaled Arizona to participate in policy roundtables, briefings with state and local officials and site tours in order to enhance their

on-the-ground familiarity with some of the issues they and the Western Caucus work on every day at the level of federal policy.

"To me, this is what the Western Caucus is all about," said **Chairman Paul Gosar**. "It's so important that we get people out on the ground to see, walk, touch and experience these issues firsthand, so that when we go back to Washington to work on them we have both sides of the coin covered. That's what we all got out of this adventure, and I was proud to show Members and staff from all across the country the best of what Arizona has to offer."

The trip kicked off at Arizona State University with a policy roundtable featuring panels on the topics of:

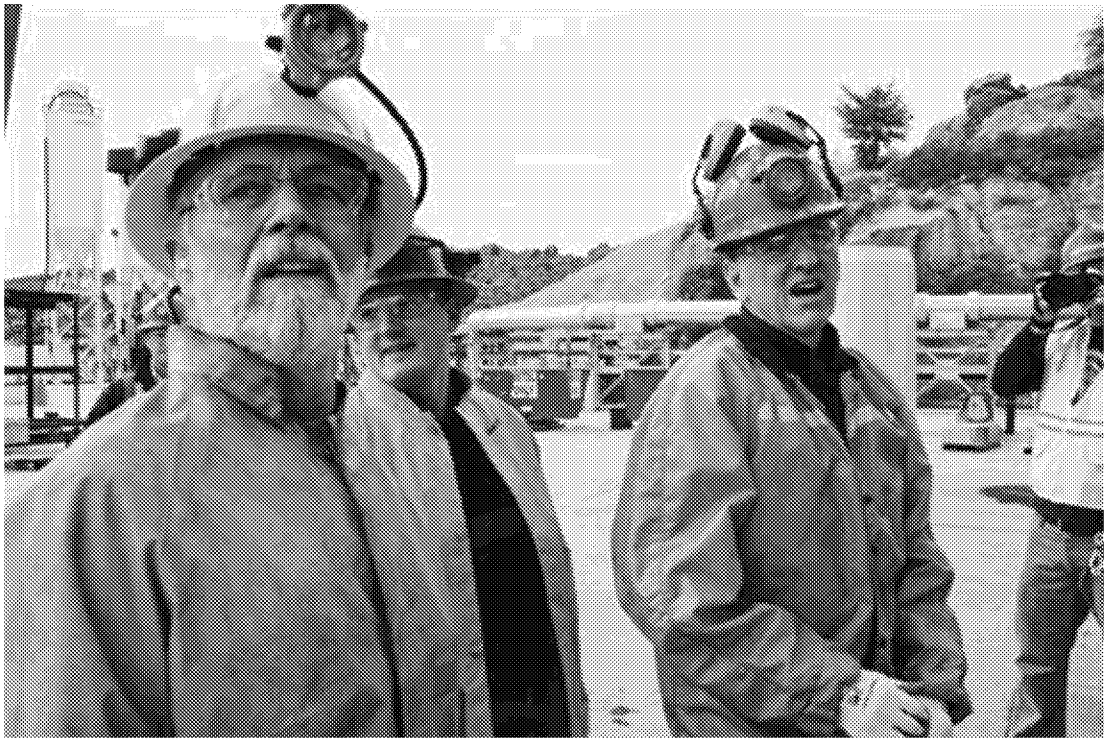
- America's Mineral Security
- Reliable Water, Healthy Forests and Fire Prevention
- Western Power
- Tribal Priorities
- Arizona Leaders, Arizona Issues

Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner **Brenda Burman** (pictured below) served as the keynote speaker for the event. **Burman** is the first female Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation within the U.S. Department of the Interior, and is a water and reclamation expert whose accumulated knowledge from a career spanning private and public service provided panelists and attendees with an exciting and comprehensive view of the Western water and power situation.

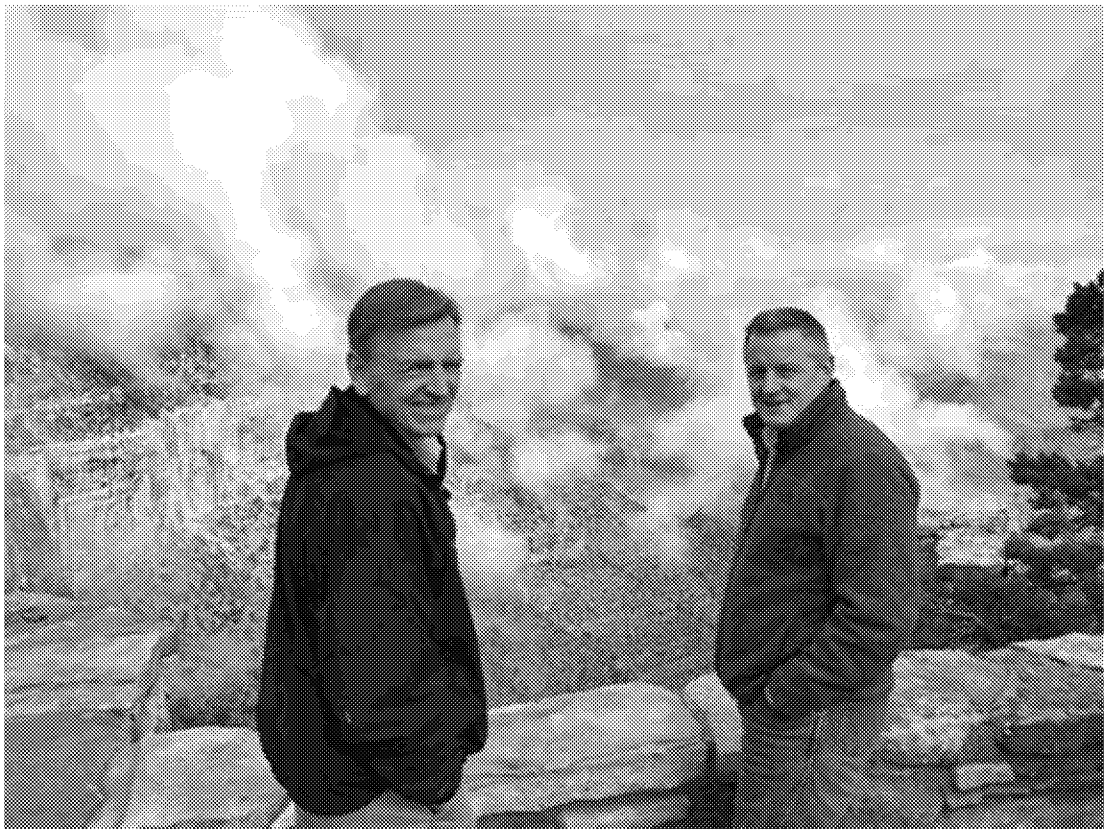
Members of Congress in attendance included Reps. **Andy Biggs, Rob Bishop, Paul Gosar, Doug LaMalfa, Dan Newhouse and Bruce Westerman.**

Dinner that night at the Arizona State's University Club in Phoenix featured keynote remarks by House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop** as well as Arizona Attorney General, **Mark Brnovich** (pictured below). Attorney General **Brnovich** gave a rousing speech underscoring the importance of federalism, with especial focus on the concept of our branches and levels of government exercising those powers which they are constitutionally allotted - no more, and no less.

The following day, Members of Congress and staff departed Phoenix by bus to tour the Resolution Copper mine in Superior, Arizona. The mine is the largest single investment in Arizona's history and delves 7,000 feet into the earth to mine copper in the area's rich deposit. The project is years in the making and was originally facilitated by a land exchanged pushed in Congress by Chairman **Gosar** and Senator **McCain**. Reps. **Newhouse**, **Westerman** and **Gosar** are pictured below above-ground at the site.



The final day of the trip featured a walking tour of the Grand Canyon and a lunch briefing and discussion which included City of Tusayan and Grand Canyon National Park officials.

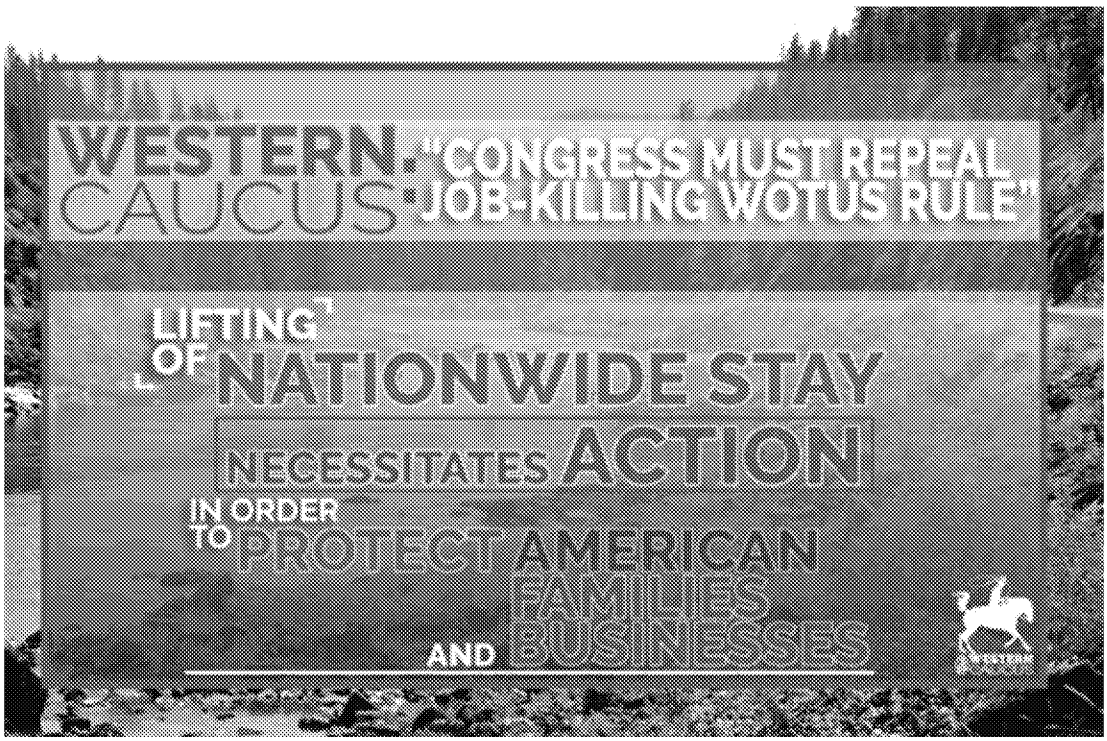


Views of the Canyon were somewhat obstructed upon arrival, including in the shot above of Reps. **Gosar** and **Westerman**. House staff, pictured below, were disappointed but clearly amused when the fog continued to roll in and force the planned plane tour of the Canyon to be cancelled.

A fantastic and informative discussion on issues related to Grand Canyon water issues, park development and growth, and regulations affecting outfitter and tour companies capped off the visit and the trip.

Western Caucus Makes Final Push for Omnibus Priorities

WOTUS, Ozone rule, gray wolves, forestry and more are in play



The Congressional Western Caucus has been hard at work to ensure that its priorities are considered and, to the maximum extent, incorporated into the ongoing omnibus appropriations bill discussions.

Caucus Members are paying attention to see whether leadership and appropriators include provisions on subjects ranging from Endangered Species Act listings to Obama-era water and energy regulations.

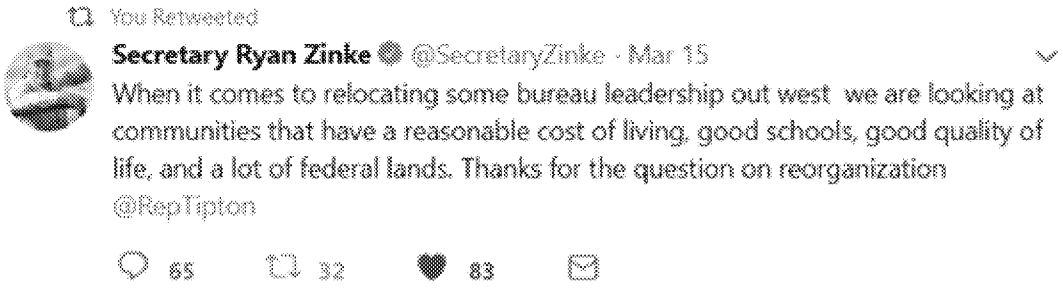
In the interest of transparency and public edification, the full list and explanation of priorities the Congressional Western Caucus has presented to appropriators is a public document, viewable **HERE**. Enjoy!

|| ZINKE IN THE HOUSE ||

Secretary of the Interior discusses budget priorities in front of Natural Resources panel

On Thursday, a Full Committee oversight hearing by the House Committee on Natural Resources examined the Department of the Interior's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Proposal and included questions by Members of the Committee posed to Secretary of the Interior (and former Committee and Caucus member) **Ryan Zinke**. His budget deputies were also present for statements and questions.

The oversight hearing was one of several taking place on Capitol Hill this week in which Cabinet officials appeared before the committees of jurisdiction to answer questions about agency activity and proposed 2019 budget allocations. These hearings serve as opportunities for the Administration to make the case publicly before Congress that the President's proposal should be enacted as Congress prepares to consider funding allocations for the 2019 fiscal year.



Topics broached were many and wide-ranging. Of particular interest was the Department's developing plans for relocating major centers of Interior operations out West, closer to the lands and jurisdictions they actually oversee - a plan that has been mostly hailed by members of the Western Caucus.

Get the scoop on the hearing including full video feed at the Natural Resources Committee website **HERE**. Picture above courtesy the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Appropriators, House Leadership Brief Staff on Omnibus at Foundation Breakfast

Counties group, Dept. of Interior and innovative nuclear company also in attendance

On Friday, Senate and Congressional Western Caucus staff met for the monthly bicameral Foundation Staff Policy Breakfast.

The standing-room only crowd heard from leadership and appropriations staff from the House and Senate chambers, who relayed updates on the omnibus negotiations process while reassuring staff they were fighting for inclusion of provisions important to Western Caucus members.

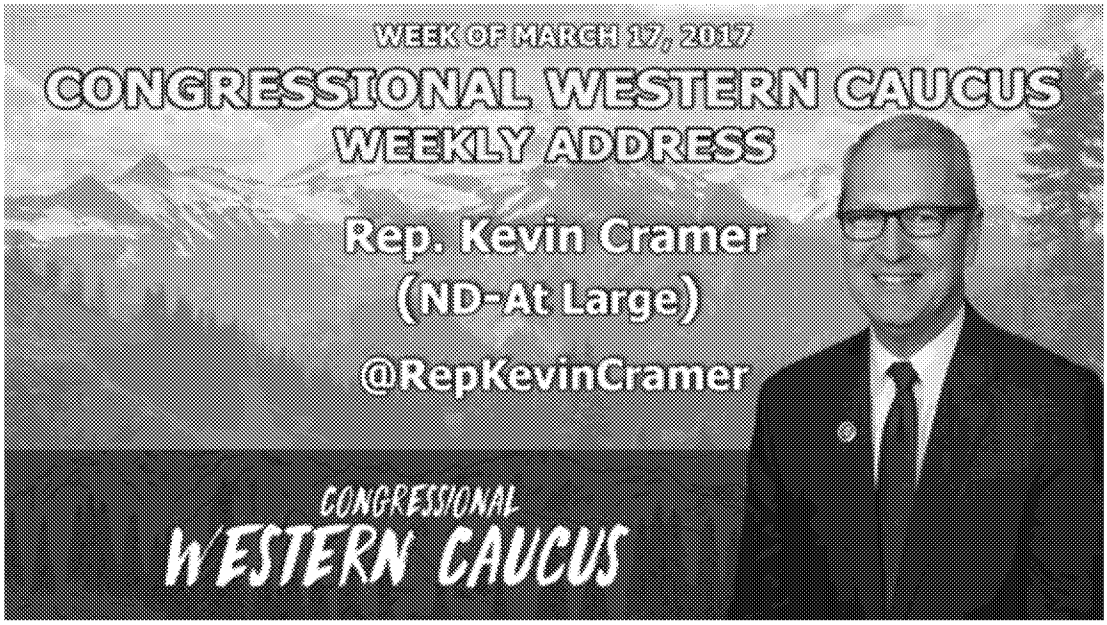
The Department of the Interior's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, **Austin Ewell** (pictured above), also gave remarks and answered questions. He was joined by **Micah Chambers**, left, representing Interior's Office of Congressional Affairs.

POST OF THE WEEK...

WEEKLY ADDRESS...

This week, **Rep. Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)**, discusses issues important both to North Dakota and the Western Caucus, including burdensome Obama-era oil and gas regulations as well as his plan for a national inventory of federal lands.

Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch this week's address.



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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 3/2/2018 12:26:04 AM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Calls on Congress to Kill WOTUS Rule

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: March 1, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Western Caucus Calls on Congress to Kill WOTUS Rule

Releases list of priorities for interior section of FY 18 omnibus package

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Executive Vice-Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Chairmen Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)** and **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, and Western Caucus Members **Ralph Norman (SC-05)**, **Jeff**

Denham (CA-10), **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-AL)**, **Markwayne Mullin (OK-02)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and **Brian Babin (TX-36)** released the following statements calling on Congress to act immediately to roll back the Obama Administration's Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule after the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals lifted the nationwide stay that was in effect for the regulation:

Chairman Gosar stated, "We've been releasing statements and press releases reacting to the various judicial and regulatory twists and turns affecting the WOTUS rule for years now. But the time for statements and press releases is over. The court stay that kept WOTUS at bay nationwide is gone. We need immediate legislative action from Congress - preferably in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus package - to stop this regulation once and for all. There is no reason that this whopper of a rule from the previous Administration should remain on the books. After all, Congress already passed a bill to nullify this job-killing water rule in the past – only for President Obama to veto it."

"It is unacceptable that the most burdensome federal water and land grab in American history is again on track to become the law of the land. The Obama Administration's WOTUS rule completely by-passes states' water rights and threatens the Coloradan farmers, ranchers and landowners whose livelihoods depend on the availability of water," said **Congressman Tipton**. "I was encouraged by the current Administration's move to permanently withdraw WOTUS, but the court's latest decision now makes it imperative that Congress take swift action to block the rule. I will continue working with my colleagues in the House and Senate toward a more permanent solution to protect farmers, ranchers, and private property owners across Colorado and the nation from federal water grabs."

Congressman Newhouse stated, "I wholeheartedly supported the Trump Administration's delay of the Waters of the U.S. rule. With the 6th Circuit's decision to lift the stay on this misguided, bureaucratic power grab, it is clear Congress must act to provide relief for our nation's farmers and agriculture community. We must repeal WOTUS once and for all."

"Today's 6th Circuit decision simply underscores Congress' need to act on WOTUS. This blatant water grab by the Obama-era EPA attempted to put everyone's backyard under federal control, harming our ranchers and farmers in the process. Today's lifting will simply continue to cost the American taxpayer, who must foot the bill as this overreach languishes in court. It is high time that Congress acts to legislatively remove WOTUS, which would help ensure local landowners the ability to provide both good jobs and clean water across the country," said **Congressman Westerman**.

Congressman Biggs said, "The Clean Water Rule is one of the most intrusive and expansive regulations to come out of President Obama's politicized EPA. Congress must act to eliminate WOTUS once and for all."

Congressman Pearce said, "This regulation would be a disaster for rural communities in the West and across the country, giving Washington near-total control over water resources. The livelihoods of American farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs are at stake. It is vital that we foster a level of rationality in environmental policy and begin detangling the web of crushing rules and regulations across the federal government. Ridding the nation of this burdensome rule is long-overdue, and I will continue working in Congress to conserve resources while protecting American jobs."

"As long as the threat of this rule has a heartbeat, farmers, ranchers, businesses and families will

continue living under a cloud of uncertainty," said **Congressman Bishop**. With bipartisan opposition across the country, we will pursue every avenue necessary to dispose of this harmful and abusive regulation."

Congressman Norman said, "The Obama Administration's WOTUS rule is an egregious example of the kind of regulatory overreach that is killing our nation's farmers and ranchers. I am disappointed that the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals has lifted the stay on implementation of the rule. Now is the time for Congress to act to eliminate this rule completely, and I am proud to stand with the Western Caucus to be the tip of the spear in this effort."

"You know the reach of the government has gone too far when farmers are getting sued for planting wheat in a wheat field," said **Congressman Denham**. "Delaying the rule was an important step, but fully rescinding the rule is clearly needed to provide certainty while the regulation is rewritten."

"This unfortunate court decision only intensifies the need for Congress to provide permanent relief for Southwest Washington farmers and land owners who would be so detrimentally impacted by this devastating rule. If the D.C. bureaucrats and courts have their way, this horrible WOTUS rule would allow the federal government to regulate every pond and ditch on private property – overturning four decades of effective Clean Water Act protection of our lands. I'll continue working with my colleagues in Congress to defend the plight of Southwest Washington residents from this egregious government power grab," said **Congresswoman Herrera Beutler**.

Congresswoman Cheney stated, "The 2015 Waters of the United States Rule was a gross overreach by President Obama's Administration, granting unconstitutional authority to federal agencies and undermining local and state authority. WOTUS threatens our rural communities, expands federal control over private property rights, and harms hard hard-working ranchers in Wyoming and across the nation. The House and Senate should move immediately to abolish this rule once and for all."

"The previous administration's WOTUS Rule allowed the federal government to regulate every stream, creek, and ditch across the nation at the expense of countless jobs and taxing regulatory costs to businesses," said **Congressman Mullin.** "Oklahoma's farmers, ranchers, and small businesses need relief from this burdensome rule. I will continue to work in Congress to pass legislation that overturns this gross abuse of executive branch power."

Congressman LaMalfa said, "WOTUS is one of the most erroneous and over-reaching rules ever implemented, and this decision clears the way for it to become the law of the land. That can't happen. WOTUS gives authority to unelected bureaucrats to regulate nearly every body of water in America and puts private property rights in serious jeopardy. This would have an especially devastating impact on rural America, including Northern California. Congress must now act quickly to pass legislation that defeats this unconstitutional rule once and for all."

"The Supreme Court's January opinion in National Association of Manufacturers v. Department of Defense - regarding the Obama Administration's overreaching, job-killing Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule - has thrown some industries into chaos as uncertainty once again looms. Congress has the capability to provide a permanent, statutory answer on the merits of the rule once and for all by nullifying the rule in its entirety. WOTUS is bad for America's farmers, bad for American energy and bad for America's builders. I will continue to fight for a solution to this terrible rule," said **Congressman Johnson**.

Congressman Lamborn remarked, "The Obama Administration's Waters of the United States rule is a classic example of government regulation gone wrong. From farmers to construction companies to homeowners and countless groups in between, the WOTUS rule makes it harder for ordinary Americans to do business and support their families. It impedes on the rights of both states and property owners, and should not be put into effect. Congress should act to require the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the WOTUS rule and re-draft the rule in a strong, bipartisan manner. I look forward to working with Administrator Pruitt and Lieutenant General Semonite on a revision of this rule that will honor local landowners instead of giving power solely to the federal government."

"Yesterday's action was disappointing." said **Congressman Emmer**. "The EPA's Waters of the U.S. rule was intrusive, damaging for jobs in Minnesota and around the country, and a prime example of Obama-era bureaucratic overreach. Like all Minnesotans, I believe that we need to be good stewards of our land and waterways, but our farmers and ranchers should be focused on feeding America instead of attempting to comply with the EPA's inherently flawed rule."

"Congress and the Administration must continue to use every tool we have to stop WOTUS. This Obama-era grab of private property rights and local control will be devastating for rural and suburban communities," concluded **Congressman Babin**.

Background:

Today, Western Caucus called on the House and Senate to immediately pass legislation which would get rid of the job-killing Obama Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule once and for all. This could be accomplished in two ways: 1) standalone legislation, or; 2) language included in the base text or attached to the fiscal year 2018 omnibus - to be considered imminently in March - that would nullify the rule entirely. This legislative approach would allow the Environmental Protection Agency to focus on other Trump Administration priorities - including writing a more targeted and sensible regulation that is consistent with Supreme Court precedent.

On 2/28/18, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals lifted the nationwide stay of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. Accordingly, Congress must act in the upcoming omnibus or other must pass legislation to end litigation and halt the incredibly onerous and overreaching rule from taking effect.

The Obama Administration's WOTUS rule attempted to assert Clean Water Act jurisdiction over nearly all areas with even the slightest of connections to water resources, including man-made conveyances. Farmers, ranchers, job creators and private property owners would suffer under this overreaching water grab. WOTUS contradicts prior Supreme Court decisions and seeks to expand agency control over 60% of our country's streams and millions of acres of wetlands that were previously non-jurisdictional.

Section 431 of the House Interior bill seeks to address the previous Administration's overreach by authorizing the EPA Administrator and Secretary of the Army to withdraw the Obama WOTUS rule. Codifying Section 431 or a similar provision into law is necessary to address the pending uncertainty for Western Caucus Members and their constituents as a result of the Sixth Circuit stay being lifted.

In recent years, the House has voted at least five different times to block or reduce the damage associated with the Obama WOTUS rule. **In January 2016, the House and Senate passed**

legislation blocking WOTUS utilizing the Congressional Review Act and put a bill on President Obama's desk that he subsequently vetoed.

The Sixth Circuit issued a nationwide stay and temporarily blocked implementation of the WOTUS rule on October 9, 2015. In June 2017, the EPA proposed a repeal of the Obama-era rule when it released a proposed rule that sought to re-codify the Clean Water Act as it existed prior to the 2015 Obama Administration rule. In January of 2018, the EPA also finalized an applicability rule that sought to delay the 2015 Obama rule by two years to February 6, 2020. However, eleven attorney generals and two environmental groups have filed separate cases in the New York court challenging delay of the applicability date and the January 2018 rule. There is also another environmental lawsuit filed against this delay in South Carolina. Further, in its January 22, 2018 decision, the Supreme Court held that challenges to the WOTUS Rule belong at the district rather than appellate court level, overturning the Sixth Circuit's decision and issuing instructions for the court to dismiss the case and nationwide stay.

In addition to calling on Congress to act to repeal the WOTUS rule, Western Caucus also released their top Interior Appropriations omnibus priorities. To view that list click **HERE**.

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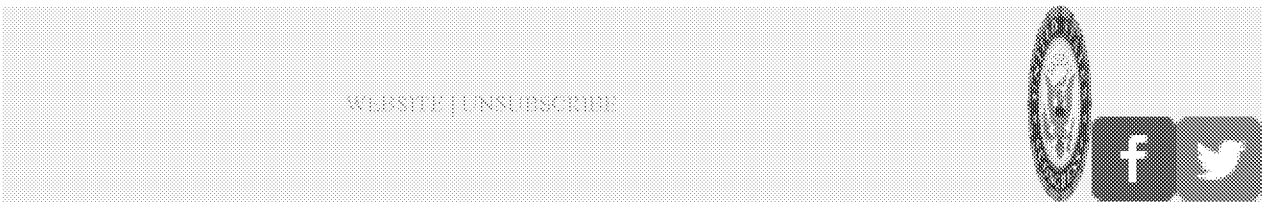

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 3/15/2018 8:41:45 PM
To: Davis, Matthew [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=84111ec08c504b6baae0510b2d2ce46a-Davis, Matthew]; Rodrick, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6515dbe46dae466da53c8a3aa3be8cc2-Rodrick, Ch]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Graham, Amy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=26722dfde5b34925b0ad9a8dd4aff308-Graham, Amy]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Block, Molly [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=60d0c681a16441a0b4fa16aa2dd4b9c5-Block, Moll]
Subject: Reminder about tomorrow's bicameral policy breakfast and upcoming Western Caucus events
Attachments: 2018 WC & Foundation Events Draft Schedule for remainder year updated 3.8.18.pdf

FYI guys.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

Upcoming Meetings & Events…

1. **Western Caucus Foundation Staff-Only Monthly Bicameral Policy Breakfast** | Friday, March 16th, 2018 | 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 209-08 | Breakfast & coffee provided
   By now you should have received the below invitation. 80-100 House and Senate staffers attend as well as staff from multiple agencies within the Administration, leadership and committee staff as well as several speakers from industry attend.
   - No RSVP Necessary

2. **Western Caucus Monthly Member-Only Luncheon and Speaker Series** | Tuesday, March 20th | **12:30-1:30 p.m. [Note: half-hour later start than usual]** | 2247 RHOB | Catered lunch provided
   A special guest speaker from the Administration will present, take questions and engage in discussion with our members on their priorities for the entirety of this lunch.
   - Please RSVP or send regrets to Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov and Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Hope to see someone from your team at tomorrow's staff policy breakfast.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

View this email in your browser

Monthly Policy Briefing

Friday, March 16, 2018

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Senate Visitors Center: SVC 209-08

Briefing will include updates from leadership, committees, and Department of the Interior.

www.westerncaucusfoundation.org

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF), is a charitable and education organization operated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and dedicated to western public policy issue education.

The Western Caucus Foundation provides education and communications to public policy makers, particularly with those in the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses, and the public in an effort to enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture. The WCF is committed to advancing the following key principles: promoting economic growth; protecting private property; strengthening local control; and increasing America's energy independence and mineral production. The Foundation hosts education and networking opportunities to advance the public policies important to the West, and offers Western Caucus members, staff, and stakeholders a non-partisan and non-political organization to facilitate discussion of critical Western issues through a robust agenda of meetings, conferences, education programs, and communications.

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Message

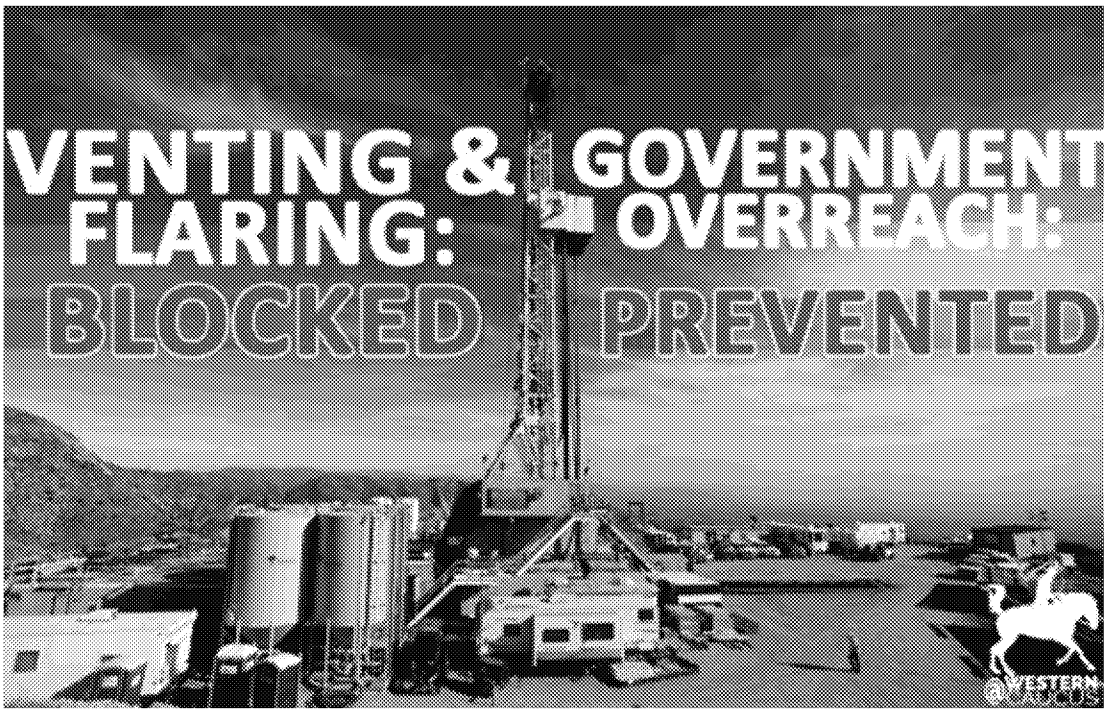
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 2/13/2018 6:34:38 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: BLM Moves to Scrap Venting and Flaring Rule

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: February 13, 2018
tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov

BLM Moves to Scrap Venting and Flaring Rule



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, **House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, **Chairman Emeritus Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, and Western Caucus Members **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Brian Babin (TX-36)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Kevin Cramer (ND-AL)** released the following statements after the Bureau of Land Management announced it was issuing a proposed rule to effectively rescind the Obama BLM's 2016 Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule, also known as the Venting and Flaring Rule:

Congressman Gosar said, "The Obama Administration's costly Venting and Flaring rule was an affront to states' rights, aimed to stifle responsible energy production on federal lands and yielded no real environmental benefit at the cost of good-paying jobs. Accordingly, I applaud the BLM and Secretary Zinke for doing the right thing for our country's ascending energy dominance by scrapping this egregious overreach by the previous administration. Their actions on this front are in line with President Trump's directive to eliminate unnecessary regulations that pose real threats to our economic security."

"The previous administration scorned domestic energy development and crafted the prior rule to deliberately stifle it. This is a necessary step to promote investment in federal and tribal lands so that economies in the west can grow. We will continue to work in coordination with Secretary Zinke, the Trump administration, states and tribal communities to advance new and better policies," said **Congressman Bishop**.

"The impacts of BLM's Obama-era venting and flaring rule would be devastating to the economy of New Mexico, which relies on the production of energy resources for thousands of jobs along with roughly 30-40% of the State's operating funds," said **Congressman Pearce**. "The full implementation of this rule would directly threaten funding for schools, teachers, hospitals, law enforcement, and other essential services our communities rely on. I appreciate the Secretary's commitment to improving this rule and look forward to working with the Department to move these necessary reforms forward."

Congressman Lamborn stated, "The Trump Administration and Secretary Zinke are taking bold action for responsible land management reform. No longer will unnecessary burdens and requirements stifle what's best for our Western lands. This move promotes strong energy development and economic growth. I'll continue to support smart policies like these."

"I commend Interior Secretary Zinke for taking this important step to end yet another onerous Obama era rule, which raised costs for Americans and made us less competitive. This Venting and Flaring Rule placed high costs on American employers and hindered economic growth. The tens of thousands of petrochemical workers in the 36th district of Texas will be the beneficiaries of this decision," said **Congressman Babin**.

Congressman LaMalfa said, "The venting and flaring rule replaced proven, responsible energy production guidelines with regulations that frequently overlap with existing state rules that have effectively managed waste prevention for decades. It's just another example of the unnecessary expansion of the regulatory state under the Obama Administration. This rule would be harmful for American energy independence and restrict our economy. I'm happy to see that the Administration is taking steps to scrap this rule and promote responsible American energy production."

"Senate Democrats killed the historical opportunity to permanently rid North Dakota of the federal mediocrity that is the venting and flaring rule," concluded **Congressman Cramer**. "I appreciate the Administration's intentions - with the many problems associated with Obama's rule, I look forward to closely studying its proposed replacement. It is my hope it addresses North Dakota's issues, as we have expressed both to Interior and to the federal courts. Methane is a commodity, and facilitating its economical transfer to the market is the solution."

Background:

Courtesy of the Department of the Interior:

As part of President Trump's Executive Order 13783 promoting energy independence [Section 7 (6)(iv)] from March 28, 2017, to review and modify federal regulations that unnecessarily hinder economic growth and energy development, the Bureau of Land Management today announced a proposal to revise the 2016 final Waste Prevention Rule (also known as the venting and flaring rule). The proposed rule would eliminate duplicative regulatory requirements and re-establish long-standing requirements that the 2016 final rule sought to replace. The proposal includes a 60-day opportunity for public comment.

"In order to achieve energy dominance through responsible energy production, we need smart regulations not punitive regulations," **said Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**. "We believe this proposed rule strikes that balance and will allow job growth in rural America."

Among the concerns identified was that the economic impact on operators was underestimated in the 2016 rule. In addition, a review of existing state and federal regulations found considerable overlap with the rule.

As a result, the BLM is proposing to replace the venting and flaring rule with requirements similar to those that were in force prior to the 2016 final rule. This proposal would align the regulations with administration priorities on energy development, job creation and reduced compliance costs while also working more closely with existing state regulatory efforts.

In an earlier part of this effort, the BLM published a final rule entitled, "Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation; Delay and Suspension of Certain Requirements," which suspended or delayed certain requirements of the 2016 final rule until Jan. 17, 2019. The rule, finalized on Dec. 8, ensured that operators on federal and Indian oil and gas leases would not expend their resources on complying with the requirements of the 2016 rule that the BLM is today proposing to replace.

The BLM's proposal supports the administration's priorities that require agencies to seek ways to reduce the costs of regulatory compliance (Executive Order 13771, Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs) and that require the Secretary to reconsider the 2016 final rule (Executive Order 13783, Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth). Secretary Zinke followed up with Secretarial Order No. 3349, American Energy Independence, on March 29, 2017, which among other things, called for review of the 2016 rule.

Courtesy of the Congressional Western Caucus:

The (BLM) Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule – colloquially known as the Venting and Flaring Rule or the BLM Methane Rule – represents one of the Obama Administration's most egregious abuses of executive power designed to stifle responsible energy production on federal lands. This 2016 Obama rule included numerous administrative and regulatory burdens that are not necessary and would have significantly hindered job creation, energy production and economic growth. Further, the revised analysis by

the Trump Administration found that the Obama rule's compliance costs for industry and implementation costs for the BLM would exceed the rule's benefits by nearly a billion dollars over a ten-year period. Obama's BLM exceeded their statutory authority with this new regulation by attempting to regulate air quality – an authority that by law is vested solely with the EPA. Methane emissions from oil and natural gas have significantly declined in recent decades without the blunt cudgel of duplicative federal regulations - and at a time when oil and gas production in the U.S. has surged.

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Sent: 5/1/2018 8:27:56 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Interior Acts on Caucus' Request, Initiates Review of NPS Franchise Fees

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: May 1, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Department of Interior Acts on Caucus' Friday Request

Delays NPS contract fee increases in order to review impacts

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart (UT-02)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Western Caucus Members **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Brian Babin (TX-36)** as well as **Executive Director of the Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association John Dillon** released statements after the Department of Interior - in response to a Caucus-led request made last Friday by 20 Members of Congress - moved to delay implementation of planned National Park Service franchise fee hikes in order to give additional review to their impacts:

Chairman Paul Gosar stated, "Last Friday, we asked the National Park Service to alter course on implementing a new franchise fee prospectus which - if nothing changed - was on track to put many longtime guides and outfitters in our National Parks out of business. I'm happy to announce that on Monday night, they listened. Secretary Zinke and the Acting Director of the NPS Dan Smith heard our requests and moved to immediately delay implementation of the prospectus. Now, those same river guides and outfitters who had their livelihoods threatened are one step closer to the contract security that will allow them to continue providing Park attendees with the experience of a lifetime. Secretary Zinke and Acting-Director Smith have earned our praise for showing that even our hulking federal agencies can listen responsively and move quickly to fix bureaucracy-generated problems. Now, we just need to make sure that as a consequence of this review period, franchise fees don't price these important service-providers out of our Parks."

Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs said, "I want to thank Interior Secretary Zinke and NPS Deputy Director Smith for extending the solicitation deadline and strongly urge DOI and NPS to rescind any proposed franchise fee increases. I am hopeful that President Trump's Administration will remain committed to making government work for the people, opening up boundless opportunities for our constituents to experience the American Dream."

Chief Defense and Interior Officer Chris Stewart stated, "I'm pleased to see the National Park Service and Department of the Interior take the time to review the proposed franchise fee increase. This fee increase will only continue to hurt outfitters and guides, putting many out of business. This is a step towards making sure our public lands stay accessible."

Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer Bruce Westerman said, "I applaud the Department of Interior's willingness to listen to the concerns of small business owners and Parks visitors. This delay will save jobs, and the subsequent review should further protect the tourist economies in our small towns. I thank Secretary Zinke and NPS Deputy Director Smith for their quick action, and encourage all agency heads and cabinet secretaries to follow their lead in future decisions."

Congressman LaMalfa stated, "I'm very pleased the National Park Service is taking seriously our request to review proposed rate hikes on franchise fees for guides and outfitters. These significant increases would force the hand of many businesses to raise prices on the public, lay off employees, or even close their doors. The willingness of NPS to extend the solicitation deadline and genuinely review our concerns is certainly a positive step. Last October, the House passed my bill, the Guides and Outfitters (GO) Act, which will streamline processes and remove red tape in order to increase recreational opportunities on public lands. If combined with a favorable result following this extended review period, life would be much easier for both our guides and outfitters, as well as the general public who simply wish to enjoy our public lands."

"I am pleased that the National Park Service listened to us and delayed their plan to implement higher fees. Now, we just need to make sure the fee increase itself never sees the light of day. Our National Parks are for the enjoyment of the American people and preserving the natural beauty of our great nation. If not also cancelled, the proposed higher fees for Park vendors will drive up the costs for retirees and families visiting our Parks and adversely impact Park services," said **Congressman Babin**.

Executive Director of the Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association John Dillon stated, "The National Park Service's solicitation for the award of new concession contracts to run guided whitewater river trips in Grand Canyon National Park, unless it is revised, will impose a significant increase in the minimum franchise fee that the operators of these services are required to pay as a percentage of their gross revenues, at the same time that they are facing substantial

projected increases in labor and other costs under federal, state, and local law. The existing prospectus threatens the sustainability of these operations, and can be expected to result in increases in trip prices and cost-cutting measures that could affect the experiences offered to the public. We are extremely grateful to the twenty bipartisan Representatives in Congress, led by Representatives Paul Gosar, Tom O'Halleran, and Rob Bishop, who requested that the Secretary of the Interior immediately reconsider and revise these potentially financially fatal requirements in the solicitation. We are also grateful to Secretary Ryan Zinke and Acting National Park Service Director P. Daniel Smith, who were quick to recognize the concerns with the solicitation. The latest amendment to the prospectus is a step in the right direction, and we hope and expect that it will give the Service the time it needs to fix the prospectus so that it provides a reasonable business opportunity and ensures the public continued opportunities to enjoy high quality, professionally-guided and outfitted Grand Canyon whitewater river trips at reasonable rates."

Background:

Last Friday, a bipartisan group of 20 Members of Congress led by Reps. Paul Gosar, Tom O'Halleran and Rob Bishop signed and sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Acting Director of the National Park Service Paul Daniel Smith requesting that they consider revising or delaying the prospectus for the award of new contracts to service-providing entities including outfitters and guides operating within Grand Canyon National Park.

Click HERE to read the original letter with signatures, and HERE to see the Caucus press release from last Friday.

On Monday, the Department answered this request by immediately moving to delay implementation of the prospectus in order that it can provide full review of the impacts to Park visitors and service-provider businesses of the rate hikes.

The April 30 NPS Intermountain Region Memorandum delaying the solicitation deadline by 90 days – until August 2, 2018 – can be found HERE.

- -

Additional NPS franchise fee & Caucus-led letter information:
Pursuant to an act of Congress - the Concessions Management Improvement Act - the National Park Service (NPS) must consider whether the franchise fees they set for contracting businesses that offer outfitting, guide and other services on NPS lands facilitate those contract-holders in running a business based on projected costs and revenues. NPS must further subordinate the objectives of producing revenue to providing necessary and appropriate services for visitors at reasonable rates through the aforementioned contracting businesses.

Unfortunately, the National Park Service has issued a prospectus for the award of new contracts that represents a substantial increase in the minimum franchise fee payment - and one that appears inconsistent with the aforementioned Act - from a tiered structure requiring payment of 4% to 18% of certain gross receipts, to one requiring 5% up to 22.5% of gross receipts.

This letter makes clear that, as we are hearing from multiple contract-holders, the change in franchise fee structure will seriously imperil the sustainability of contract-holding businesses present and future, thereby potentially compromising the ability of park visitors to participate in

the many activities and experiences within Parks that require the services of contract-holding businesses.

These franchise fee increases come simultaneously with required overtime and minimum wage hikes affecting the same contracts per Department of Labor regulations issued during the last Administration, even though NPS has previously cited those same labor cost increases as a factor which should lead to *reduced* franchise fees. The NPS is contradicting itself with the new fee increases, potentially violating the law in so doing – and failing to provide any explanation for these actions in the process.

These increased costs will have to be passed onto Park visitors, effectively constituting an additional "rate hike" on Park attendees and decreasing Park attendance.

Letter signers asked that the NPS revise its prospectus such that it becomes consistent with its statutory mandates which facilitate contract-holders to run workable business models while privileging NPS visitors receiving appropriate services at reasonable rates.

The broader danger of these particular tiered rate increases is that they set a precedent whereby any National Park in the country can impose substantial fee hikes on contract-holders - hikes which are inconsistent with the statute in question and detrimental to the long-term mission of the Park. By addressing this problem for Grand Canyon National Park, the Department of Interior can set a clear precedent whereby it demonstrates the value it places on issuing rate structures nationwide that are consistent with the law and take into consideration the needs and interests of park visitors.

Letter Signers (20): Rob Bishop*, Paul Gosar*, *Tom O'Halleran**, Brian Babin, Andy Biggs, Liz Cheney, John Curtis, Greg Gianforte, Garret Graves, Doug LaMalfa, Doug Lamborn, Mia Love, Roger Marshall, Martha McSally, Mark Meadows, *Kyrsten Sinema*, Chris Stewart, Scott Tipton, Bruce Westerman, Ted Yoho

(* indicates letter-lead)

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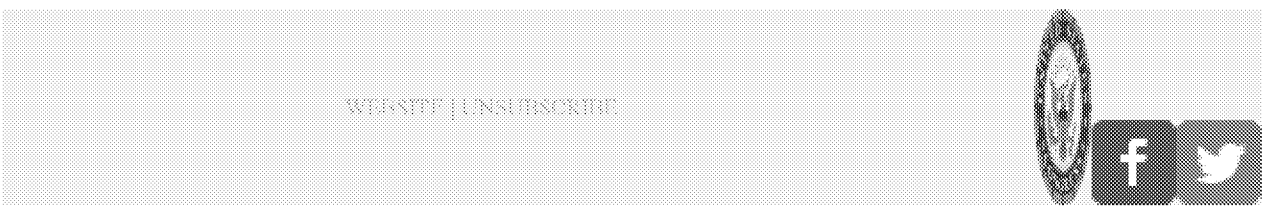
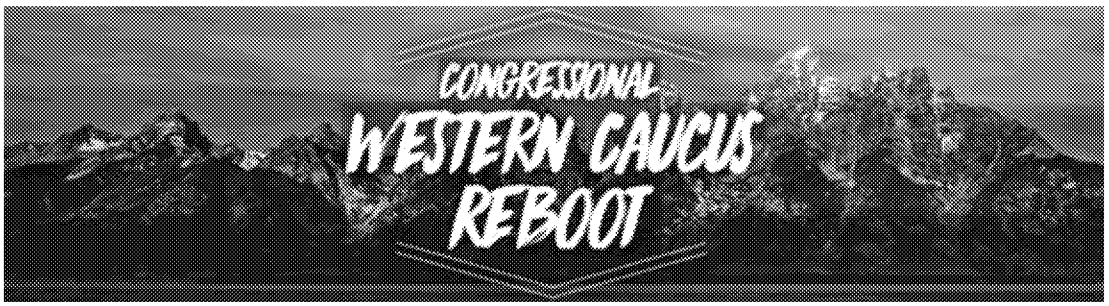


Message

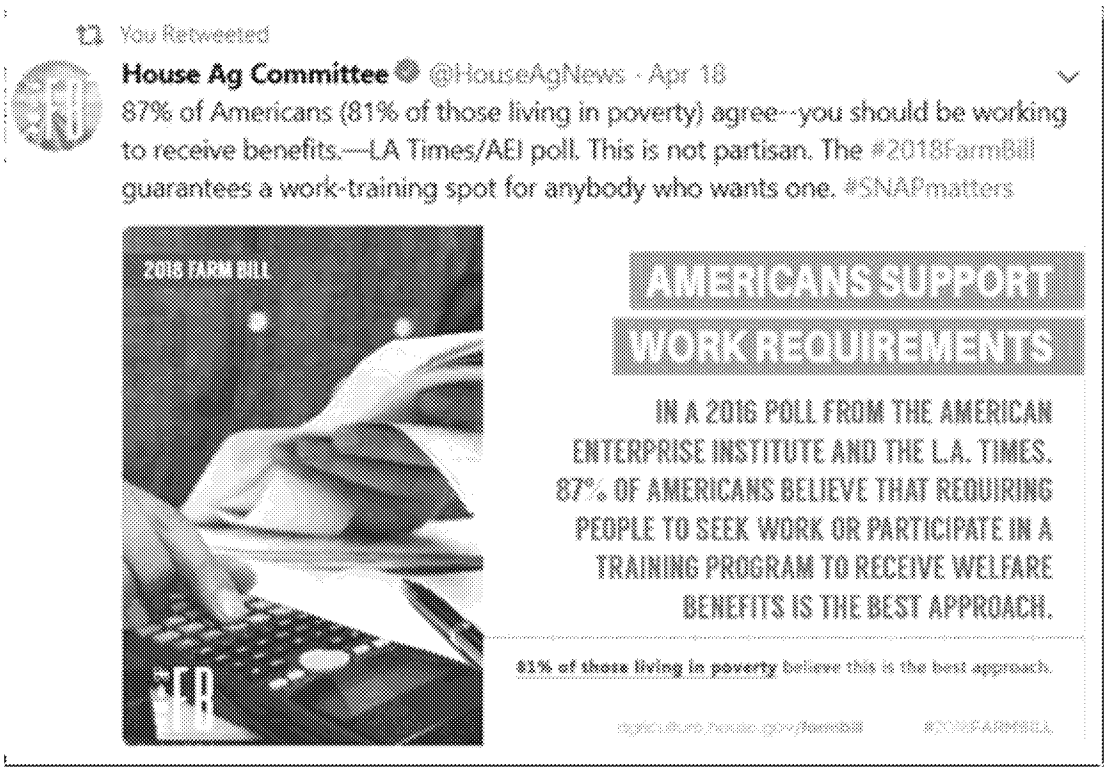
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 4/21/2018 8:44:36 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 04.21.18



Week of 04.21.2018

Farm Bill Passes Committee on Partisan Vote

Democrats appalled, disturbed at bill's 20 hours/week work requirement for able-bodied adults



Relying on precisely zero Democrat votes, the House Committee on Agriculture passed H.R. 2, the Farm Bill of 2018 by a vote of 26-20 on Wednesday.

Of particular outrage for the panel's Democrats - who all voted 'no' on advancing the bill - were new requirements within the bill's nutrition title conditioning food benefits for work-capable adults on their finding

employment, or receiving free work training, for 20 hours a week. Such requirements enjoy near-consensus with the American public; previous polling has indicated over 80% agree that recipients of welfare benefits should be required to seek employment or participate in training programs as a condition.

The bill is likely to receive floor consideration in early May.

Following Committee passage, **House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway** (TX-11) stated, "Today's vote was about America's farmers and ranchers. It was about a better future and greater opportunities for SNAP recipients. It was about fulfilling an obligation to lead, rather than standing on the sidelines.I'm disappointed that my Democrat colleagues have turned their backs on America's heartland – that they've chosen partisan politics over the three years of bipartisan work in this committee. Democrats halted talks over their objection to requiring work-capable adults to either find employment or receive free training for 20 hours per week. Yet, despite this turn of events, I remain hopeful. When House Democrats pushed a partisan farm bill that raised taxes in 2008 over Republican objections, Republicans worked alongside Democrats to fend off hostile amendments aimed against the legislation on the House floor and worked in conference committee to achieve a bipartisan farm bill. I am hopeful De mocrats will not hold the nation's farmers and ranchers hostage in this process over the SNAP work and training requirements, which will provide SNAP beneficiaries not just a benefit, but a better future that only a job can provide."

See the Committee's press release HERE.

Click HERE to read the full legislative text of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Click HERE to read the section-by-section summary of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Click HERE to read policy highlights in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

See the Committee on Agriculture's 2018 Farm Bill information page HERE.

Caucus Huddles With Reclamation Commissioner Burman

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Apr 17

Today, our members got to hear from the @usbr Commissioner Brenda Burman at our Member Lunch.

The Trump Administration presents a great opportunity for our members to work with the Bureau on water storage solutions, infrastructure, Endangered Species Act and many other issues!

Rep. Paul Gosar, DDS, RepMarkAmodei, Louie Gohmert and 4 others

At last week's Western Caucus Member Lunch & Speaker Series, our members had the chance to speak with Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman - the first female Commissioner in Reclamation's history, and a formidable expert on water and infrastructure in the West.

The Trump Administration presents an incredible opportunity for our Members to work with the Bureau on the pressing concerns facing the Bureau including long-term storage solutions, new infrastructure, Interior reorganization plans, the Reclamation Fund balance, and the substantial dam and water use complications arising from Endangered Species Act habitat, take and consultation requirement - among many other issues!

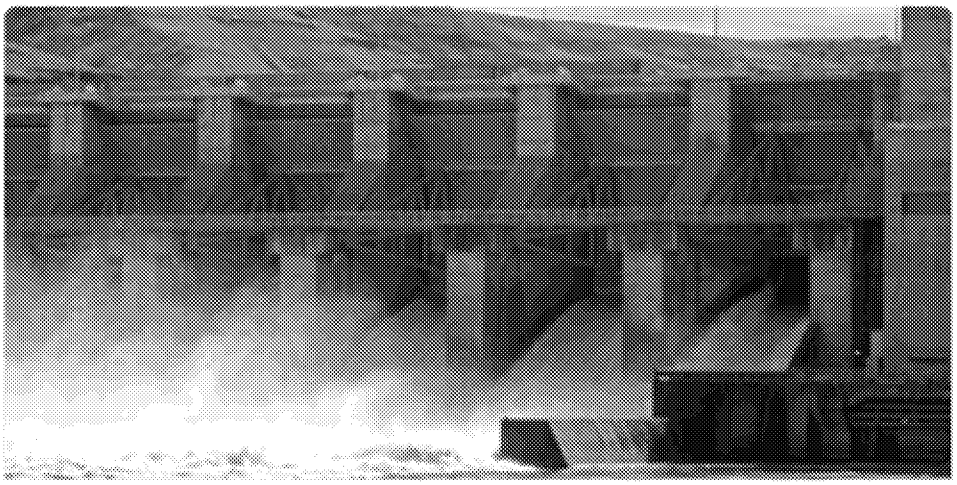
Thanks, Commissioner!

Bipartisan H.R. 3144, Balancing Dam Security with Fish Recovery, Set For House Floor Vote This Week

You Retweeted

Natural Resources @NatResources · Apr 17

.@Raul_Labrador: For a liberal judge to ignore the broad scientific consensus of the federal government and the states of Idaho, Washington and Montana is unconscionable and must be stopped.



Republicans criticize spill of dam water to help salmon

Republican lawmakers are upset with a federal judge's order to spill water that could be saved for other uses from four Snake River dams to help

thenewstribune.com

Two weeks ago, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed H.R. 3144. The bill is now scheduled for House floor action this week. This important legislation protects four critical dams that provide reliable and affordable water and power.

The dams – Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite – are currently under siege by a liberal federal judge who is forcing operators to ignore federally-authorized scientific consensus in order to spill water downriver – a change that will cost $40 million dollars in lost power sales and harm other infrastructure operations so as to "speed migrating salmon to the Pacific Ocean."

The judge's order, while appeasing environmentalist outrage against the very existence of the dams, defies existent comprehensive scientific study the federal government approved in 2008 and updated in 2014, while lacking itself any evidence that the wasteful spills will have any beneficial effect on salmon runs. Finally, the judge has ordered a new environmental review that he presumably hopes will retroactively justify his spill order when it is completed in several years. The judge has put the cart before the horse in ordering major policy changes first and seeking scientific backing afterwards**; he thereby sets a terrible national precedent in which judges are empowered to ignore the scientific consensus on major energy and infrastructure projects so long as they do so while posturing in the service of empty environmentalist talking points**.

See an Associated Press story on the events to date HERE.

See Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers' press release following the bill's Committee passage HERE.

Department of Interior Moves Ahead to Drill in ANWR

You Retweeted

Natural Resources @NatResources · Apr 19

Tomorrow marks the start of a long overdue process, opening up #ANWR to responsible energy development. #EnergyDominance

Ryan Zinke moves to open Arctic refuge to drilling

The Trump administration on Friday will start the process of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and natural gas leasing.

washingtonexaminer.com

On Friday, the Department of Interior took the major step of publishing in the Federal Register its Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for an oil and gas leasing program in the 1002 area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This publication sets off the scoping process to determine the breadth of the environmental issues to be accounted for in an eventual Statement.

Drilling in the area was authorized in the H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, after decades of Congressional attempts to do so. Interior officials have expressed hope that lease sales in the area could begin as early as 2019.

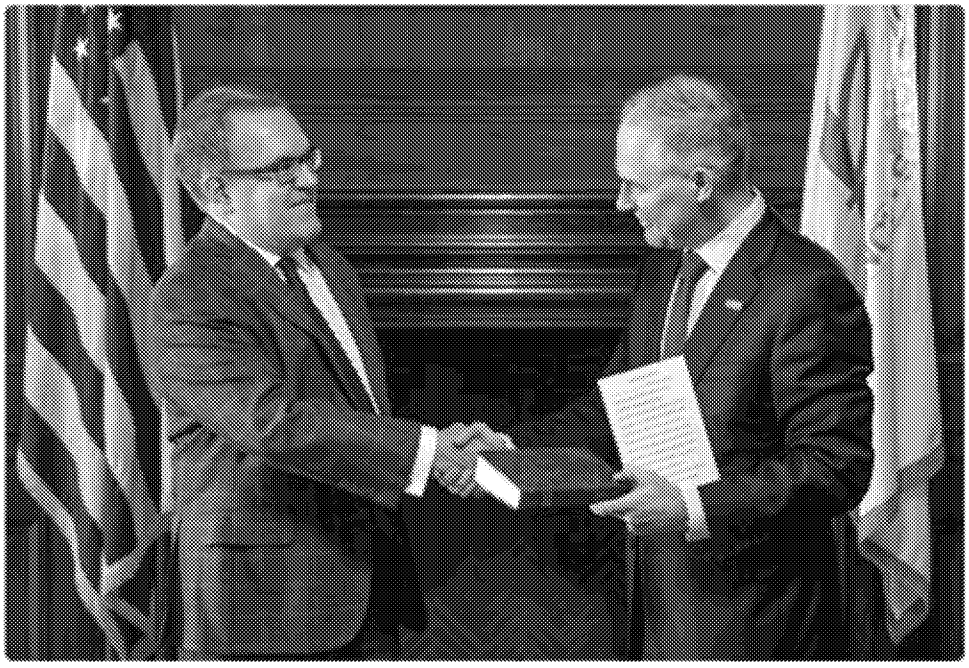
See the Federal Register Notice of Intent HERE.

Read a Washington Examiner article on the development HERE.

POST OF THE WEEK...

Administrator Pruitt @EPAScottPruitt · Apr 20

Glad to give a warm welcome to Andy Wheeler this morning—officially sworn in as @EPA's Deputy Administrator. We look forward to working together to advance @POTUS agenda of regulatory certainty & environmental stewardship.



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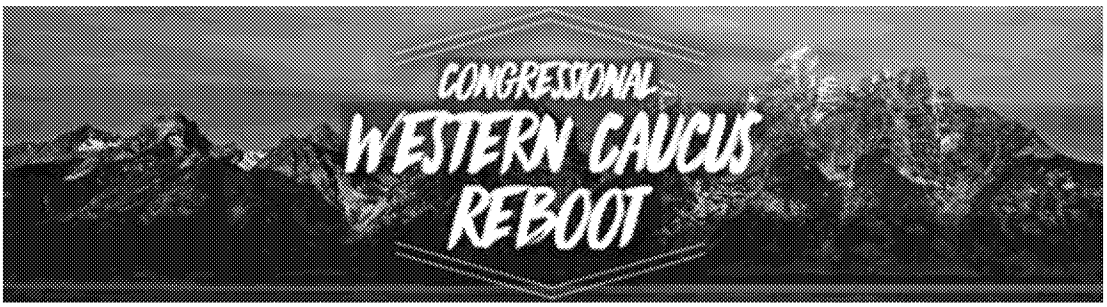
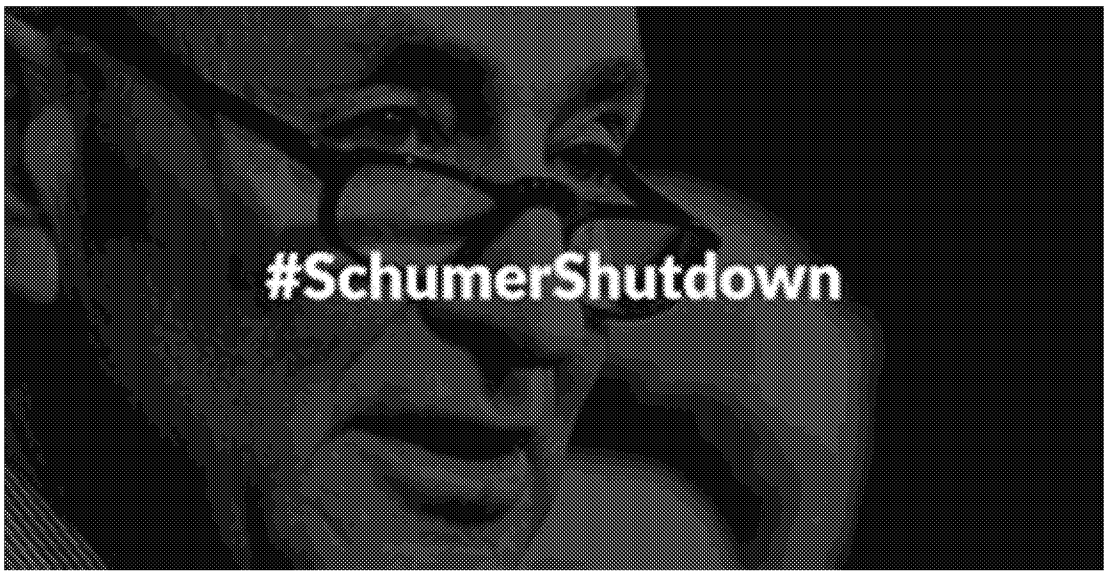
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 01.20.2018



Week of 01.20.2018

Senate Democrats Shut Down the Government



Friday night, Senate Democrats shut down the government, putting partisan politics ahead of the needs of our troops and the American people. Members of the Western Caucus and the Administration have not been shy about placing the blame squarely where it belongs — Senate Democrats own this Shutdown.

The White House @WhiteHouse · 11h

Senate Democrats put politics above national security, military families, vulnerable children, and our country's ability to serve all Americans. We will not negotiate the status of unlawful immigrants while Democrats hold our lawful citizens hostage over their reckless demands.

Brian Babin @RepBrianBabin · 1h

.@SenSchumer & @SenateDems must end their politically motivated shutdown & pass bipartisan House bill that keeps government open. The #SchumerShutdown is harming our troops, blocking CHIP heath care for children & obstructing relief for #Harvey victims in #TX36.

Rep. Mia Love @RepMiaLove · 1h

The NO vote from @SenateDems took health care from 9 million children who rely on the Children's Health Insurance Program every day. #SchumerShutdown #utpol

Martha McSally @RepMcSally · 52m

I'm disgusted that Democrats violated the will of the American people and shut down the government—choosing illegals over our American troops and 9 million children throughout this country relying on CHIP for healthcare.

Raúl R. Labrador @Raul_Labrador · 10m

#ShumerShutdown seeks amnesty for illegal aliens, while denying gov't services to taxpaying citizens. Time for Democrats to work with us in good faith.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

Democrats are holding our Military hostage over their desire to have unchecked illegal immigration. Can't let that happen!

The House has Acted to Fund the Government

The House of Representatives passed legislation for all 12 appropriations bills necessary to fund the government in fiscal year 2018 and passed two short-term extensions to allow the Senate to try and get their work done and fund the government. Meanwhile, the Senate has passed one short-term extension and 0 of 12 appropriations bills. The Senate is currently comprised of 51 Republicans and needs 60 votes to fund the government and pass appropriations bills. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats refuse to work for the American people and reach across the aisle.

Appropriations Status Table: FY2018

Select Year: 2018

Last updated and other notes: ...read more

BILLS PASSED

- HOUSE (12 OF 12)
- SENATE (0 OF 12)
- BOTH CHAMBERS (0 OF 12)
- VETOED (0 OF 12)
- SIGNED BY PRESIDENT (0 OF 12)

Source: The Nonpartisan Congressional Research Service

America Continues to Reap Benefits of Tax Reform

Paul Ryan @SpeakerRyan · Jan 17

This is great news for the American economy and for America's workers.

CNBC @CNBC

BREAKING: [redacted] says it will contribute more than $350 billion over the next five years to the US economy through investments, will add "over 20,000 new jobs through hiring at existing campuses and opening a new one"

More than two million workers have already benefited directly from the historic tax cuts enacted in December. To see a full list of companies taking action to invest in America and reward their employees as a direct result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act click HERE.

Brian Babin @RepBrianBabin · Jan 17

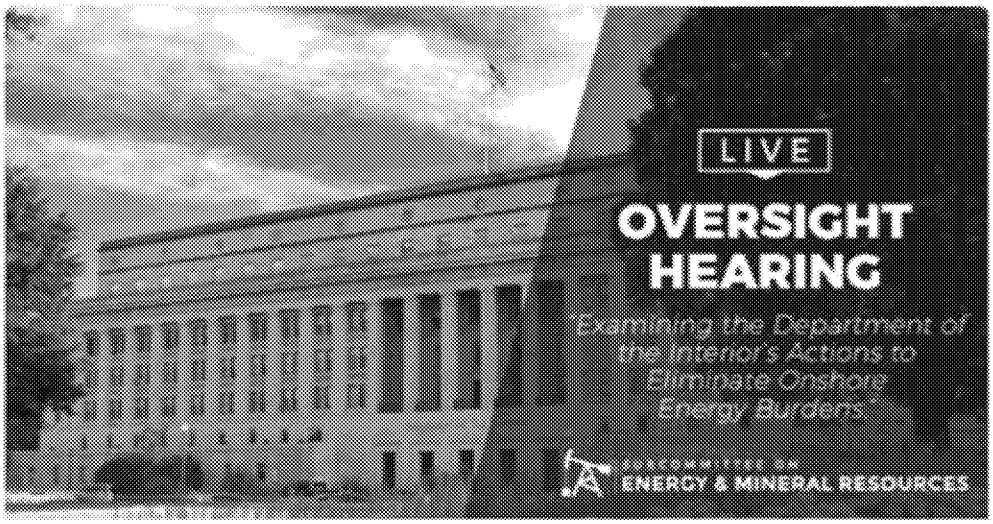
GREAT NEWS: Treasury has announced new withholding tables that will mean hardworking #Americans see boosts in their #paychecks as early as February (in just a few weeks). This is a huge win for vast majority of Americans who are working paycheck-to-paycheck. #TaxCutsandJobsAct

Resources Reviews Actions to Reduce Energy Barriers

Natural Resources @NatResources · Jan 18

.@RepGosar chair's hearing to address @Interior's actions to reduce costly barriers to energy development on federal lands.

LIVE: bit.ly/OversightHeari...



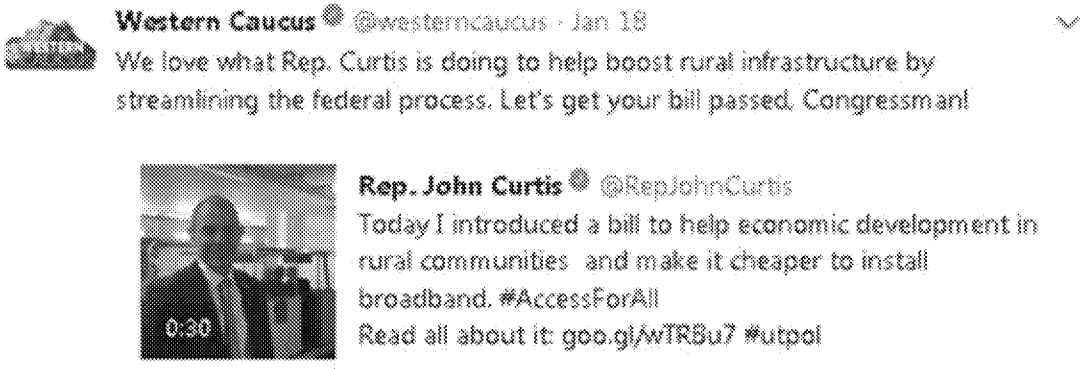
On Thursday, House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources **Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04)** held an oversight hearing to examine Department of

the Interior actions to eliminate energy burdens on federal lands.

"Under Secretary Zinke's leadership we are reviewing, revising and creating new oil and gas program policies, procedures and guidelines to help secure American energy dominance, create jobs and build a strong economy," **Deputy Director of Policy and Programs at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Brian Steed** stated.

Read the full Natural Resources Committee press release HERE.

Curtis Introduces Bill to Boost Rural Broadband



On Thursday, **Rep. John Curtis (UT-03),** introduced the Rural Broadband Permitting Efficiency Act. This legislation streamlines the permitting process and spurs economic development in rural communities.

Vice-Chairman Scott Tipton (CO-03) stated, "Having access to reliable and fast broadband is critical to the success of every American family, student and small business. Unfortunately, the digital divide between rural and urban America is significant, and we must take action to make sure rural America is keeping up," said Tipton. "Redundant permitting laws and regulations often hold up broadband projects, especially in rural areas, which in turn discourage providers from pursuing these projects. That's why I am proud to cosponsor critical legislation that will streamline broadband projects in highway rights-of-way and ultimately increase broadband access across Colorado and the entire country."

Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04) said, "The last Presidential election showed us that, more and more, there are two Americas – and rural America feels left behind. Basic services like broadband internet represent the minimum of what is necessary to participate in the 21st century American Dream, but too often rural communities are boxed out of reliable internet access by our own government's convoluted, crawling approvals process for deploying broadband infrastructure. Congressman Curtis' Rural Broadband Permitting Efficiency Act solves many of these problems. Rural America deserves to be on equal footing with the rest of the country, and I thank Mr. Curtis for working to bridge that infrastructure gap," said Gosar.

Trump Administration Making America Great for a Year

Natural Resources @NatResources · 3h

One year of Making America Great Again! Thank you @realDonaldTrump #MAGA

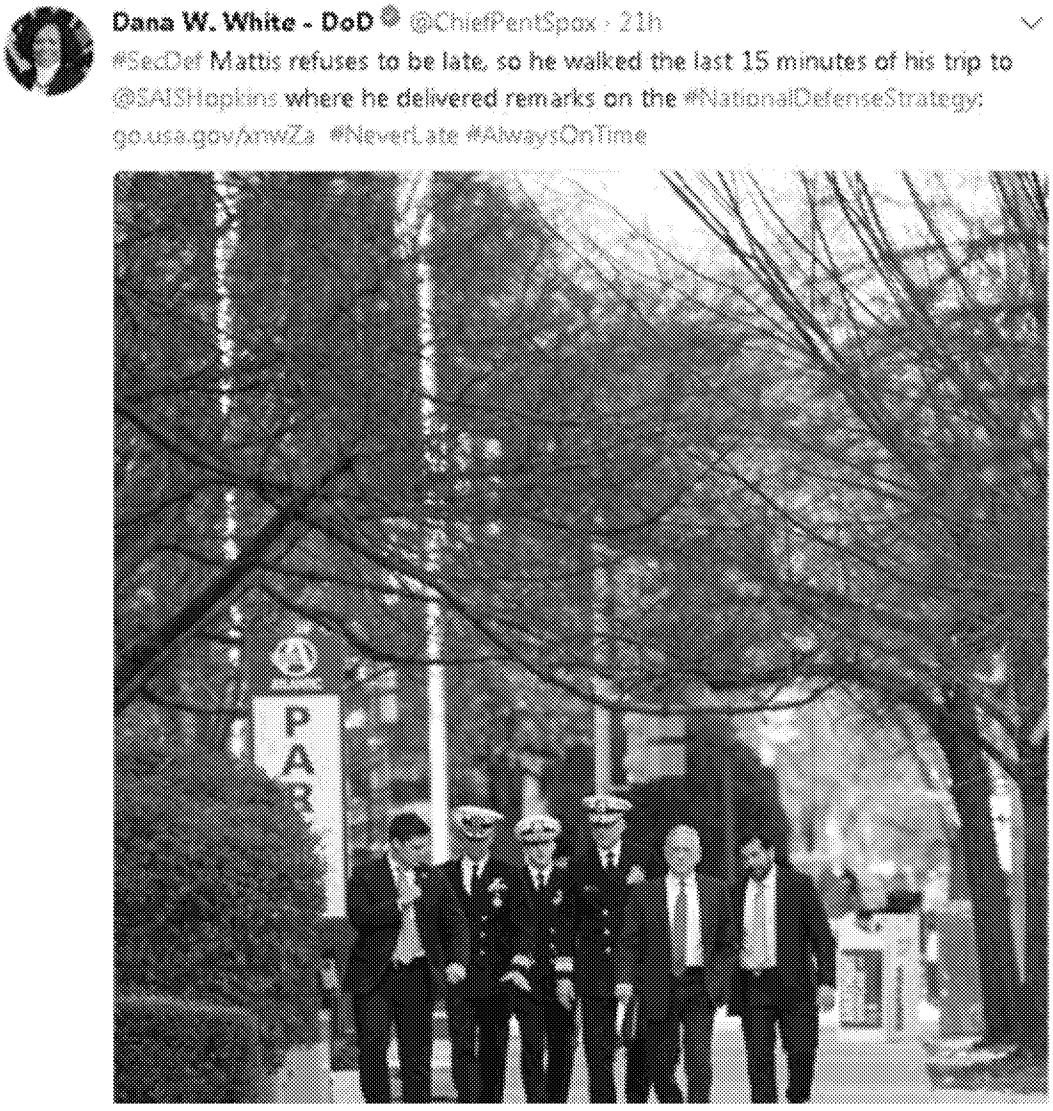
bit.ly/TrumpsFirstYear

Its been over a year now since the Trump Administration started making American great again. The President and his team had enormous success during that period and business is booming. A few of the highlights from the first year include:

- 1.7 million new jobs were created
- Unemployment fell to 4.1 percent, the lowest rate in nearly 17 years
- The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cut taxes by $5.5 trillion
- 60 percent of these tax cuts went directly to hard-working families
- U.S. GDP increased 3 percent or more for two quarters in a row for the first time in three years
- The Dow Jones Industrial Average index hit record highs more than 60 times and closed higher than 24,000 points for the first time in history

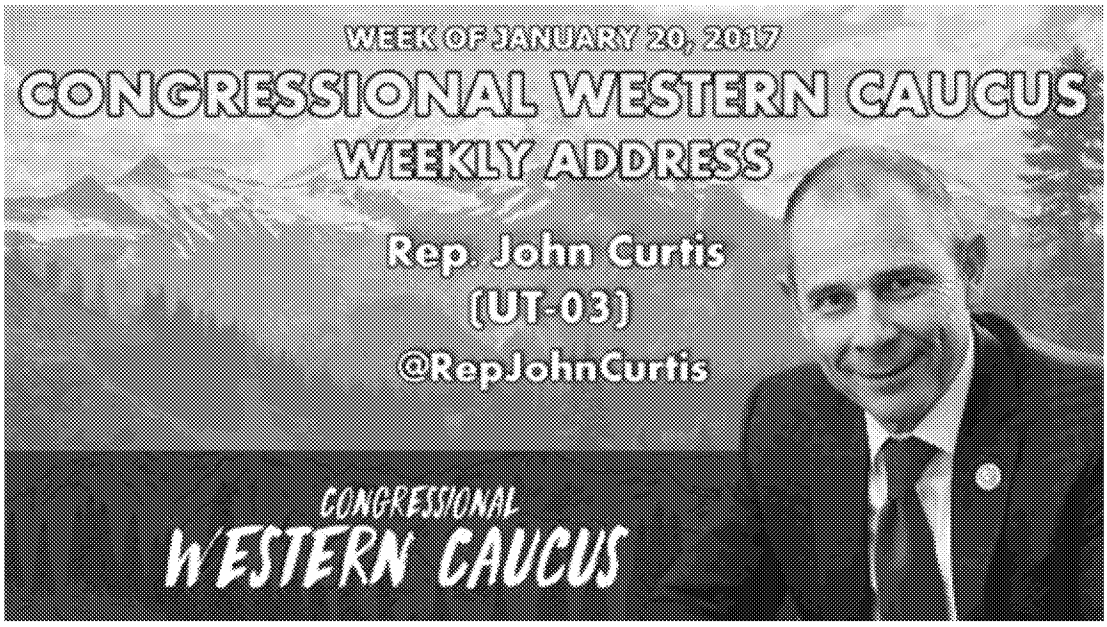
To read more click HERE.

POST OF THE WEEK...



WEEKLY ADDRESS...

The newest Member of the House of Representatives and newest Member of the Congressional Western Caucus, **Rep. John Curtis (UT-03),** discusses important issues in Utah's Third District. Click HERE or on the picture below to watch this week's address.



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To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Reminder: Taste of the West 1/30/18
Attachments: 2018 Taste of the West invitation.pdf

We are now less than a week away from the 2018 Taste of the West Reception.

By now you should have received the below invitation from the Western Caucus Foundation.

RSVP HERE ASAP if you have not already done so *(Invitation exclusively for Members of Congress, staff for Western Caucus Members (no interns), Foundation supporters, sponsors, and special invited guests only).*

Hope to see you next Tuesday evening.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

*Invitation exclusively for Members of Congress, staff for Western Caucus Members (no interns), Foundation supporters, sponsors, and special invited guests only.

Western Caucus Foundation | 400 N. Capitol St., #382-B | Washington, DC 20001 | info@westerncaucusfoundation.org

*** ***This event is planned to fully comply with Congressional Ethics Rules and other applicable laws*** ***

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF) is a charitable and educational organization organized and operated under Section 501(c)(3). Contributions to the WCF are deductible from income taxes as allowed by federal and state laws. It will provide education and communications to policy makers and the public to further enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture.

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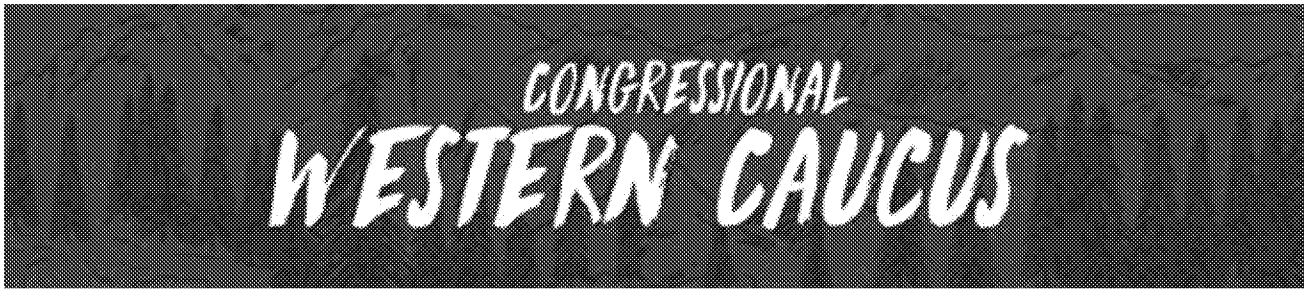
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 3/20/2018 12:19:40 AM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Job Creators & Western Caucus to Omnibus Negotiators: Job-Killing 2015 Ozone Rule Must Be Fixed Now

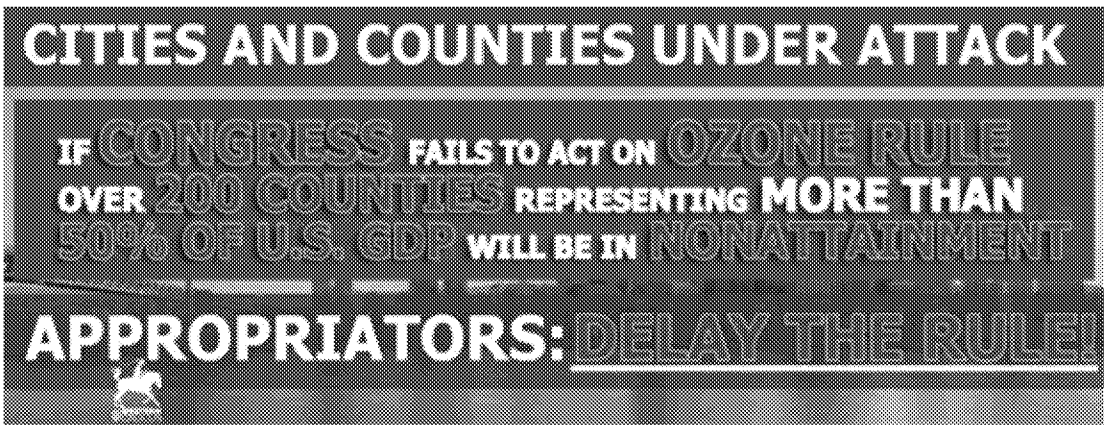


For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: March 19, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Job Creators & Western Caucus to Omnibus Negotiators: Job-Killing 2015 Ozone Rule Must Be Fixed Now

Gray Wolves, Forestry Reform and WOTUS also need to be addressed



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce,** the **American Petroleum Institute**, the **National Association of Manufacturers**, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, and Western Caucus Members **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Louie Gohmert (TX-01)**, **Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large)**, **Brian Babin (TX-36)**, **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, and **Bob Gibbs (OH-07)** released the following statements calling on appropriations negotiators and Congressional leadership to include language to address the job-killing 2015 Obama-era Ozone rule and other Western Caucus priorities in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus funding bill:

"The 2015 ozone regulations short-circuited the existing implementation process and stands as a tremendous barrier to capital investments we need to spur economic growth. The Chamber strongly supports inclusion of language that recognizes the tremendous progress being made to

improve air quality and provides relief to the thousands of businesses in the many industries that are unnecessarily burdened by this standard including construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and energy," said **Karen Alderman Harbert**, **President and Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Energy Institute**.

"Congress has an opportunity to protect states and businesses from duplicative and burdensome regulations by incorporating language that improves the implementation of the ozone standards while fully maintaining the nation's commitment to protecting public health and reducing emissions," stated **American Petroleum Institute Senior Director of Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Howard Feldman**. "Ozone concentrations and methane emissions are down significantly and air quality continues to improve thanks in part to increased use of domestic natural gas and industry investments in advancing technology."

"Ozone levels have declined roughly one-third since 1980, and the precursors that contribute to ozone—nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds—have been cut in half. In fact, the Obama EPA projected that the United States would achieve nearly the same air quality by 2025 even if the 2015 ozone standard was never implemented. The NAM supports language that would create a more flexible glide path for manufacturers to comply with the 2015 ozone standard, harmonizing the compliance process for the 2015 standard with the behind-schedule process for the 2008 standard. In doing so, it would allow real ozone reductions to continue through 2025 without the unnecessary economic pain of ozone nonattainment," said **Ross Eisenberg, Vice President of Energy and Resources Policy at the National Association of Manufacturers.**

"It's time for Congress to wake up and smell the ozone. Overall levels of the odorless molecule are down 17% since 2000 thanks to the proactive work of states and businesses across the country. Most states were just beginning to adopt new ozone standards implemented in March 2018, when the Obama Administration pulled the rug out from underneath everyone and sought to dramatically lower the ozone standard once again in October 2015. Now thanks to a few activist judges, this untimely wrecking ball of a rule is slated to go into effect unless Congress acts before April 30. Failure to act will cause 236 counties representing more than 50% of U.S. GDP to feel the wrath of the nonsensical 2015 Ozone rule. This rule and the economic damage it inflicts will be nearly impossible to unwind once counties are classified in April. The only real solution at this juncture is a legislative fix, and the only realistic path for such a fix is inclusion of a 10-year delay of the rule in the omnibus," said **Congressman Gosar**.

"As the details of the omnibus legislation are negotiated, I stand with my Western Caucus colleagues to press negotiators to include priorities for rural communities like those in Central Washington," stated **Congressman Newhouse**. "I strongly support ending the cycle of fire-borrowing and encouraging active forest management to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires like those we have experienced in Central Washington. The gray wolf must be fully delisted in the eastern part of Washington state in order to allow state and local authorities to manage gray wolf populations. I have voted many times to withdraw the Obama Administration's Waters of the United States rule because we must prevent the EPA's attempted power grab from taking effect and restricting property owners' ability to determine the best use of their own land. Along with my colleagues, I urge negotiators to keep these priorities in mind as final omnibus legislation takes shape."

Congressman Westerman said, "For too long, the executive branch has passed down big-government rules and regulations such as the Obama era 'Ozone Rule' that does little to address the problems at hand. Year after year, more and more acres go up in smoke because of a lack of focus on real issues like active forest management and fire borrowing. The result? Tons of CO2 going into the air you and I breath and yet no action on the part of the federal government. It is

time to get our priorities straight. It is time to tackle the '2015 Ozone Rule' and enact meaningful forestry reforms that truly protect our treasured natural resources."

"The Obama-era Ozone Rule will force economic harm on hundreds of counties across the United States. Counties are still working on complying with the 2008 rule because they were not given guidance from the EPA until 2015. Instead of giving states time to catch up, the Obama Administration claimed that progress wasn't being made and used that to justify an even lower standard at the end of 2015. The WOTUS Rule was a large overstep by the government into the lives of American farmers, ranchers, and small businesses. These rules are perfect examples of the many burdensome regulations that would have devastating economic impacts on communities across the country. We must also focus on strong reforms that will allow us to start large forest management projects as soon as possible to thin our nation's overgrown national forests. This means making progress on a large-scale quickly or else our forests and their ecosystems will be destroyed by catastrophic wildfire. While it is vital that we foster a level of rationality in environmental policy, we must begin detangling the web of crushing rules and regulations across the federal government," said **Congressman Pearce**.

"Implementation of the Obama-era Ozone Rule will begin at the end of next month. It's important that the Omnibus package includes a provision to delay this rule until Congress can legislate a long-term solution. I'd also like to see meaningful forestry management reforms – not watered-down proposals and empty promises that come up short on actual results. If we don't remove the 100 million dead trees in California's forests, they'll only serve as a tinder box for yet another devastating year of wildfires. This funding measure must also include a repeal of the previous administration's disastrous WOTUS rule, which would jeopardize private property rights all across the country if allowed to take effect," stated **Congressman LaMalfa**.

We all want clean air, but the Obama administration's shortsighted and heavy-handed actions regarding the EPA's standards for ground-level ozone fly in the face of common sense. If Congress does nothing, the current administration will be forced to implement regulations that go against the job-growing, energy dominant strategy they have so successfully enacted so afar – and will be burdened with implementing the harmful 2015 Ozone rule that will cost many individuals and businesses in counties across the country their very livelihood," stated **Congressman Gohmert**. "Finally, as concerns WOTUS, it is imperative that Congress acts now to repeal this dangerous and overreaching rule. Surreptitiously, the Obama administration legislated the WOTUS rule without following the Constitutionally-mandated legislative process. It expanded the definition of 'navigable waters' to hypothetically include water like the creek in your backyard and even runoff from rain which was NEVER was intended to be controlled by Washington bureaucrats from their high pedestal. This is the very thing the 10th Amendment was intended to stop. The Clean Water Act needs legislative fixes as is, but even so, it clearly was not intended to give the Federal government control of 60% of our country's streams."

"Unfortunately for the American people, liberal judges have taken over for Obama-era bureaucrats and are keeping the job-killing 2015 ozone rule in place from the federal bench. This action places tens of thousands of American jobs at risk and hampers economic growth – especially here in Texas. Congress must seize the opportunity in this bill to put an end to these regulatory excesses," said **Congressman Babin.**

Congressman Gianforte stated, "I appreciate the efforts of the Western Caucus as we work to ensure issues important to Montana and the West are addressed. Montanans faced a devastating wildfire season last year, which makes it critical that the omnibus bill include reforms that get us managing our forests again and preventing catastrophic wildfires. The fact is everyone wins with

better managed forests. I also hope the omnibus will address important Montana land management issues and repeal costly, unnecessary Obama-era mandates that burden Montanans."

"The Trump Administration and EPA Administrator Pruitt have been incredible partners in rescinding the Obama-era WOTUS Rule. But it is clear a legislative fix is necessary to provide long-term certainty for Ohio's farmers, home builders, and local governments. Federal jurisdiction should not expand outside navigable waters and I urge House leadership to address WOTUS in the Omnibus," said **Congressman Gibbs.**

"The last Administration enacted a series of unnecessary and reckless policies which unfairly targeted farmers, ranchers, and businesses in Minnesota and around the country, saddling them with burdensome red tape and regulation from Washington. I am hopeful this package will reverse such policies, delaying the harmful Ozone Rule, repeal of the WOTUS rule, and delisting gray wolves from the Endangered Species List. Further, I look forward to seeing the restoration of mineral rights to states, including Minnesota, by eliminating duplicative environmental reviews which threaten the creation of thousands of jobs and hinder access to important resources Americans depend so heavily upon in their everyday lives," concluded **Congressman Emmer**.

Background:

Final negotiations are taking place on a spending bill, often referred to as the omnibus, to fund the federal government for fiscal year 2018.

On 3/1/18, the Congressional Western Caucus released their top Interior Appropriations omnibus priorities. To view that list click **HERE**.

Today, Members of the Western Caucus called on Appropriation negotiators and Leadership to include language to address the job-killing 2015 Obama-era Ozone rule and Western Caucus priorities in the final omnibus package.

Below are the top four priorities of the Caucus for the omnibus:

Ozone – Numerous Members of the Western Caucus support including language to delay the 2015 Obama-era Ozone rule. As a result of recent Court rulings, including one last week, EPA has been ordered to carry out the 2015 Ozone Standards and designate areas in the country that do not meet them by April 30th. This will cause significant economic impacts to nonattainment counties – and 236 counties representing more than 50% of the GDP of the entire country will be in nonattainment if the rule is implemented as scheduled – in the form of permitting delays, a reduction of transportation dollars as well as preventing new businesses from locating in these areas. Congress must act to prevent the draconian Obama-era Ozone mandate from taking immediate effect and wreaking havoc across the country.

Forestry – The top priority for the Senate and House Western Caucuses is a forestry package that includes both a fire-borrowing fix and strong active forest management reforms. Catastrophic wildfires are a significant threat to wildlife, watersheds and communities throughout the West. 2017 was one of the worst wildfire seasons on record. More than 58,000 fires burned more than 9.2 million acres. The Forest Service spent more than $2.5 billion on suppression costs this fiscal year alone - a new record.

WOTUS – Members of the Congressional Western Caucus support repealing WOTUS in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus. Repeal the Obama WOTUS rule. WOTUS was slated to go into effect August 28, 2015, but was subject to a nationwide stay up until February 2018. Though that stay was lifted, we were heartened when EPA finalized an applicability rule in January 2018 that delays implementation until February 6, 2020, and note their plans to issue a replacement rule as well. But until the EPA's rescind-and-replace strategy for WOTUS is finalized, an unfavorable court ruling against the applicability rule would result in WOTUS taking immediate effect in the majority of the country. Even then, the rescission rule and the replacement rule could be subject to litigation. The bottom line is that a Congressional, statutory fix is necessary for there to be certainty that WOTUS implementation never sees the light of day. On March 1, 2018 17 Members of the Caucus called on Congress to repeal the Obama Administration's WOTUS rule. To view that release click HERE.

Wolves – Members of the Western Caucus support retaining Section 116 and an updated Section 117 of the House Interior bill in the omnibus. Section 116 directs the Secretary to reissue two final rules that will remove recovered wolves in Wyoming and the Great Lakes from the endangered species list. The Wyoming rule is consistent with the D.C Circuit Court of Appeals decision. Section 117 prohibits the treatment of gray wolves range-wide as an endangered or threatened species. On June 13, 2013, Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a proposed rule that would remove the Gray Wolf from the "List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife." This determination was made after the FWS "evaluated the classification status of gray wolves currently listed in the contiguous United States" and found the "best available scientific and commercial information indicates that the currently listed entity is not a valid species under the Act." Fully delisting the Gray Wolf under the Endangered Species Act will allow state wildlife officials to more effectively manage wolf populations – as we have seen is possible in states such as Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Even extreme environmentalist groups agree that, "The return of gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains and the Great Lakes has been an incredible success story." It doesn't make any sense to have wolves on one side of the street listed and wolves on the other side delisted. Accordingly, numerous Members of the Western Caucus support a range-wide fix for Gray Wolves in addition to removing recovered wolves in Wyoming and the Great Lakes from the endangered species list.

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From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 1/22/2018 9:14:07 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Secretary Zinke Signs Agreement to Build Life-Saving Road in Alaska

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jeff Small

Date: January 22, 2018
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

Secretary Zinke Signs Agreement to Build Life-Saving Road in Alaska

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04),** House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Vice-Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Doug LaMalfa (CA-**

01) released the following statements after the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) signed an agreement with the Alaska Native King Cove Native Corp to build a life-saving road connecting the native village of King Cove, AK to the Cold Bay Airport:

"Today is a great day for Alaska, and an especially important day for the residents of King Cove. Secretary Zinke has done what the previous administration refused: he prioritized the lives and well-being of Alaska Natives over those of a goose," said **Congressman Don Young.** "Sally Jewell said someone had to speak for the birds. Well Secretary Zinke has finally spoken for the people. The city of King Cove was incorporated 33 years before there was a Refuge, and the residents of that town only asked for one thing -- a road to reach the airport. I want to thank not only the Administration, but my colleagues who stood up with me on July 20th when we voted in the House to build the King Cove road. I have been working on this for 30 years, and I am proud to stand with Secretary Zinke today in finally giving King Cove their road."

Congressman Westerman stated, "Nineteen people. The cost of decades of inaction by the federal government is 19 American lives. Expedient access to a hospital is something most Americans can fortunately take for granted. For many, emergency services are an ambulance ride away. Not for the citizens of King Cove, Alaska. Adjacent to the Aleutian Islands, the 1,000 residents of King Cove, Alaska, are connected to hospitals in the region via a small runway and a ferry. Harsh winter storms ground planes and prevent safe sea travel, cutting off residents from hospitals and necessary supplies. In truly dire emergencies, King Cove residents have but two choices – number one is to pray a boat captain will brave enormous seas or wait until the Coast Guard can dispatch a medivac helicopter. I congratulate Congressman Don Young on securing an agreement between the Interior Department and the people of King Cove to build this important road and I thank Secretary Zinke for listening to the citizens of this community."

"Alaska has fought for too long to build a road to safety for the people of King Cove. Finally, we have an administration willing to place people ahead of dogma and special interests and do the right thing. By signing this land swap, Secretary Zinke is saving lives," **Congressman Rob Bishop** said.

Congressman LaMalfa said, "As Chairman of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs, I am happy Secretary Zinke has approved an 11 mile road connecting King Cove to the Cold Bay Airport in Alaska. The people of the Agdaagux tribe have gone far too long without proper access to a hospital, or at the very least, a road that can connect them to their local airport. My colleague from Alaska, Mr. Don Young, has worked on this issue for decades, and I applaud him for his efforts to make this life-saving road a reality."

"Too many local residents and members of the Agdaagux Tribe have died or not received the care they deserved due to partisan politics and a failure to allow construction of a simple 11-mile gravel road. I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with Congressman Don Young when some Democrats were making ridiculous claims on the House Floor about King Cove. I thank the new Dean of the House for his steadfast devotion to this important cause and for fighting to ensure the people of Alaska receive the emergency services they need and deserve. I also applaud Secretary Zinke for his leadership and putting forward this carefully crafted agreement to build a short, commonsense road that will save lives," concluded **Chairman Gosar**.

Background:

Courtesy of the Department of Interior

Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed an agreement with the Alaska Native King Cove Native Corp., which is made up of tribal members from the local Agdaagux and Belkofski tribes, to build a life-saving road between the Native village and the nearby all-weather airport in Cold Bay. The village of King Cove is an isolated area in the Aleutian peninsula that currently lacks any safe and reliable ground transportation for medical evacuation in the case of an emergency. There have been 18 deaths attributed to the lack of road access, either in plane crashes or the inability to receive timely medical treatment. In a community with no hospital or doctor, King Cove residents must fly 600 miles to Anchorage for most medical procedures.

The agreement signed today begins a process between Interior and the King Cove Native Corp. of identifying land of equal value needed for a single lane, restricted-access road.

The Aleut residents of King Cove have worked for more than three decades to win federal approval of a single-lane, life-saving road corridor connecting their isolated community to the all-weather Cold Bay Airport. A small stretch of road, approximately 12 miles long, is all that is needed to link King Cove to the existing road system within the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, which is located next to an 10,000-foot runway. The corridor will provide the village with its first and only dependable ground transportation for medical emergencies.

For photos from the signing event, see Interior's Flickr page.
For B-roll from the event, see Interior's YouTube page.

Courtesy of the House Committee on Natural Resources

In July 2017, the House passed H.R. 218, the bipartisan "King Cove Road Land Exchange Act." Introduced by Rep. Young, the bill authorizes a land exchange between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Alaska to construct an 11-mile, one lane, non-commercial road connecting the remote community of King Cove to a modern, all-weather airport with access to emergency medical services in Cold Bay, Alaska.

Under the agreement announced by Secretary Zinke, the State of Alaska will transfer State land to be added to the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, in exchange for the minimum acreage necessary to construct the life-saving road that the people of King Cove have sought for decades.

Provided by the Western Caucus

Since 2013 alone, 55 emergency medevacs have been required to get people in need of significant medical attention to hospitals, as there is currently no road to make these trips from King Cove to the Cold Bay Airport.

The House passed H.R. 218 on 7/20/17 by a vote of 248 – 179. This bill sought to authorize construction of a one-lane 11-mile noncommercial road to connect King Cove and Cold Bay.

Rep. Don Young put together this awesome video following passage of H.R. 218 depicting the passionate floor debate on this issue.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has testified before Congress multiple times in support of this legislation and on the need to construct this road. NCAI has also passed formal resolutions of support in 2007, 2014 and 2015.

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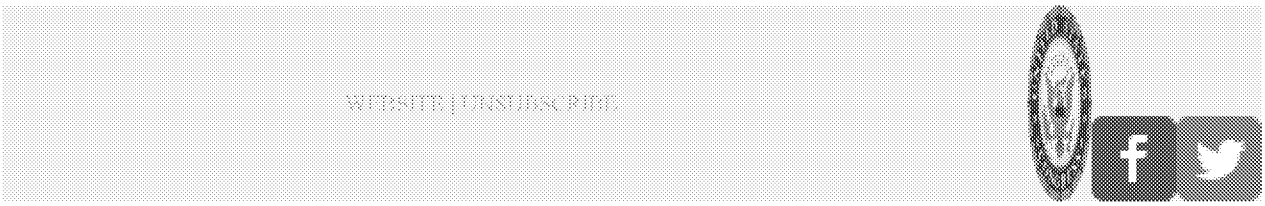
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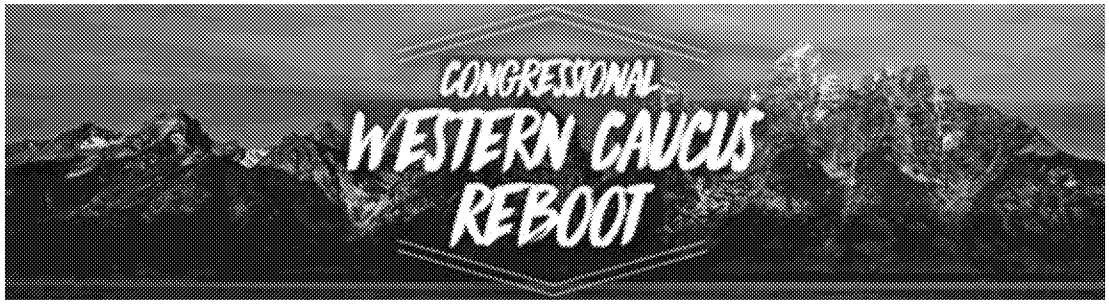
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 1/13/2018 10:57:30 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 01.13.2018



Week of 01.13.2018

Caucus Fracas: Announcing Membership Changes

Rep. Biggs joins Executive Committee; Rep. Curtis joins membership ranks

On Thursday, the Congressional Western Caucus announced that Rep. Andy Biggs (AZ-05) accepted a position as its Chief Regulatory Reform Officer. The Caucus also announced that the newest Member of the House of Representatives, Rep. John Curtis (UT-03), had joined its ranks as a Member.

They and Chairman Rep. Paul Gosar released the following statements commenting on the changes:

"I am honored to accept the position of Regulatory Reform Officer of the Congressional Western Caucus," said **Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs**. "Chairman Paul Gosar has led the Caucus in an historically effective manner. The Caucus is a strong voice for Westerners who have been burdened by the federal government's regulatory overreaches. President Trump and members of his Administration have demonstrated that deregulation to achieve economic freedom is a top priority, and they have been incredible allies. In 2017, the administration and the Western Caucus accomplished a lot for hard-working Americans. There is much work to do, though, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to help unleash our economic potential."

"I am honored to join the Western Caucus and join the fine public servants that represent some of our country's most diverse and beautiful places. I look forward to working with all members to

advance important issues like rural broadband and other common-sense policies to protect the Western way of life," said **Congressman Curtis**.

"My good friend Congressman Biggs is establishing himself as a major player around the Capitol," said **Chairman Gosar**. "I am excited to announce that he is coming onboard as the newest member of our Executive Committee. Andy has a passion for liberty and free markets and he is turning that passion into a force for change in Washington. We look forward to working with him to grow and improve the Caucus' influence in order to make progress on land, water and energy issues. Congratulations, Congressman," he said. "I am also proud to welcome the newest Member of the House, Congressman Curtis, into the Caucus fold. Congressman Curtis has an impressive record coming into Congress as the successful, longtime Mayor of the great city of Provo, Utah. With these dynamic leaders onboard, 2018 is shaping up to be the most successful year for the Caucus yet," he concluded.

Read the Caucus Year in Review 2017

Last year, the Western Caucus had one of the most successful years in its 25-year history. 2018 is shaping up to be an even bigger one, but first, we thought we would take a quick breath to recap the most major victories and milestones of the year.

Click HERE or the picture below to read the Western Caucus 2017 Year in Review.

This year, the Western Caucus was on

TOP 20 2017 Highlights:

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20) Led efforts by Congress to end "sue and settle" practices within the EPA.

EPA Launches New Website Tracking Deregulatory Actions

Last week, the United States Environmental Protection Agency launched a new informational page designed to inform the American people of the progress of the Trump Administration's deregulatory agenda, including as it relates to the Executive Order signed by the President in January requiring that the government relinquish two regulations for each new one enacted.

The Administration and President Trump's stated deregulatoiry intentions were ambitious from the outset, to the extent that many skeptics claimed their goals were overbroad and would be impossible to achieve. These skeptics said we simply had to be content with slowing the acceleration of regulatory overreach - that the problem could no longer be systemically cured.

Reviewing this website demonstrates that the Administration and President Trump have put in the work and due diligence to enact an impressive rollback of our overregulating federal apparatus, which we have every reason to believe will continue so long as he is in office. The aforementioned skeptics, now, are nowhere to be found.

Click HERE to see the new page.

Caucus Staff Breakfast Draws Big Crowd

Interior, Agriculture and other agency speakers attend

On Friday, we had great turnout at the Western Caucus Foundation Staff Policy Breakfast, with over a hundred House, Senate, and Administration staff in attendance.

We heard from: U.S. Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash, their Principal Assistant Deputy Secretary Kate MacGregor, U.S. Department of Energy's Jake McCurdy, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Doug Crandall, House Agriculture Committee's Josh Maxwell, former Caucus Executive Director and current Wyoming County Commissioner Association's Executive Director Pete Obermueller, and Akin Gump's Michael Rossetti.

Pictured below: Assistant Secretary Balash and Assistant Deputy Secretary MacGregor.

Rep. Mike Johnson's SEA Act Passes Resources Committee

You Retweeted

Natural Resources @NatResources · Jan 10

Seismic research is vital to unlocking our #energy potential.

The #SEAact will slash the red tape that stands in the way of restoring our beautiful coastlines.

You and Rep. Mike Johnson

10 19 13

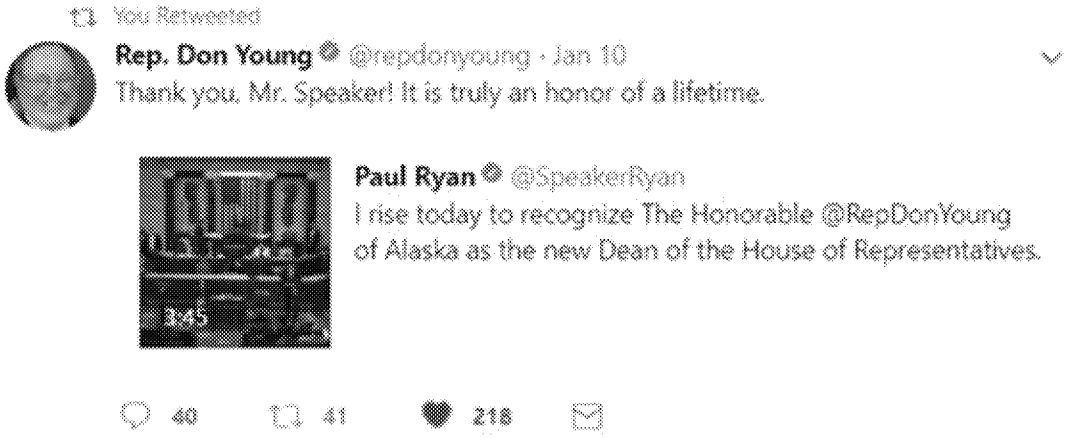
On Wednesday, the House Natural Resources Committee passed Congressman Mike Johnson's H.R. 3133, the Streamlining Environmental Protections (SEA) Act of 2017. The bill amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to remove duplicative permitting requirements that inhibit economic development and restoration projects.

"Washington bureaucrats should never have the authority to halt coastal initiatives based on their own politically biased agendas. Yet many permit approvals are prolonged, including coastal restoration efforts and critical naval operations, specifically for that reason. The SEA Act takes important steps to implement strict deadlines for agencies while maintaining appropriate permitting standards, allowing projects to move forward only if they meet the highest requirements. I applaud the Natural Resources Committee for recognizing the importance of this commonsense legislation and my colleagues for moving it forward," **Rep. Johnson stated.**

"Dogma and outdated federal mandates are stalling beneficial conservation and economic development activities," **Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) said.** "This bill establishes accountability within the bureaucracy and reconciles conflicting federal requirements to make the law work better for people and the environment. I thank Rep. Johnson for his work on this important bill and look forward to advancing it through the House."

Read the full Natural Resources Committee press release HERE. Bill text is HERE.

Vice-Chair for Indian Affairs and Oceans Don Young Named Dean of the House

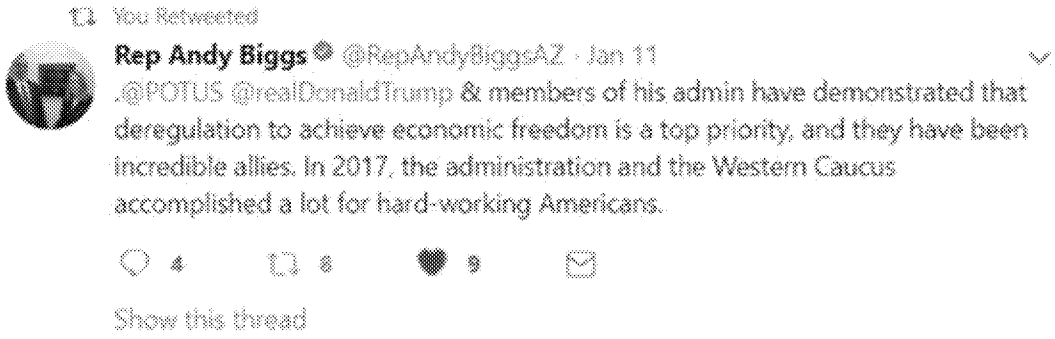


On Wednesday, the House officially recognized Congressman Don Young (AL-At Large) as the new Dean of the House of Representatives, formalizing his stature as the longest-serving Member of the House presently in office. He gained this title as a consequence of the resignation of the last Dean, Democrat John Conyers.

Rep. Young also serves as the Vice-Chair of Indian Affairs and Oceans for the Western Caucus, where his valuable expertise and formidable institutional knowledge is a major benefit to his colleagues.

Click on the tweet above to watch the video from the House Floor.

POST OF THE WEEK...



WEEKLY ADDRESS...

In lieu of a weekly address, the Western Caucus wanted to share this funny video by the Public Lands Council. Their take on the Patagonia Monuments controversy? If you're embarassed about the logo on your jacket, that doesn't mean you can't wear it anymore. Click this link or on the picture below to watch the short video.

STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING US!

WEBSITE

Click Here to view this email in your browser
Click Here to be removed from this list

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 1/11/2018 6:17:18 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Announcing Changes to Western Caucus Leadership, Membership

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: January 11, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Rep. Andy Biggs Joins Caucus' Executive Committee

Newest House Member Rep. Curtis Joins Caucus as Member

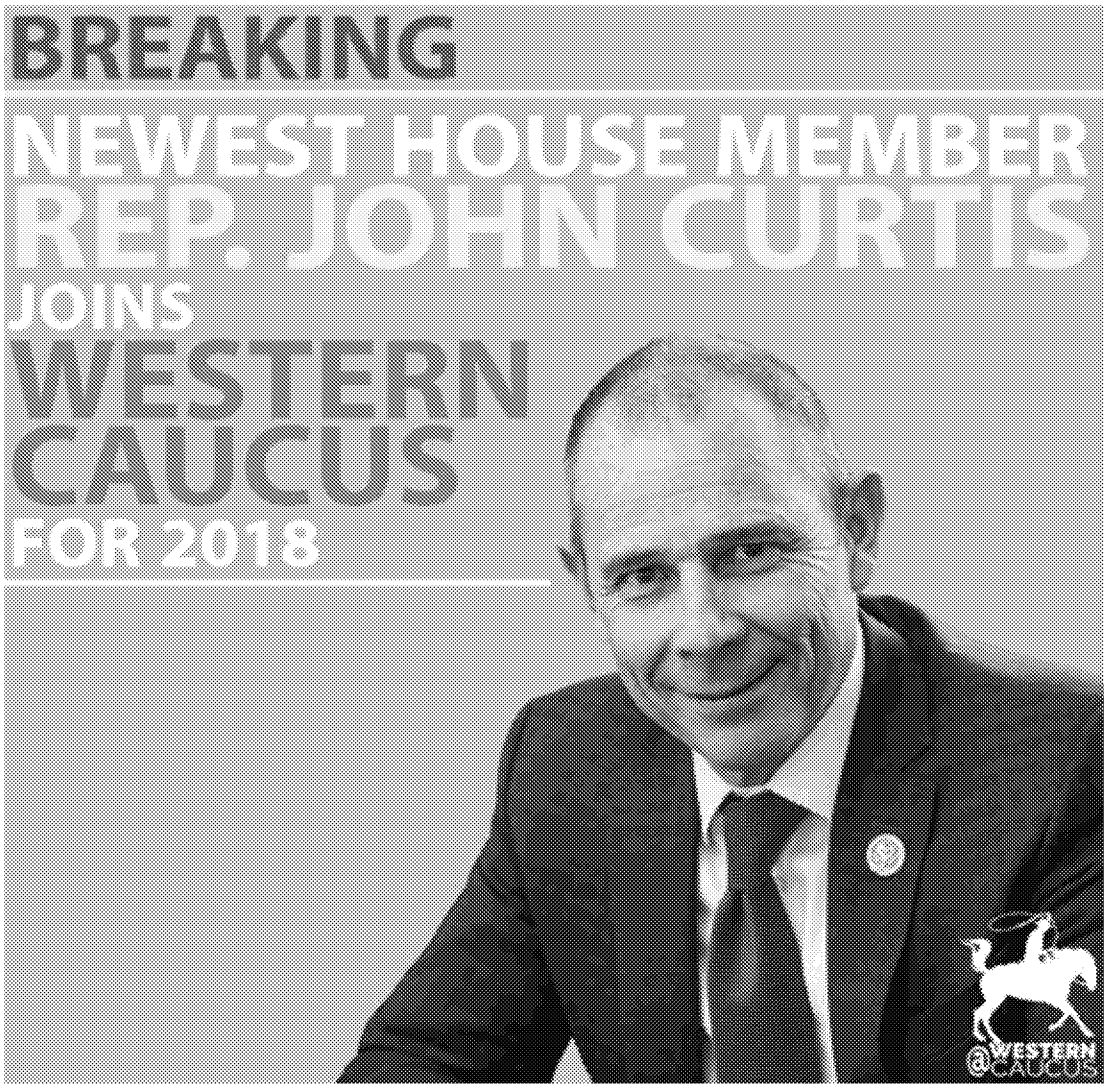
WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Congressman **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** and Congressman **John Curtis (UT-03)** issued statements following the leadership and membership changes in the Caucus. Congressman Biggs will serve as the Caucus' Chief Regulatory Reform Officer for 2018, and Congressman Curtis - the newest Member in the United States House of Representatives - has just joined the Caucus as a member. They issued the following statements:

"My good friend Congressman Biggs is establishing himself as a major player around the Capitol," said **Chairman Gosar**. "I am excited to announce that he is coming onboard as the newest member of our Executive Committee. Andy has a passion for liberty and free markets and he is turning that passion into a force for change in Washington. We look forward to working with him to grow and improve the Caucus' influence in order to make progress on land, water and energy issues. Congratulations, Congressman," he said. "I am also proud to welcome the newest Member of the House, Congressman Curtis, into the Caucus fold. Congressman Curtis has an impressive record coming into Congress as the successful, longtime Mayor of the great city of Provo, Utah. With these dynamic leaders onboard, 2018 is shaping up to be the most successful year for the Caucus yet," he concluded.

"I am honored to accept the position of Regulatory Reform Officer of the Congressional Western Caucus," said **Chief Regulatory Reform Officer Andy Biggs**. "Chairman Paul Gosar has led the Caucus in an historically effective manner. The Caucus is a strong voice for Westerners who have

been burdened by the federal government's regulatory overreaches. President Trump and members of his Administration have demonstrated that deregulation to achieve economic freedom is a top priority, and they have been incredible allies. In 2017, the administration and the Western Caucus accomplished a lot for hard-working Americans. There is much work to do, though, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to help unleash our economic potential."

"I am honored to join the Western Caucus and join the fine public servants that represent some of our country's most diverse and beautiful places. I look forward to working with all members to advance important issues like rural broadband and other common-sense policies to protect the Western way of life," said **Congressman Curtis**.



###

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 1/8/2018 4:51:51 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus 2017 Year in Review
Attachments: Western Caucus 2017 Year in Review.pdf

2017 was a banner year for the Western Caucus. This was only been made possible by the engagement and diligence of our Members, staff and supporters. Thank you for helping make this year a major success.

Below are the Western Caucus Highlights for 2017. Attached is our comprehensive Year in Review.

Chairman Gosar is filled with optimism and excited to work with our Members, staff, committees, industry, the Administration and the American people to make 2018 the best year yet.

We look forward to future efforts.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

WESTERN CAUCUS

Congressional Western Caucus
Year in Review 2017

This year, the Western Caucus was on

TOP 20 2017 Highlights:

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19) Prevented funds for the Obama Administration's Social Cost of Carbon rule.
20) Led efforts by Congress to end "sue and settle" practices within the EPA.

Other Caucus Milestones in 2017:

1) Passed Caucus bylaws at first member meeting – a campaign promise kept.
2) Established monthly Member meeting with outside speakers including Secretaries Zinke and Perdue, Administrator Pruitt, Director Mulvaney and Chief Tooke. Catered lunch provided.
3) Drafted 26 unique amendments to Interior section of FY'18 approps; 13 were made in order by Rules Committee and 10 were successfully passed and attached to the bill.
4) Created weekly newsletter.
5) Established weekly Member video address.
6) Designed and launched completely redesigned Caucus website
7) Issued 74 press releases featuring a total of 505 unique quotes from Caucus members.
8) Launched Caucus Instagram page.
9) Western Caucus Member Zinke confirmed as Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 1/4/2018 10:03:25 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Trump Administration Releases Aggressive Plan to Encourage Offshore Oil and Gas Production

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jeff Small

Date: January 4, 2018
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

Trump Administration Releases Aggressive Plan to Encourage Offshore Oil and Gas Production

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04),** Majority Whip **Steve Scalise (LA-01)**, Natural Resources Committee Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Agriculture Committee Chairman **Mike Conaway (TX-11),** Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Western Caucus Members **Randy Weber (TX-14)**, **Ralph Abraham (LA-05)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Jeff Duncan (SC-03)**, **Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, **Garret Graves (LA-06)**, **Louie Gohmert (TX-01)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** and **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** released the following statements after the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced a Draft Proposed Program (DPP) for the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program to increase available acreage and leases for responsible offshore oil and gas exploration and production:

Congressman Weber stated, "I applaud the president and this administration for focusing on American energy dominance. Our nation is filled with untapped potential. It is incumbent on us to responsibly increase our offshore oil and gas exploration and production. I firmly believe this is entirely within our reach."

"The Trump administration's announcement to allow expanded offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling is welcomed news. This decision will lead to more jobs for hard-working Louisianians anxious to return to work in the industry, provide greater economic stimulation in communities that rely on energy production for survival, and further our goal of American energy independence," said **Congressman Abraham**.

Congressman LaMalfa said, "President Trump and Secretary Zinke are working together to expand American energy production and create American jobs. This draft plan promotes responsible offshore energy production and will include input from Congress and local stakeholders. This is an important step towards our ultimate goal of American energy self-sustainability and putting Americans back to work. I look forward to seeing this program improve our nation's energy independence and create jobs for hardworking Americans."

"The announcement coming out of the Trump Administration today is tremendous news for American energy independence, economic development, and job creation. The Obama Administration's shortsighted offshore plan set the U.S. behind our competitors around the world and trampled efforts to move toward energy independence. It's great to see President Trump correct this misguided policy and replace it with an aggressive, bold agenda to ensure the U.S. is the leading nation for energy security which is critical in our increasingly volatile world. Opening up U.S. waters for drilling, including off the coast of South Carolina, will expand access to critical resources which will greatly benefit South Carolinians and our nation as a whole. As a longtime advocate for offshore energy and a former member of the U.S. Department of Interior's Outer Continental Shelf's Five Year Planning Subcommittee, I know this decision will move the U.S. to the forefront of global energy security and closer to achieving the goal of energy independence," said **Congressman Jeff Duncan**.

Congressman Mike Johnson stated, "The Trump administration's decision to allow enhanced exploration, leasing and development within the Outer Continental Shelf, previously closed to such activities, prioritizes home-grown energy production and puts the United States one step closer to achieving energy dominance. I look forward to the

many benefits Louisiana and other coastal states will see from this all-of-the-above energy strategy."

"After the ban was lifted on oil exports last year, we've seen worldwide demand for American energy explode. Secretary Zinke and President Trump's decision to seize on America's energy potential is a smart step towards furthering our nation's position as a global energy leader," said **Congressman Conaway.**

Congressman Garret Graves stated, "Let's be clear – preventing energy production in the United States makes us reliant upon foreign energy sources, sends hundreds of billions of American dollars overseas and exports jobs to other countries. This energy plan is different. It begins to maximize domestic energy resources, creates jobs at home and decreases our reliance upon foreign energy. The United States has one of the safest, most environmentally-sensitive conventional energy production programs in the world. Eliminating barriers to domestic energy production as envisioned in this plan is a step in the right direction."

"It is truly exciting and encouraging that we have a president that is doing all he can to make us completely energy independent. Being energy independent will ensure that we can never be blackmailed by totalitarian nations who provide us any energy. Under this current administration, we are headed on a road that will establish this country as one of the strongest energy superpowers. This move is an important step forward to pursuing our nation's energy potential. It is refreshing to know that we have a leader in the White House who values the assets this nation has to offer and is willing to take bold, yet common sense steps to both protect and benefit the American people," said **Congressman Gohmert**.

Congressman Scalise stated, "Today's announcement by Secretary Zinke represents yet another positive step the Trump Administration has taken in the direction of American energy dominance. With this program, my constituents in southeast Louisiana whose jobs depend on the energy industry can rest easy knowing that oil and gas development is a priority for this administration. With increased exploration and production in the Gulf of Mexico and beyond, we will be able to create more jobs and continue to receive the revenue sharing that is vital to rebuilding our coast. I look forward to working with Secretary Zinke and President Trump to ensure that our offshore oil and gas industry continues to be strong."

"The previous administration's approach to offshore development started from the premise of considering 'as little as possible.' The Trump administration starts from the premise of considering 'as much as possible.' American energy dominance will only be achieved by taking the latter approach. I look forward to continuing to work with the Administration to responsibly develop American energy, spur job growth and maximize revenues to the benefit of taxpayers," said **Congressman Rob Bishop**.

"North American energy independence should be a top priority for the United States. Today's announcement by Secretary Zinke is a positive step in that direction. As he noted, not all offshore areas are appropriate for drilling, but proper study and public comment will help the Interior Department as it explores areas for safe, regulated exploration and development. While energy independence should be our next step, energy dominance should be our final goal. This allows not only our citizens and

businesses to thrive, but frees our allies from purchasing oil and gas from our enemies," stated **Congressman Westerman**.

Congressman Lamborn said, "Offshore drilling uses our nation's abundant natural resources to our economy's advantage. The economic boost will create more jobs and help entire communities thrive with a strong connection to drilling. Instead of heavily relying on foreign countries to supply the United States with fuel, we can restore American independence by using our own. This will drastically cut costs for the average American. These measures are good for our nation's workers, consumers, and economy."

"Once again President Trump and his administration are keeping the promises he made in his campaign. I applaud the proposed plan for oil and gas exploration in the Outer Continental Shelf. This program is yet another step in the right direction to revive America's energy independence. Oil and gas exploration in these regions will benefit job growth, our economy, and national security," stated **Congressman Biggs**.

Congressman Emmer said, "Once again, this administration put America first by further severing our reliance on foreign countries for essential resources. Today's action by the President echoes the Department of Interior's decision to support mining rights in Minnesota and enhance access to our nation's resources while creating jobs, boosting local economies, and advancing national security."

Chairman Gosar concluded, "The Trump Administration's aggressive plan to unlock offshore oil and gas resources will move America closer to energy independence and dominance. Unlike the previous Administration, which aimed to stifle and undermine responsible oil and gas production at every opportunity, President Trump and Secretary Zinke understand that developing these resources is an important part of a true all-of-the-above energy strategy."

Background:

Courtesy of the Department of Interior

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced the next step for responsibly developing the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National OCS Program) for 2019-2024, which proposes to make over 90 percent of the total OCS acreage and more than 98 percent of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and gas resources in federal offshore areas available to consider for future exploration and development. By comparison, the current program puts 94 percent of the OCS off limits.

Earlier this year, 155 Members of both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate sent letters to Secretary Zinke in support of a new 5-year plan that recognizes America's potential for energy dominance.

The Draft Proposed Program (DPP) includes 47 potential lease sales in 25 of the 26 planning areas – 19 sales off the coast of Alaska, 7 in the Pacific Region, 12 in the Gulf of Mexico, and 9 in the Atlantic Region. This is the largest number of lease sales ever proposed for the National OCS Program's 5-year lease schedule.

BOEM currently manages about 2,900 active OCS leases, covering almost 15.3 million acres – the vast majority in the Gulf of Mexico. In fiscal year 2016, oil and gas leases on the OCS accounted for approximately 18 percent of domestic oil production and 4 percent of domestic natural gas production. This production generates billions of dollars in revenue for state and local governments and the U.S. taxpayer, while supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs.

For more information about the National OCS Program, including maps, please visit: http://www.boem.gov/National-Program/

Courtesy Western Caucus

The DPP announced today proposes an aggressive 5-year plan that significantly increase available acreage and the number off leases for responsible offshore oil and gas exploration and production in the Outer Continental Shelf. This plan will move our national offshore energy policy away from an overly restrictive and misguided approach towards energy independence.

It is Important to note that this is just the draft plan, it can be modified and it will take a significant amount of time to complete as the agency will hold meetings in affected states with stakeholders, brief members of Congress, hold a public comment period and do significant outreach.

In April, President Trump issued Executive Order 13795, lifting the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration and production in the Arctic and Atlantic. Read more **HERE**.

Secretary Zinke subsequently issued Secretarial Order 3350 which called for enhancing OCS energy exploration, leasing, and development as well as establishing regulatory certainty for OCS activities.

Under the previous Obama plan, 94% of all acreage was off limits and only 15 potential lease sales were proposed. President Reagan proposed 41 and 42 lease sales during his Administration. The Trump Administration proposed 47 lease sales and opening up over 90 percent of the total OCS acreage in today's DPP.

In November, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Whip Scalise's bill, H.R. 4239, the Secure American Energy Act. This legislation seeks to increase access to oil and gas resources in the OCS. Read more **HERE**.

###

WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/22/2017 11:06:54 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: New DOI Legal Opinion Confirms Lawless Minnesota Land Grab, Rejects Arbitrary Anti-Mining Actions by Obama

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jeff Small

Date: December 22, 2017
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

New DOI Legal Opinion Confirms Lawless Minnesota Land Grab, Rejects Arbitrary Anti-Mining Actions by Obama

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** released the following statements after the United States Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor issued a new legal opinion concluding that Twin Metals Minnesota has a non-discretionary right to a third renewal of its two federal mineral leases held in

Northeast Minnesota for more than 50 years and determined that the BLM does not have discretion to deny the company's renewal application:

Congressman Emmer said, "Minnesotans send our gratitude to the Department of the Interior for their action to reverse course set by the Obama Administration and allow our great state to regain control of our mineral leases to advance responsible mining. This action today, coupled with the passage of the MINER Act last month, demonstrate a commitment to unwind the politically motivated actions by the previous Administration and put Minnesota and the nation on a path to prosperity for local economies and communities for generations to come."

Western Caucus and House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals Chairman Paul Gosar said, "Today's legal opinion confirms that President Obama and his agency minions had no legal authority to cancel two mineral leases in order to appease anti-mining extremists. I thank Secretary Zinke, Deputy Secretary Bernhardt and their team as well as President Trump and his staff at the White House for hearing the concerns of the people of Minnesota and working diligently to overturn the Obama Administration's lawless land grab."

Background:

Courtesy of the Department of the Interior:

Today, the United States Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor issued a new legal opinion concluding that Twin Metals Minnesota has a non-discretionary right to a third renewal of its two hardrock mining leases, located in the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota. The new M-Opinion (Memorandum Opinion) M-37049 reverses and replaces a prior opinion on the topic which was issued in March 2016.

Under the new legal opinion, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will work together with the surface management agency, USDA Forest Service, to reconsider a 2016 decision in which the BLM denied Twin Metals' pending lease renewal application. The agencies will conduct the appropriate environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to make a final agency decision on the application and to identify appropriate terms and conditions for surface protection.

The M-Opinion is available HERE.

Courtesy of the Western Caucus

On November 30, the House took action to reject the Obama Administration's Minnesota land grab by passing H.R. 3905, the Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act.

The full press release can be found HERE.

On January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register, to restrict for a 20-year moratorium, lands within the Superior National Forest in Northeast Minnesota.

This action immediately placed this vast area off limits to future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development for two years while the 20-year withdrawal is being considered. The total withdrawal application boundary spans approximately 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands.

In conjunction with this massive mineral withdrawal, the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management inappropriately rejected Twin Metals Minnesota's application to renew two hardrock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest – leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

These bureaucratic decisions could decimate local economies, stifle job creation as well as cause significant harm to K-12 education and mining in Minnesota. These were political, anti-mining and anti-education actions taken by the Obama Administration.

The University of Minnesota-Duluth estimates the creation of 12,000 construction jobs and 5,000 long-term mining jobs if mining projects already being pursued in Duluth Complex are allowed to move forward. These are good-paying jobs, as the average annual mining wage in Minnesota was $78,635 in 2015.

Education will be significantly harmed as Minnesota is projected to lose up to $3 billion in royalty revenues for the State's Permanent School Trust Fund that would support nearly 900,000 K-12 students statewide if the withdrawal application and cancelled leases are not rejected.

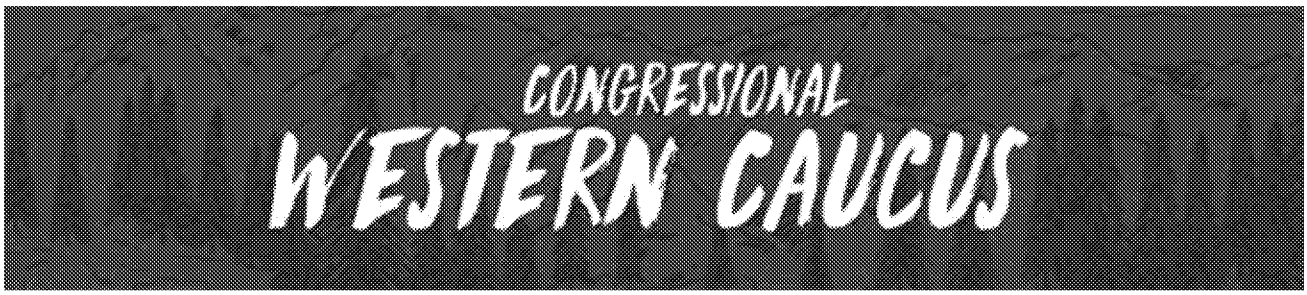
To date, Twin Metals has invested upward of $400 million – a significant investment – in reliance on the two federal mineral leases that the BLM executed with the company's predecessors and renewed each time they expired.

Today's action was the first of three actions by the Trump Administration that need to occur to reverse the Obama land grab.

###

Message

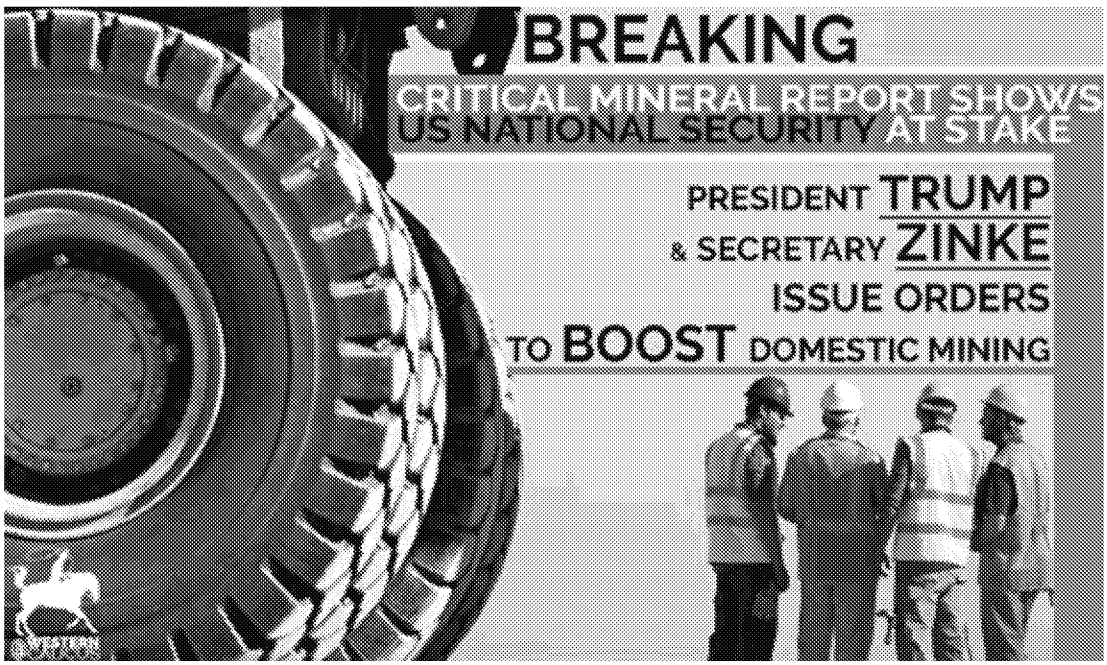
From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/21/2017 10:01:06 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Trump Administration Acts to Reduce Dependence on Foreign Critical Minerals and Strengthen National Security



For Immediate Release
Contact: Jeff Small

Date: December 21, 2017
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

Trump Administration Acts to Reduce Dependence on Foreign Critical Minerals and Strengthen National Security



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Vice-Chairman for Policy and Appropriations **Mark Amodei (NV-02)**, Vice-Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)** and Western Caucus Members **Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Adrian Smith**

(NE-03), **Jason Smith (MO-08)**, **Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large)**, **Andy Biggs (AZ-05) and Tom Emmer (MN-06)** issued the following statements following President Donald J. Trump's executive order to break America's dependence on foreign minerals and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke's secretarial order to begin work on identifying immediate domestic sources for critical minerals:

Chairman Gosar said, "Our reliance on foreign nations of questionable stability and demonstrated hostile intentions towards the United States for critical minerals constitutes a serious security threat. This situation has come about even though the United States could readily procure the vast majority of the 23 minerals identified in the USGS Report domestically and sustainably, were we only to choose to greenlight development of our bounty of mineral resources. At a recent hearing of the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee which I chair, I emphasized the extent to which arbitrary mineral withdrawals and a federal bureaucracy loathe to authorize mineral projects have brought us to this precarious juncture. But there is a way forward. I applaud President Trump and Secretary Zinke for taking action to advance American energy dominance and strengthen our national security."

Congressman Amodei stated, "Having introduced critical minerals legislation that has passed out of the House the last three Congresses in a row – and watching that bill run straight into Senate paralysis – I appreciate the fact that the Administration has taken the lead on this issue and is moving the ball toward the goal line."

"The unique and resource rich geology in Alaska makes the state an excellent candidate for finding critical minerals," said **Congressman Don Young.** "This strategic decision by President Trump will ensure that the U.S. is more self-sufficient and that our military can operate without risk of losing access to these crucial minerals while helping create jobs and boost both the Alaskan and national economy."

Congressman Westerman stated, "America's dependence on foreign sources of materials for manufacturing has been a concern among leaders in Congress, the executive branch, and industry for many decades. President Trump's action addresses those concerns and puts America on the road to mineral independence. I appreciate the President and Secretary Zinke's leadership in addressing this important security and economic challenge."

"Tapping into our abundant domestic supply of critical minerals is good defense policy that has the added bonus of creating jobs and economic growth. These actions underscore President Trump's commitment to responsibly develop more of our own resources and reverse America's dependency on foreign sources. I look forward to continuing our work with the administration to achieve this shared objective," said **Congressman Rob Bishop.**

Congressman Mike Johnson stated, "The president's decision marks an important turning point in prioritizing our nation's sovereignty and security. America's mineral resources are among our greatest assets and our independence in this area is key to strengthening our national defense. Once again, President Trump and Secretary Zinke have shown real leadership in reducing U.S. dependence on foreign resources."

Congressman Lamborn said, "Today less than half the minerals American manufacturers need come from our own soil. That fosters dependence on foreign aid and poses a significant problem for national security. While serving as Chairman of the

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources for six years, this is an issue I worked on intensively. President Trump's Executive Order changes course for the better. We will no longer rely on foreign competitors for vital minerals needed to keep our country safe. Secretary Zinke's order backs the president's decision by increasing American mineral production. The new administration is putting America first and making American security the top priority. Putting critical mineral control back in the hands of domestic companies ensures a safer, better tomorrow."

"America's reliance on foreign nations for important minerals and resources that our military needs puts our national security in jeopardy. We must make it easier to identify and produce these minerals so that everything our armed forces need can be made right here on our soil. I support the President's decision to issue this Executive Order that will create jobs as well as streamline and safeguard our supply lines," **Congressman LaMalfa** remarked.

Congressman Adrian Smith stated, "New efforts to mine rare earth minerals in places like Elk Creek, Nebraska, demonstrate we are capable of mining and refining these critical inputs for 21st century technology at home. I applaud President Trump and Secretary Zinke for recognizing the need to grow our economy by utilizing resources which already exist within our borders."

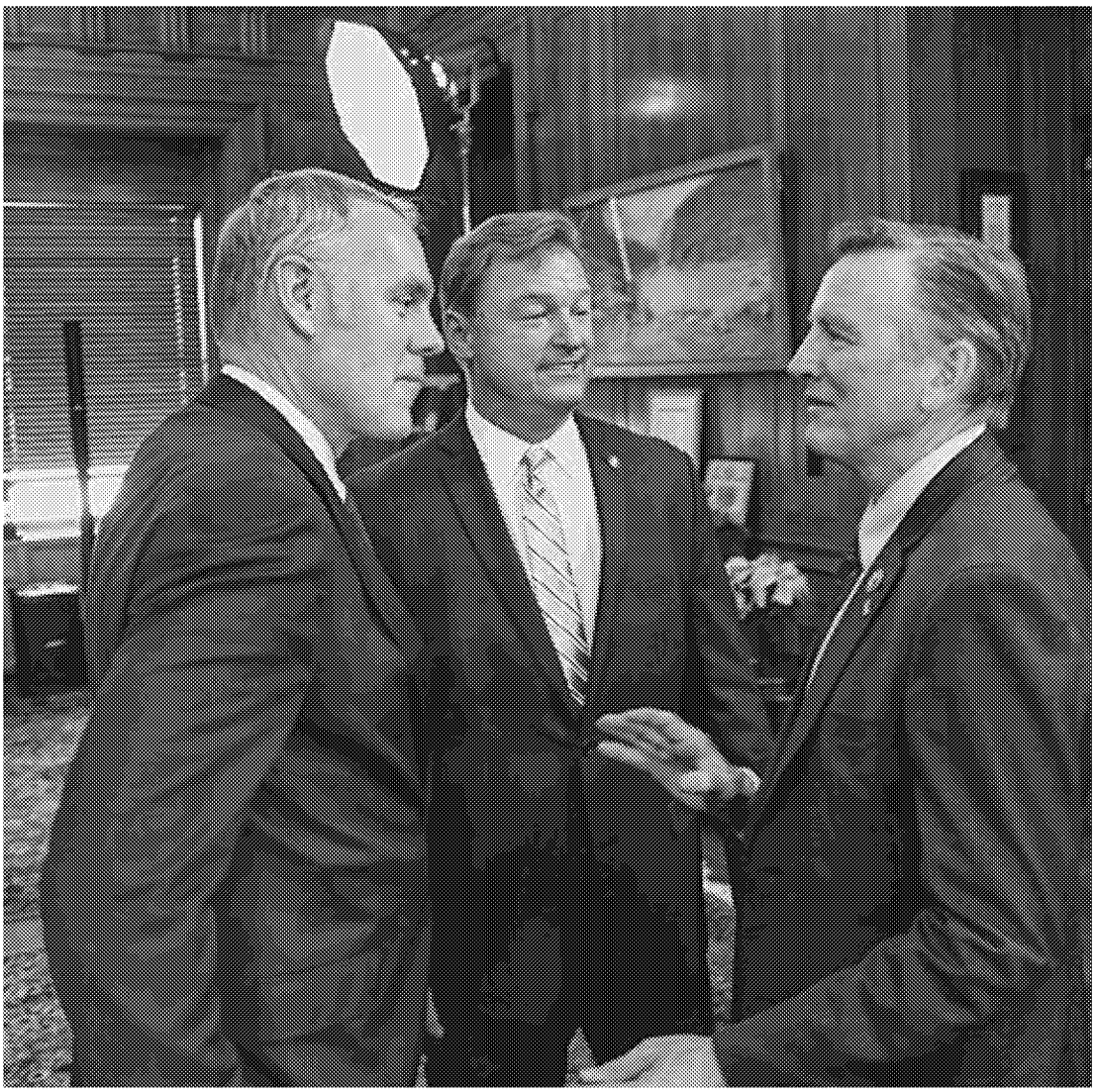
"The number one responsibility of your government is to keep you and your loved ones safe. Energy security – knowing we can do everything from building the best equipment for our military to putting gas in our cars and heating our homes – is a major part of that safety and security. But for too long, the government has been dependent on foreign countries supplying us with these critical resources when we have them right here in southeast Missouri. President Trump's action to change this will make us less reliant on countries like Russia and China who don't have our best interests at heart and will secure America's energy independence while bringing jobs back to the United States," said **Congressman Jason Smith**.

Congressman Gianforte stated, "Montana is home to the only platinum and palladium production in North America. Rare earth elements and platinum metals are integral parts of high-tech components, from batteries to computer chips to display screens to engines, that are vital for our economy and national defense. With Russia controlling much of the world's platinum group production and China controlling nearly 80 percent of rare earth production, greater domestic production of these materials would protect us from relying on other nations. Opening a mine in the U.S. is difficult, and this order will improve the process. I applaud the efforts of the president and look forward to making it easier to create high-paying mining jobs in Montana."

"By increasing exploration and production of key minerals in the United States, President Trump has kept his promise to prioritize our national strategic interests. Arizonans will see expanded job growth and trade opportunities. I applaud this administration for protecting our affairs," said **Congressman Biggs**.

"Like so many states across this great nation, Minnesota is fully prepared to step up and help unleash America's full mining potential," concluded **Congressman Emmer** whose MINER Act, which reverses the misguided, last-minute actions of the Obama Administration to stop any exploration of one of the most valuable precious metal deposits in the world, passed the House last month. "This will add jobs and bring economic prosperity; improve national security and decrease our reliance on foreign

countries like Russia and China; and enhance the lives of every American. Further, our current environmental regulations ensure that we can secure critical minerals while protecting our nation's big, beautiful landscape. I am glad this administration agrees sound economic, environmental, and security policy can and should coexist. I commend Secretary Zinke and the President for their work to support our miners, streamline the permitting and review process, and enhance our national defense with this important order today."



Secretary Zinke, Senator Heller and Chairman Gosar chat following the SO signing.

Background:

Courtesy of the White House

Yesterday, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order to reverse the decades-long trend of increasing dependence on foreign imports of critical minerals that are essential to American prosperity and national security.

The comprehensive order aims to identify new sources of critical minerals, ensure miners and producers have access to the best data, and streamline the leasing and

permitting process to expedite production, reprocessing and recycling of minerals at all levels of the supply chain.

Courtesy of the Department of the Interior:

Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order directing the initial steps to producing the first nationwide geological and topographical survey of the United States in modern history. The order also directs Interior bureaus to begin work on identifying immediate domestic sources for critical minerals.

Earlier this week, the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Geological Survey released a report that detailed the extent to which the United States is fully, majorly, or partially dependent upon foreign competitors and even adversaries for our supply of "critical minerals." The report identified 23 of the minerals that are most-needed to sustain our national defense and economy and are used in manufacturing everything from batteries and computer chips to equipment used by our military. The report shows a troubling trend of foreign dependency.

Click HERE and HERE to read DOI's press releases on these matters.

Courtesy of the Western Caucus

On December 12, 2017, the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing on the arduous and uncertain regulatory scheme governing domestic mineral development and resulting impacts on America's economic and national security. Panel members discussed America's reliance on foreign minerals and the benefits of increasing domestic production.

Each of the last three Congresses, the House has passed Vice-Chairman Amodei's National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act. This legislation sought to address delays in the permitting of American mining projects, which can currently take seven to ten years or longer. This bill required the lead permitting agency to identify a project lead to coordinate with all involved, set and adhere to deadlines, establish clear goals, and track progress. It also streamlined judicial review and litigation.

###

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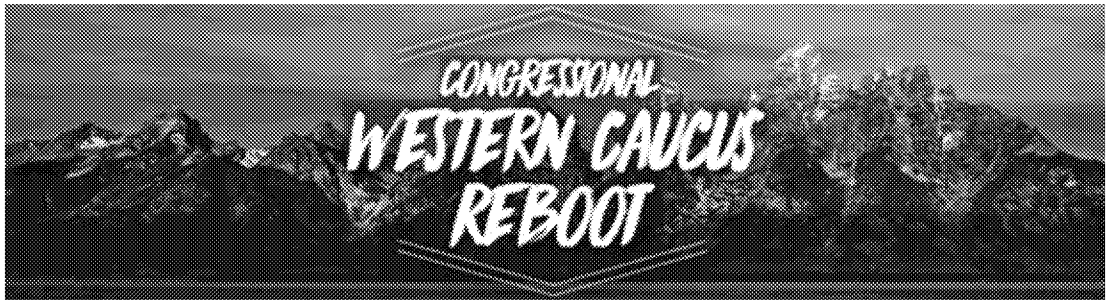
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/16/2017 9:54:23 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 12.16.17



Week of 12.16.2017

New Forest Service Chief Tooke Meets With Western Caucus

Vows to work with members, Caucus to implement forestry reform

On Tuesday, new Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke met with members of the Congressional Western Caucus. Chief Tooke is off to an excellent start and knows better than anyone the challenges we face when it comes to combating catastrophic wildfires and actively managing our forests.

Tony Tooke is the 18th Chief of the United States Forest Service and has worked for the agency for 18 years. Prior to his current role, Chief Tooke was the Regional Forester for the Southern Region. He grew up on a small 200-acre farm in Detroit, Alabama.

McClintock Passes Bill to Increase Public Access

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Rep. McClintock's bill to provide bicycle and wheelchair access to some of the most scenic landscapes in the country. Numerous Democrats opposed this commonsense legislation.

"This bill advances one of the principal objectives of the Federal Lands Subcommittee: to restore public access to our public lands. When the House considered the Wilderness Act in June of 1964, the record is clear that its framers intended that the term "mechanical transport" be applied to non-human-powered vehicles like motorcycles – not human-powered devices like bicycles. Bicycles were allowed in wilderness areas from the inception of the Act in 1964 until 1977, when the Forest Service reinterpreted the act to ban them. Bicycles peacefully co-exist with backpacking, hiking, horseback riding and packing on any other public lands – and they did for many years in Wilderness areas. This bill only removes the current blanket prohibition against bicycles and other

forms of human-powered locomotion established by bureaucratic regulation. It in no way interferes with the discretion provided in other regulations and laws that gives land managers the ability to close or restrict the use of trails according to site-specific conditions. This bill restores this principle for America's mountain bikers on our public lands," **Rep. McClintock stated.**

"This bill prevents unelected bureaucrats from arbitrarily banning bicycles, strollers and wheelchairs from our public lands," **House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop said**. "Public lands should be open to all Americans. It is shocking to see self-proclaimed defenders of public lands in Congress vote to perpetuate a permanent ban on bikers, parents, the disabled, or certain hunters from accessing public lands. I'm proud to stand with Rep. McClintock in fighting for American citizens who are tired of government officials telling them they can't enjoy our nation's public lands."

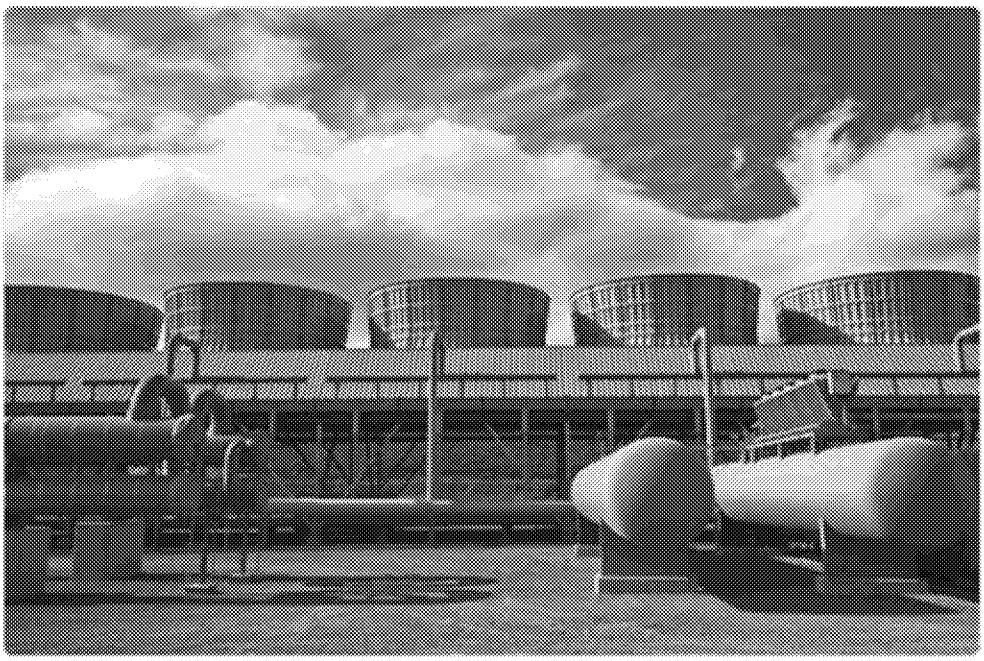
"Our public lands have always played different roles based on their unique characteristics and histories. But a blanket ban on bicycles and wheelchairs in wilderness clearly provides an overbroad answer to the question of what kinds of activities are appropriate across those vast and diverse areas. There is no question mountain biking can be done responsibly, with its impacts controlled by land managers and proactive biking cooperatives working together. I want to congratulate Western Caucus member Tom McClintock for his bill passing Committee, and thank him for bringing to light this commonsense public lands use issue," said **Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar**.

See the bill's text **HERE**.

Labrador Passes Bill to Increase Geothermal Energy

Raúl R. Labrador @Raul_Labrador · Dec 13

My bill easing regulations for geothermal exploration cleared @NatResources today. #Idaho will benefit. bit.ly/2AWM6H1



On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Rep. Labrador's bill to incentivize new production of geothermal resources and support more development on lands

already leased for that purpose.

Read Congressman Labrador's press release **HERE** for more information. Bill text can be found **HERE**.

Agriculture Committee Launches Farm Bill Page

Slick promo video showcases what to expect

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Agriculture launched a landing page to share important information on the upcoming farm bill. The Committee also released an excellent video which can viewed by clicking above or visiting the landing page.

Trump Administration Slashes Job-Killing Regulations

The president literally cut the red tape

Rep. Jason Smith @RepJasonSmith · Dec 14

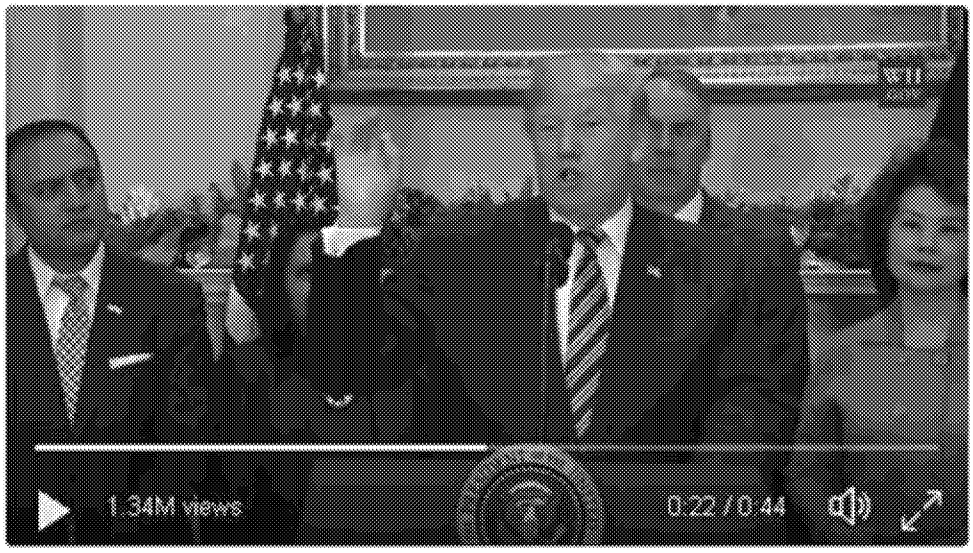
President Trump is rapidly cutting through regulatory red tape! So far this year, we have removed more than $8.1 billion worth of regulations that were costing YOU money. Ready to see us accomplish even more regulatory roll-backs in 2018!

The Trump Administration has not been shy in proclaiming its intentions to dismantle the regulatory state. President Trump is clear on his desire to provide ordinary Americans and business owners with greater regulatory certainty and the economic prosperity that attends to it. On Thursday, December 14, 2017, President Trump was joined by Secretary of Transporation Elaine Chao and Secretry of the Interior Ryan Zinke for a 'ribbon-cutting' ceremony. In the Roosevelt Room, he cut red tape connecting 1960's approximately 20,000 pages of regulation to today's more than 185,000 pages.

The message was that the Trump Administration is severing the near-exponential regulatory onslaught of the federal government. This is being accomplished in large part by President Trump's original Executive Order 13771 directing agencies to eliminate two old regulations for each new one introduced. The actual progress of the Administration on this front is even more drastic: President Trump announced in the Roosevelt Room that the figure is now closer to 22 eliminated for every one introduced.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Dec 14

Today, we gathered in the Roosevelt Room for one single reason: to CUT THE RED TAPE! For many decades, an ever-growing maze of regs, rules, and restrictions has cost our country trillions of dollars, millions of jobs, countless American factories, & devastated entire industries.



Daily Caller Fact-Checks Democrat Wildfire Claims

Western Caucus weighed in

The Daily Caller's fact-checking arm ran a fact-check piece looking into some of the more incendiary claims that accompany Democratic talking points on wildfires, including that climate change is a more substantial cause than decreased forest management and thinning.

The Daily Caller cited politicians including California Governor Jerry Brown and former Vice President Al Gore who implied or stated explicitly that addressing climate change was the proper way to deal with wildfires while neglecting to discuss the need for active forestry management. The verdict: that premise is 'False'.

From the piece:

"*Policies to stop natural fires can make future fires worse when they leave forests with thick, dry undergrowth. Members of the [congressional] Western Caucus say too much focus on fire suppression and not enough focus on fire prevention helps to explain the severity of fires in California and elsewhere.*

Tanner Hanson, a spokesman for the Caucus, told TheDCNF in an email that some politicians who link climate change to the fires also "plead ignorance to the question of whether forest thinning and clearing millions of dead, dry trees could have any effect on the intensity or duration of wildfires."

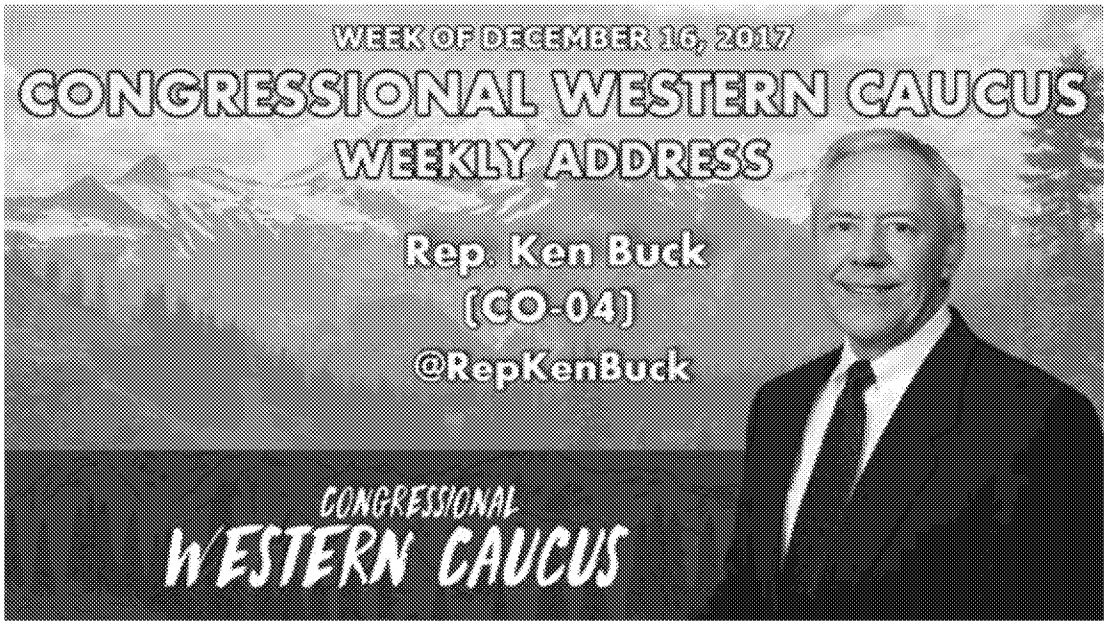
While the Forest Service has spent a record $2.3 billion this year on battling fires, timber harvests have decreased 80 percent over the last 30 years, according to the Caucus. The House passed a bill in November that would increase funding for preventative forest management practices like managed fire treatment and removal of dead trees."

Click **HERE** to read the full fact-check.

POST OF THE WEEK...

WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Congressman Ken Buck (CO-04) discusses his bill to make water more accessible and affordable for rural communities as well as his efforts to protect American energy infrastructure. Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the address.



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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/13/2017 4:17:32 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Holiday Reception Tonight | Western Caucus Foundation

By now you should have received the below invite to **tonight's** Western Caucus Foundation Holiday Reception.

December 13, 2017 | 5-7 p.m. | Hotel George, 15 E St NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 | RSVP **HERE**

Members, staff and friends of the Western Caucus are all welcome.

Hope to see you this evening.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

From: Western Caucus Foundation [mailto:info@westerncaucusfoundation.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:25 AM
To: Small, Jeff
Subject: Reminder: Holiday Reception Tonight @5pm – Please RSVP asap!

Join us for our Holiday Reception!

WESTERN CAUCUS FOUNDATION

THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

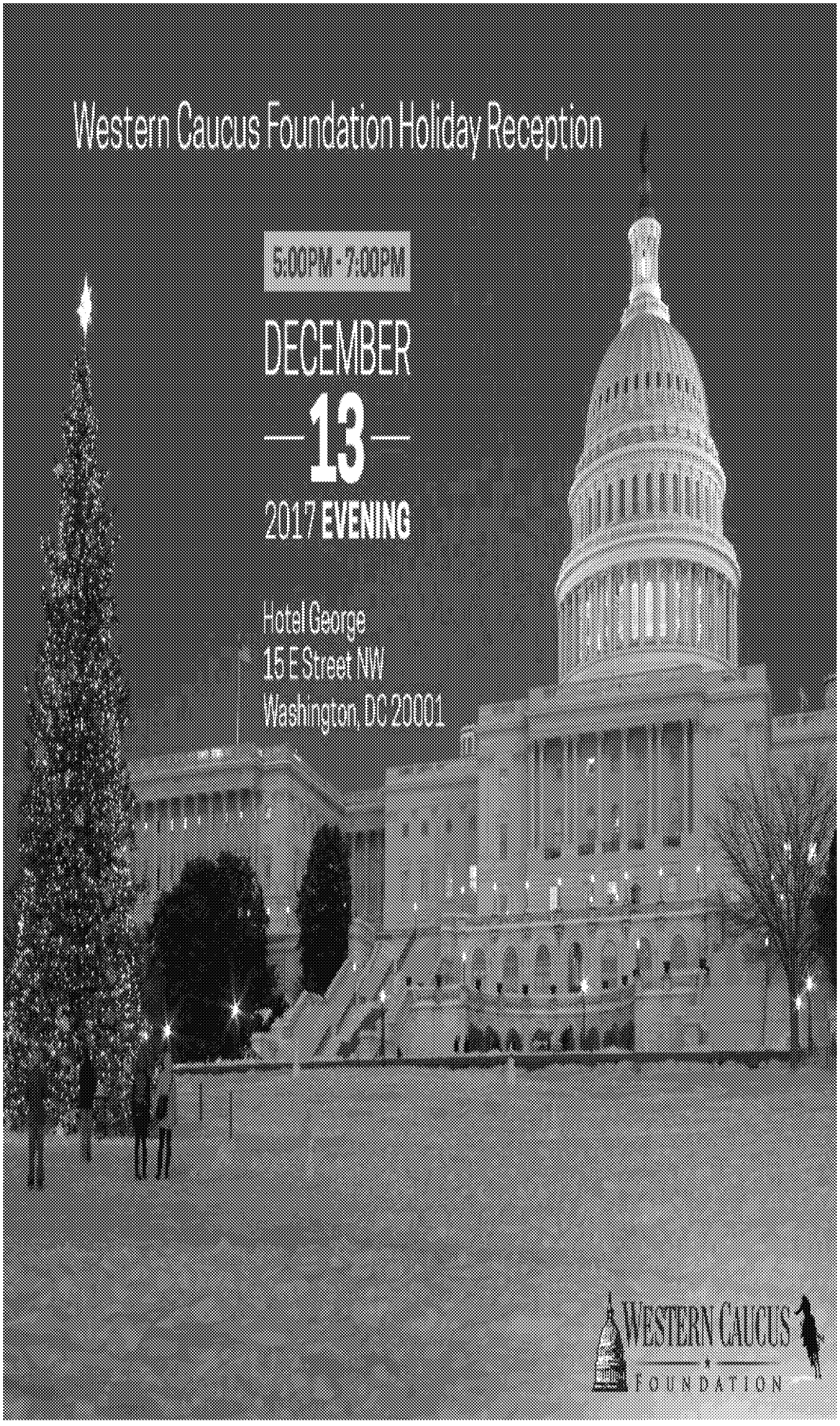
THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

Holiday Reception

With our invited guests: Members of the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses

Wednesday, December 13, 2017
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

At the Hotel George in Washington, D.C.


Western Caucus Foundation Holiday Reception
5:00PM - 7:00PM
DECEMBER
13
2017 EVENING
Hotel George
15 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
WESTERN CAUCUS
FOUNDATION

RSVP HERE!

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF), a 501 (c)(3), is a cultural exchange organization committed to educating public policy makers and communicating with the public in an effort to enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture. The Foundation provides support, education, and networking opportunities to advance the public policies important to the West, and offers members a non-partisan and non-political organization to facilitate discussion of critical Western issues through a robust agenda of meetings, conferences, and programs.

To learn more about the Western Caucus Foundation please visit: ***http://westerncaucusfoundation.org***

Like us on Facebook at **www.facebook.com/westerncaucusfoundation/**
and follow us on twitter **@WestCaucusFoundReception to Celebrate**

Western Caucus Foundation | 400 N. Capitol St., #382-B | Washington, DC | 20001

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Message

From: Bowman, Liz [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C3D4D94D3E4B4B1F80904056703EBC80-BOWMAN, ELI]
Sent: 12/5/2017 10:56:55 PM
To: Wagner, Kenneth [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=048236ab99bc4d5ea16c139b1b67719c-Wagner, Ken]
CC: Hewitt, James [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=41b19dd598d340bb8032923d902d4bd1-Hewitt, Jam]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Konkus, John [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=555471b2baa6419e8e141696f4577062-Konkus, Joh]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Lyons, Troy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=15e4881c95044ab49c6c35a0f5eef67e-Lyons, Troy]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Block, Molly [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=60d0c681a16441a0b4fa16aa2dd4b9c5-Block, Moll]; Daniell, Kelsi [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cd867173479344b3bda202b3004ff830-Daniell, Ke]; Cory, Preston [preston.cory@mail.house.gov]; Shimmin, Kaitlyn [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=becb3f33f9a14acd8112d898cc7853c6-Shimmin, Ka]
Subject: 2017-12-5 Draft EPA Restore Council Chair Announcement.docx
Attachments: 2017-12-5 Draft EPA Restore Council Chair Announcement.docx

Hi Ken – Attached, and below, please find an updated draft of this release – which we will send, following your approval and the president's announcement of this appointment. I also added a quote from you – so please be sure to review that. I am adding Tate/Troy for any other relevant stakeholder outreach that might need to occur tomorrow, either for quotes to add to this release - or for relevant stakeholder outreach. Thank you – Liz

PRESIDENT TRUMP APPOINTS EPA ADMINISTRATOR SCOTT PRUITT AS CHAIR OF THE GULF COAST ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION COUNCIL

WASHINGTON – (December 6, 2017) – Today, President Donald Trump appointed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt as the new chairperson of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council).

"I look forward to working with the governors of each of these states to continue the excellent work of this Council to further the critical mission of restoring the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem," **said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.**

Administrator Pruitt was appointed, following his unanimous selection by the five states on the council: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The Council is responsible for helping to restore the ecosystems and economies of the Gulf Coast region from the *Deepwater Horizon oil spill.*

EPA Administrator Pruitt succeeds the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, who began serving as the Council's Chair in March 2016. Administrator Pruitt has designated Kenneth Wagner, senior advisor to the administrator for regional and state affairs, to serve as his designee on the Council.

"I am excited to have a chairperson of the RESTORE Council that understands the importance of state-federal agencies working together toward a common goal of restoring the Gulf of Mexico," **said Toby Baker, commissioner of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.**

"I look forward to working with Mr. Pruitt and Mr. Wagner toward comprehensive restoration of the Gulf Coast, "said **Gary Rikard, executive director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.** "Their focus on cooperative federalism resonates strongly with the spirit under which the state members of the RESTORE Council seek to operate."

"We thank USDA for its leadership," said **Ben Scaggs, acting executive director of the Council**. "The Council is poised to build on our foundation of collaboration among Council members over the past five years and we are delighted to welcome Administrator Pruitt as our new Chair. Along with our restoration partners, the Council is ready to advance our efforts to restore the Gulf ecosystem and economy from the worst environmental disaster in the nation's history."

"Administrator Pruitt's commitment to cooperative federalism and streamlining processes to ensure positive environmental outcomes makes him a perfect choice for this important role," said **Kenneth Wagner, senior advisor to the administrator for regional and state affairs.** "I look forward to working with the states and Administrator Pruitt on continued restoration of the Gulf region."

Background

The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act) established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) and the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund), and dedicates 80 percent of Clean Water Act penalties resulting from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill to the Trust Fund, for restoration projects in the Gulf Coast region.

The Council is responsible for administering 60 percent of the total funding allocated from the Trust Fund: 30 percent (plus interest) under the Council-Selected Restoration Component and 30 percent under the Spill Impact Component. The Council is chaired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and members include the governors of: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, as well as the secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Homeland Security, the Army and the Interior.

The Council is responsible for helping to restore the ecosystems and economies of the Gulf Coast region by developing and overseeing implementation of a Comprehensive Plan and carrying out other responsibilities.

###

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/5/2017 12:05:54 AM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: EPA Determines No Additional CERCLA Action Needed

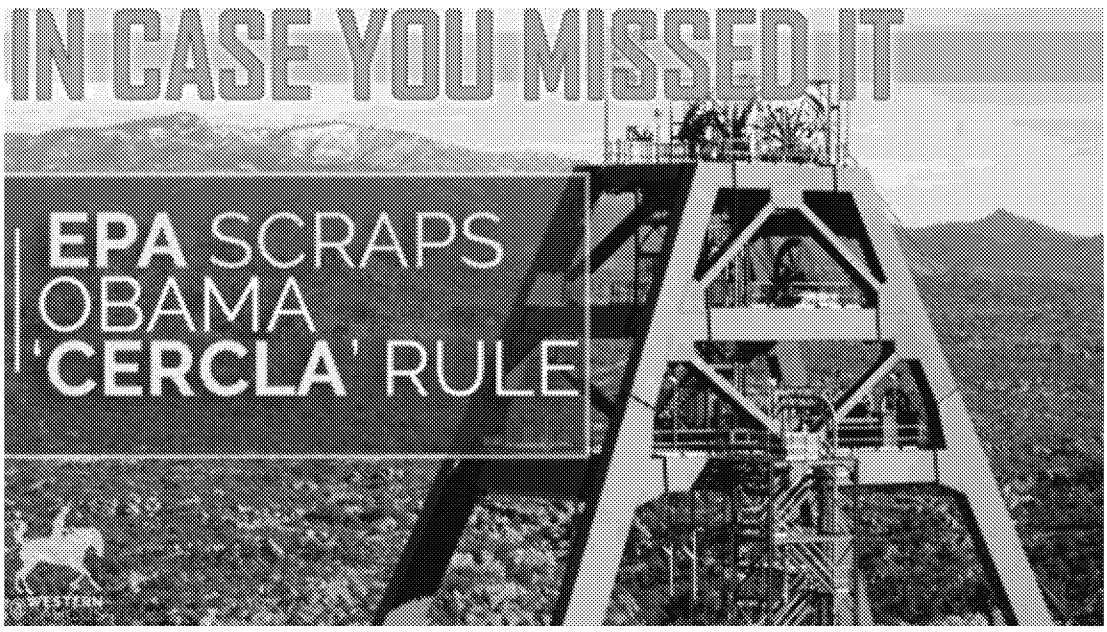
CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: December 4, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

EPA Determines No Additional CERCLA Action Needed

existing mining regs are sufficient and extra are onerous, says pruitt



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Executive Vice Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)** and Western Caucus Members **Raúl Labrador (ID-01)**, **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)** and **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** issued statements following EPA's announcement that it will not be issuing new final regulations for financial responsibility requirements for hardrock mining facilities:

"Imposing billions of dollars in new financial costs on job creators in rural communities in order to enact duplicative government mandates defies commonsense," **Congressman Gosar** stated. "The Obama CERCLA rule was a solution in search of a problem. I am grateful that

Administrator Pruitt and the Trump Administration have heeded our call to scrap this fundamentally flawed, duplicative and unnecessary rule that would have usurped states' rights."

"The decision to reject the CERCLA financial assurance rule is a victory for Colorado, and our nation," said **Congressman Tipton**. "The federal rule, issued in the waning months of the Obama Administration, was duplicative of existing state programs and would have done more harm than good, putting unnecessary burdens on Colorado's job creators. I am pleased to see action to withdraw this unnecessary federal rule."

"I'm grateful the EPA decided to return power from Washington bureaucrats back to Minnesota. The duplicative and unnecessary requirements under CERCLA would have harmed thousands of hardworking Minnesotans in the mining and mineral industry. Now, we can instead support these families and businesses, grow our local economy and work to ensure American mineral and energy independence," said **Congressman Emmer**.

"I appreciate EPA Administrator Pruitt's decision to scrap the Obama Administration's last-minute financial requirements for the hardrock mining industry. In July, I signed a letter to Director Pruitt calling on him to revoke the requirements because they would impose billions of dollars in new costs. Now, thanks to the Director's decision, Idaho's hardrock mining industry – and the rural areas that depend on it – are better positioned to thrive," said **Congressman Labrador**.

Today is an important day for freedom and deregulation. Throughout my first term in Congress, I have been pro-active in overturning the CERCLA 108(b) regulation by sending letters to Administrator Pruitt and the House Appropriations Committee. I also highlighted the regulation on my weekly Freedom Friday blog. Arizona's mining industry brings over 43,800 jobs and $4.3 billion to the economy. I applaud Administrator Pruitt for putting our economy, global competitiveness, and American energy independence ahead of bureaucracy," stated **Congressman Biggs**.

"The EPA is doing the right thing in scraping these unnecessary regulations. The consequences have been damaging and I'm pleased to see it will be reversed. This is a victory," concluded **Congressman Lamborn**.

Background:

On Friday, December 1, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced that the Agency had completed its review of the Obama Administration's proposed financial responsibility requirements for certain hardrock mining facilities under CERCLA were unnecessary given that existing regulations and laws already addressed risks sufficiently.

The EPA announcement comes on the heels of a Western Caucus-led letter, signed by 42 Members of Congress, calling for the Administration to scrap the misguided new regulation. Read the press release issued when that letter was sent this summer **HERE**.

"After careful analysis of public comments, the statutory authority, and the record for this rulemaking, EPA is confident that modern industry practices, along with existing state and federal requirements address risks from operating hardrock mining facilities," said **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**. "Additional financial assurance requirements are unnecessary and would impose an undue burden on this important sector of the American economy and rural America, where most of these mining jobs are based."

The full EPA press release can be found **HERE**.

The rule was originally published in the lame duck on January 11, 2017 and in the twilight of the Obama Administration's regulatory authority.

The regulation was duplicative of existing state programs and federal financial assurance obligations for the HRM industry. It therefore did not secure any additionally meritorious protections in the area of financial assurance, while imposing extensive compliance costs on state governments and mining companies.

The letter signers stated that EPA's assessment of the HRM industry failed to appropriately account for the comprehensive federal and state programs and associated financial assurance safeguards already in place. Such programs ensure that all phases of mining, reclamation, closure and post-closure are designed and operated to provide protection against the very same risks the past Administration sought to address in the rule. As a further consequence, a final rule would have usurped states' regulatory purview. The complexity of this industry and its variability across states makes it suited for even more state oversight—not less, as the rule as proposed would force.

The letter also made clear that the totality of available evidence and study shows that the Obama Administration's rule would have devastating economic consequences for companies, the families they support, and the states and localities to which they provide revenues. The industry in question provides more than 1.2 million jobs and generates approximately $3 trillion in added value to our nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

Agency *and* private analysis of the redundant rule both showed its requirements would result in significant economic damage to this important industry.

EPA's Regulatory Impact Analysis estimated that the rule will impose $7.1 billion in new financial responsibility obligations on the HRM industry. According to EPA's data, the rule would have required HRM facilities to incur $171 million per year in new financial responsibility costs, while only saving the government $15.5 million per year.

Analyses conducted by affected industries included more comprehensive considerations and detailed assumptions derived from knowledge of industry operations. Such analyses estimated the cost of the mandate to be significantly higher than EPA's already-substantial projections.

###

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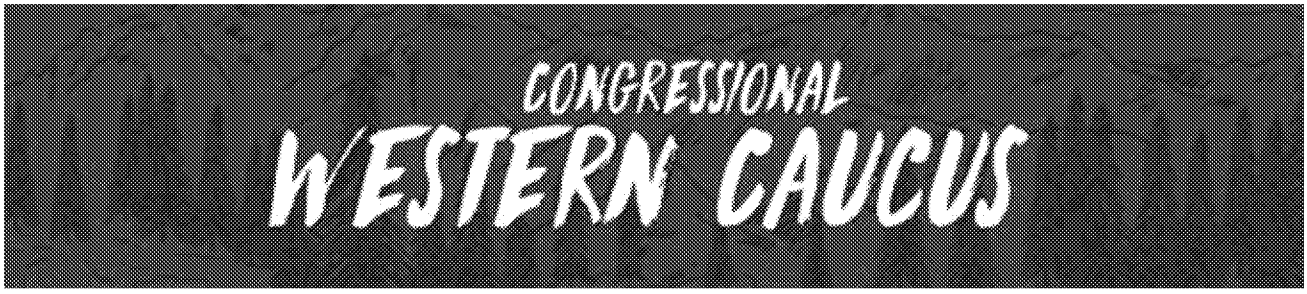
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/4/2017 9:23:31 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: TRUMP SENDS LAND SOVEREIGNTY BACK TO UTAH



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: December 4, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

TRUMP SENDS LAND SOVEREIGNTY BACK TO UTAH

Shrinks 2,000,000 acres of Bears Ears, Grand Staircase Monuments

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart (UT-02)**, Western Caucus Members **Raúl Labrador (ID-01)**, **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)** and **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, and Congressman **John Curtis (UT-03)** issued statements following President Trump's announcement of modifications to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments:

Congressman Gosar said, "Today's announcement by President Trump shows that he and Secretary Zinke are committed to smart, restrained and proper application of the Antiquities Act. His decision takes power from unaccountable Washington bureaucrats doing the dirty work of

special-interest groups and gives it *back to the people* where it belongs. By shrinking the national monument footprint in Utah by more than two million acres, President Trump is correcting past overreach by previous presidents, supporting the multiple-use doctrine for public lands required by federal law and giving local communities a voice by restoring traditional uses. And unlike past Presidents, President Trump heard the people, listened closely to their ideas, and *acted*. Thank you, President Trump, for keeping another promise and taking action to ensure past presidents abuse of a more than one hundred-year-old law doesn't lock-up the West."

Congressman Bishop said, "I applaud President Trump for recognizing the limitations of the law. Americans of all political stripes should commend him for reversing prior administrations' abuses of the Antiquities Act and instead exercising his powers within the scope of authority granted by Congress. These new proclamations are a first step towards protecting identified antiquities without disenfranchising the local people who work and manage these areas. The next steps will be to move beyond symbolic gestures of protection and create substantive protections and enforcement and codify in law a meaningful management role for local governments, tribes and other stakeholders."

"The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument resides in my district. I have seen firsthand the damage that the monument has caused to the local economy. My constituents have been in a desperate need of change, and today President Trump delivered. President Trump had the courage that no other president had. He listened to local voices that had been left out of the decision-making process for too long. On behalf of the county commissioners, the state legislators who represent the area, and the entire federal delegation, we say thank you, Mr. President," said **Congressman Stewart**.

President Trump's reductions of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments in Utah are a welcome relief to western landowners," said **Congressman Biggs**. "The west has been negatively affected for decades, and government has not constrained its unlawful acquisition of these lands. Earlier this year, I led a letter with Chairman Gosar to Secretary Zinke to recommend the total rescission of these two monuments. I am glad that the two monuments will be significantly reduced, and I trust that the Trump administration will continue to relinquish the federal government's grasp on these lands.

Congressman Labrador, "I support President Trump's decision to correct his predecessors' overreach and scale back the monument designations to reflect local concerns and respect the right of ordinary Americans to make a living. Radical environmentalists will howl, but the fact remains that the Antiquities Act has been abused by presidents of both parties. Now we need to move forward on a permanent legislative solution to restrain abuse of presidential power over our public lands."

"I support the President's decision. This rolls back harmful overreach by the previous administration. Instead of using the law to protect antiquities, it's been wrongfully used to restrict development. It's also made it more difficult to take care of our national lands," said **Congressman Lamborn**.

"The President's action today and the House's action to pass the MINER Act last week demonstrate a renewed commitment of returning power from Washington bureaucrats back to the states," said **Congressman Emmer**, whose MINER Act will protect Minnesota's right to explore and, if environmentally appropriate, mine valuable precious metals. "It's high time the federal government allow local economies to flourish and trust the land to the people who live there."

"I am grateful to the President for coming to Utah to help us resolve this important issue," **Congressman Curtis** said. "Now that the President has created two new monuments in my congressional district, the time has come for congress to ensure that these sites are managed the right way. In the coming days, I look forward to introducing legislation to ensure we are just doing that."

Background:

On November 9th, Western Caucus sent a letter signed by 24 Members of Congress encouraging President Trump "to think big and act big league" in his monuments review (Executive Order 13792, April 26, 2017). To read the full letter and recommendations click HERE.

This letter emphasized the signers' consensus that monuments must be statutorily compliant – i.e. in keeping with the "smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects" clause of the Antiquities Act, and that they must be of demonstrated scientific or historic interest. As such, the parameters forming this consensus necessarily demand the shrinking or rescission of a majority of the monuments under review.

President Obama designated or expanded 34 national monuments, more than any other president in history. These unilateral declarations locked-up more than 553 million acres of land and water.

Today's actions by President Trump shrink the national monument footprint in Utah by more than two million acres.

Courtesy of the White House:

RESPONSIBLE LAND MANAGEMENT: President Donald J. Trump is modifying two national monuments to continue to protect objects of significance while prioritizing public use and access.

-Today, President Trump is signing two proclamations modifying the boundaries of the Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument in Utah.

-Bears Ears National Monument will be modified to two units named Shash Jáa, Navajo for Bears Ears, and Indian Creek, encompassing a total of 228,784 acres of land.

- Bears Ears was originally designated in 2016 to encompass nearly 1.5 million acres, including a patchwork of Federal, State, and private land.
- This modification will restore the majority of the National Forest and Bureau of Land Management land to the management status existing prior to the 2016 designation.

-Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument will be modified to three units encompassing a combined 1,006,341 acres, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island.

- Grand Staircase was originally designated in 1996 by President Clinton largely for political purposes.

-Presidents have modified the boundaries to remove lands from monuments 18 times in the past. The most significant reduction occurred in 1915 when President Woodrow Wilson halved Mount Olympus National Monument, which is now a National Park.

ENDING OVERREACH ON PUBLIC LAND: President Trump is ending past overreach and abuse of the monument review process under the Antiquities Act that has closed off land to the public, while continuing to protect objects of significance.

-The Antiquities Act requires that objects be of historic or scientific interest, that the area reserved to protect the objects be the smallest area compatible, and that monuments be designated on Federal land only.

-Since 1996, several national monuments designations have gone beyond the intent of the Antiquities Act—to limit protected areas to the smallest area compatible—and now encompass millions of acres.

- In 1906, President Teddy Roosevelt designated the first national monument at Devils Tower, which was less than 1,200 acres.

-"Objects of historic or scientific interest" is a term that has been stretched to include landscape areas, biodiversity, "viewsheds," World War II desert bombing craters, and "remoteness."

- Past administrations have abused the designation of objects as national monuments to fill in pre-identified boundaries that mirror failed Congressional attempts to make protective land designations.

-Monument external boundaries often encompass private land, and in the case of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, the expansion contained 38 percent private land within the external boundary.

-Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument is the poster child for Antiquities Act overreach and abuse, having been designated to assist President Bill Clinton's reelection campaign and end the development of a coal project.

A NEW POLICY FOR LAND MANAGEMENT: President Trump and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke will work to put in place new land management policies to protect objects while prioritizing public access, facilitating infrastructure development, and allowing traditional uses of the land.

-The Trump Administration is continuing to protect public land, and is keeping parts of monuments to protect objects of interest within the smallest areas compatible.

- The Trump Administration is not going to sell public lands wholesale.

- The Trump Administration will protect objects in the "smallest area compatible" with the proper care of the objects to be protected.

-The Trump Administration is making sure local communities have a voice by restoring traditional "multiple use" activities on Federal lands and waters.

- This will increase economic growth and prosperity, especially in rural communities, by allowing grazing, commercial fishing, logging, and in some cases, mineral development.

- Monument designations should be used to protect objects and not to unnecessarily restrain public access.

-Improving and developing infrastructure will help the American people experience our public lands that have been made inaccessible due to past overreach.

- Some monument designations prevent construction of future roads and other facilities, making the land inaccessible for use.

- Restrictions on vegetative management and maintenance activities have led to poorly maintained roads and even closures.

-Monument designations have greatly restricted multiple-uses like grazing, timber harvest, fishing, resource development, infrastructure upgrades, and motorized recreation.

- Designating too much land for a national monument is harmful to the local tax base via the elimination or unnecessary restriction of grazing, timber and mineral activity and leases, as well as the restricting of access to hunting and fishing opportunities.

A TRANSPARENT REVIEW PROCESS: President Trump and his Administration are being open and transparent in the review of monuments.

-The President's proclamation follows an open and transparent review process originally initiated by President Trump's Executive Order 13792, "Review of Designations under the Antiquities Act."

- President Trump's Executive Order limited the review to monuments designated after January 1, 1996, and over 100,000 acres in size, or monuments that Secretary Zinke deemed to have been created without adequate public input.

- The review only covers only 27 of the more than 150 monuments that the Act has been used to designate or expand.

-Secretary Zinke visited eight monuments in six States and personally held more than 60 meetings with hundreds of local stakeholders.

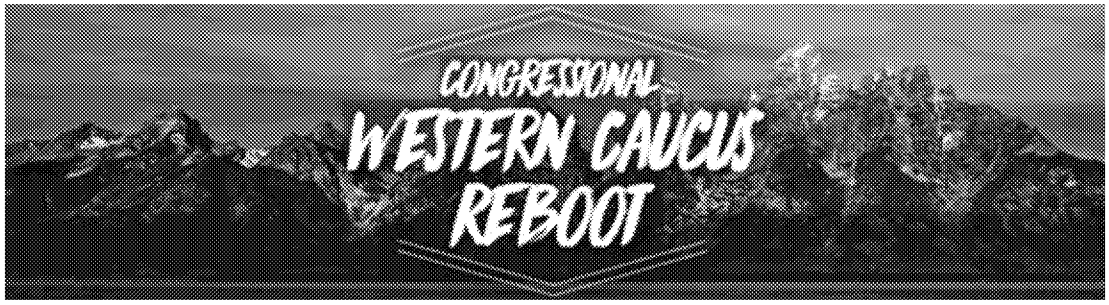
- Individuals and organizations representing all sides of the debate were involved, ranging from environmental organizations to county commissioners and local residents.
- Secretary Zinke met with Tribal representatives, including from the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition in Salt Lake City.

-Secretary of the Interior Zinke opened a formal comment period on regulations.gov, for the first time ever, of the review of monuments designated under the Antiquities Act.

###

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 12/2/2017 7:50:36 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 12.02.17



Week of 12.02.2017

House RESTORES Minnesota Mining

western caucus leads charge on bill's passage

On Thursday, November 30, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3905, the "Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act," on a close vote 216-204. The bill represents a simple fix to the past Administration's overreach, in which the government abruptly elected not to renew longstanding mining leases in Minnesota's Superior Forest. The vote was a reassertion of Congress' Article IV Constitutional powers entailing discretion over

federal land, and was in keeping with two prior Congressional authorizations for mining in the same area as well as the repeated recommendation of the U.S. Forest Service that mining take place there.

Western Caucus members were instrumental in the victory. The bill's sponsor, Congressman Tom Emmer, is a valued member of the Caucus; further, Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar was chosen to testify in favor of the bill before the Rules Committee on Tuesday, November 28. There, he was successful in advocating that the bill receive a structured rule and be put before the House.

Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chief Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, House Republican Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, Western Caucus Members **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, and Congressman **Jason Lewis (MN-02)** issued statements following passage of H.R. 3905, some of which are below:

"Mining has been a way of life for Minnesota since the 1800s and is a crucial part of our state's economy. Unfortunately, this was not a shared interest with the Obama Administration," said **Congressman Emmer**. "In their waning days, the previous administration took unnecessary, politically motivated actions by refusing to renew mineral leases and starting the process to withdraw nearly a quarter million acres of federal land from development. By passing the MINER Act today, we are protecting more than 10,000 jobs, and billions of dollars in revenue and education funding while leaving an extensive process intact to protect and preserve the environment and our beloved Boundary Waters."

"I thank Rep. Emmer for his leadership on this issue and commitment to protecting the economic livelihoods of his constituents. This bill protects jobs for Minnesotans while facilitating future economic opportunities across the state through responsible, environmentally sound mineral development," **Congressman Bishop** said.

"17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore – this is what is at risk if H.R. 3905 is not signed into law. Left unchallenged, the Obama Administration's arbitrary termination of two hardrock mineral leases and politicized mining withdrawal – coming only the day before President Obama left office – sets precedent for a sweeping executive power grab that threatens communities throughout the country," **Congressman Gosar** said. "Congress has already passed two separate laws authorizing mining in the Superior National Forest, and the 1986 Forest Service and 2004 Forest Plans both concluded that mining is 'a desired condition.' No one is proposing to mine in the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, an area that already has significant buffers, and mining in the forest will occur only after job creators have gone through the full NEPA environmental process. All this bill does is secure the opportunity to present mining plans for an area *already authorized for mining* by Congress. The people of Minnesota should know they have a Representative who will fight for their livelihoods in Congressman Emmer."

"This is a win for Minnesota and for our country," said **Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers**. "Mining and developing our minerals here in the U.S. creates jobs and grows our economy. This legislation will continue to uphold our environmental laws, including complying with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), while ensuring that we are responsibly unleashing our natural resources. This legislation also lessens our reliance on foreign countries for natural resources, which in turn strengthens our national security by making the U.S. more self-sufficient. Thank you to Rep. Emmer for your dedication to serving the people of Minnesota and for putting for a bill that helps our economy and our national defense."

Background

On January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register, to restrict for a 20-year moratorium, lands within the Superior National Forest in Northeast Minnesota.

This action immediately placed this vast area off limits to future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development for two years while the 20-year withdrawal is being considered. The total withdrawal application boundary spans approximately 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands.

In conjunction with this massive mineral withdrawal, the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management inappropriately rejected Twin Metals Minnesota's application to renew two hardrock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest – leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

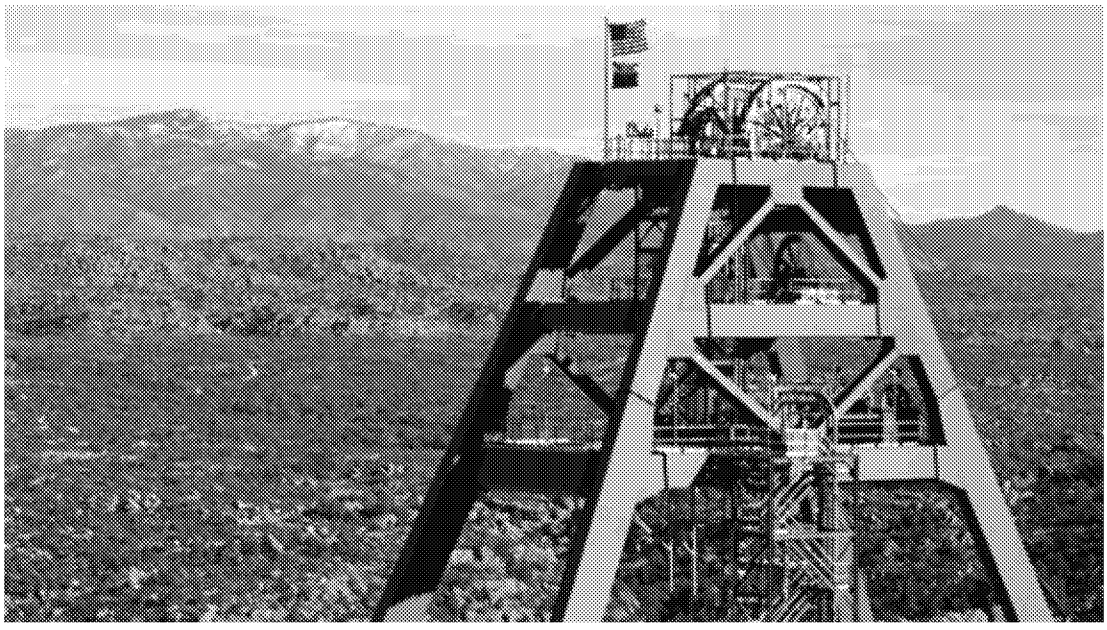
The MINER Act halts last-minute political mineral withdrawals by requiring Congressional approval for any future withdrawal actions in Minnesota, renews two mineral leases that were

denied for political reasons under the same terms they were renewed twice previously and ensures any future mining projects in Minnesota National Forests will have to satisfy all existing environmental permitting requirements including NEPA.

To see all of the statements by Members, full legislative background and the list of third-party endorsements, see the Caucus press release **HERE**.

EPA Slashes Hardrock Mining Regulation

existing regs are sufficient and extra are onerous, says pruitt



On Friday, December 1, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced that the Agency had completed its review of the Obama Administration's proposed financial responsibility requirements for certain hardrock mining facilities under CERCLA were unnecessary given that existing regulations and laws already addressed risks sufficiently.

"After careful analysis of public comments, the statutory authority, and the record for this rulemaking, EPA is confident that modern industry practices, along with existing state and federal requirements address risks from operating hardrock mining facilities," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "Additional financial assurance requirements are unnecessary and would impose an undue burden on this important sector of the American economy and rural America, where most of these mining jobs are based."

The full EPA press release can be found **HERE**.

Congressional leadership welcomed Pruitt's announcement:

"This is just good policy. States already have innovative, robust regulations to ensure the highest level of environmental protection and reclamation. I commend the EPA for recognizing that mining is vital to rural economies and altering course on this devastating policy. We are already too reliant on foreign nations for minerals that are buried in our backyard. It's about time we incentivize self-sufficiency and acknowledge existing rigorous federal and state environmental laws," said House Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop** in a statement released today.

"Imposing billions of dollars in new financial costs on job creators in rural communities in order to enact duplicative government mandates defies commonsense," Western Caucus Chairman **Paul Gosar** stated. "The Obama CERCLA rule was a solution in search of a problem. I am grateful that Administrator Pruitt and the Trump Administration have heeded our call to scrap this fundamentally flawed, duplicative and unnecessary rule that usurps states' rights."

The EPA announcement comes on the heels of a Western Caucus-led letter, signed by 42 Members of Congress, calling for the Administration to scrap the misguided new regulation. Read the press release issued when that letter was sent this summer **HERE**.

Growing Calls for Reform at Interior

natural resources chairman bishop pens op-ed in support of department 'transformation'

On Wednesday, November 29, House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop penned an op-ed in the Washington Times calling for a transformation of the U.S. Department of the Interior - from the bloated, bureacratic sludge-machine at present to a Department positioned to nimbly and effectively execute its many missions, including managing nearly one-fifth the land in the United States as well as the development of our nation's bounty of natural resources.

Chairman Bishop's calls echo those of other federal land and natural resource officials, including Interior's own Secretary Ryan Zinke. While some of what Bishop has called for in a full-scale 'transformation' can be achieved internal to the Department at the discretion of the President and Secretary, more sweeping change to procedures are likely to come via Congressional authorization and subsequent new authorities.

Selections of that op-ed can be found below. Click **HERE** to read its entirety.

"*The Interior Department is one of the most vital federal agencies, overseeing more than 400 million acres of federally owned land, 26 percent of which is in 11 western states. In case you're wondering, 400 million acres is about one-fifth of all the land in the United States or approximately four times the size of California. The department and its agencies have diverse missions and responsibilities that include everything from running our nation's cherished national parks to managing offshore energy resources on 1.7 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf.*

Despite the importance of the department's work, its ever-expanding missions have fueled a decline in its ability to provide efficient, effective and transparent service to the American public. In fact, the Government Accountability Office identified several "mission critical" functions within the department — the management of oil and gas resources and Interior programs that serve tribes — to be high-risk areas for "fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or the need [of] transformation."

I agree with the Government Accountability Office. The department has fallen behind in carrying out some of its basic statutory responsibilities, including responsible management and development of our nation's natural resources."

"A shift away from the current Washington-centric management system toward a contemporary decentralized model that prioritizes accountability, transparency and service to the American people must occur. A primary responsibility of Congress is to conduct oversight of the executive branch. The Natural Resources Committee has a critical role overseeing the Interior Department's reorganization efforts, and I look forward to reviewing the specifics of Mr. Zinke's plans. Together, we have an opportunity to not just move organizational boxes, but to transform the way the department responds to the American people it serves."

President Rumored to Announce Plans for Utah Monuments

trump slated to arrive in salt lake city on monday, december 4

The media is abuzz with the news that President Trump will be paying a visit to Utah on Monday, December 4th at the invitation of Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and other officials.

The Presidential trip is being described by news sources as a means for Trump to announce his

decision on the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments currently under his review. Some speculate - based on anonymous sources - that the President will also issue his decision for the remainder of the 27 total monuments under his review.

POST OF THE WEEK...

Natural Resources @NatResources · 3h

FACT: Shrinking #monuments is nothing new, in fact six former presidents (of both parties) have reshaped the size & scale of several national monuments #BearsEars #utpol

Senator Hatch Office, Sutherland Institute, Strata Policy and 6 others

6 10 11

WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Congressman Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large) talks about his work with the Western Caucus and the House Natural Resources Committee to advance natural resource objectives for the country and the people of Montana. He also discusses the pressing need for the Senate to pass Congressman Bruce Westerman's H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, so that it can be signed into law. Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the address.

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/30/2017 8:04:22 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: House RESTORES Minnesota Mining

Big win today! See below.

Chairman Gosar is thankful for everyone that had a hand in this victory.

Please share this email and spread the word from our social media pages.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
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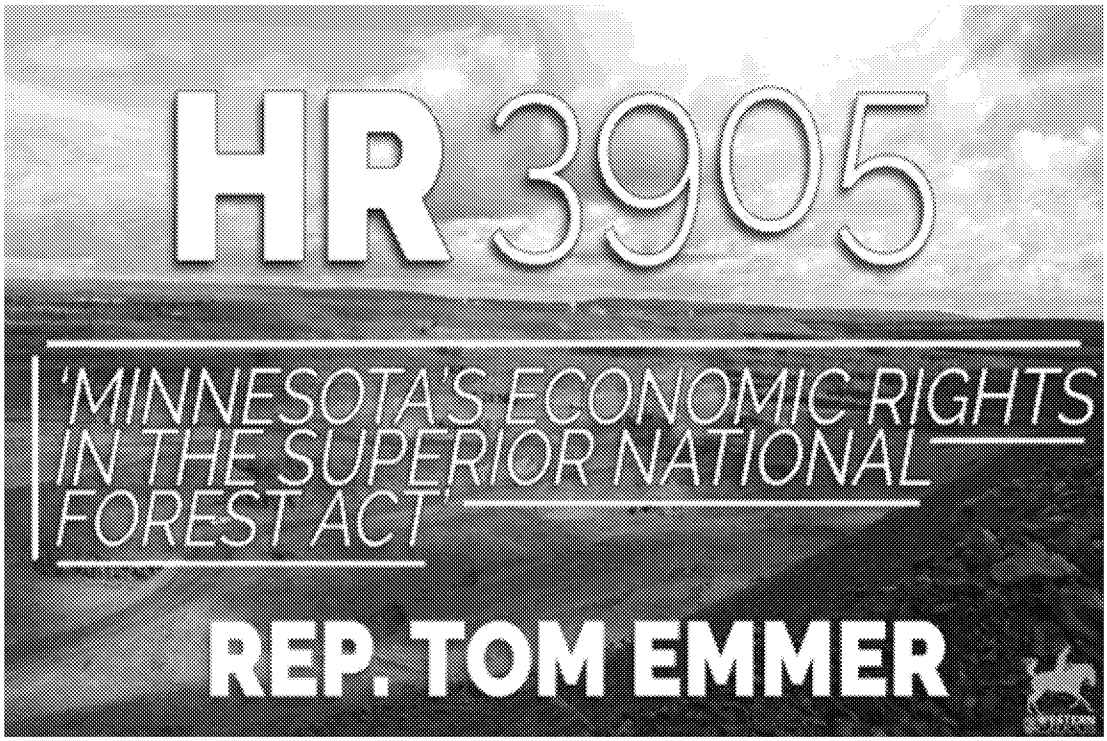
CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 30, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

House RESTORES Minnesota Mining



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"Mining has been a way of life for Minnesota since the 1800s and is a crucial part of our state's economy. Unfortunately, this was not a shared interest with the Obama Administration," said **Congressman Emmer**. "In their waning days, the previous administration took unnecessary, politically motivated actions by refusing to renew mineral leases and starting the process to withdraw nearly a quarter million acres of federal land from development. By passing the MINER Act today, we are protecting more than 10,000 jobs, and billions of dollars in revenue and education funding while leaving an extensive process intact to protect and preserve the environment and our beloved Boundary Waters."

"I thank Rep. Emmer for his leadership on this issue and commitment to protecting the economic livelihoods of his constituents. This bill protects jobs for Minnesotans while facilitating future economic opportunities across the state through responsible, environmentally sound mineral development," **Congressman Bishop** said.

"17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore – this is what is at risk if H.R. 3905 is not signed into law. Left unchallenged, the Obama Administration's arbitrary termination of two hardrock mineral leases and politicized mining withdrawal – coming only the day before President Obama left office – sets precedent for a sweeping executive power grab that threatens communities throughout the country," **Congressman Gosar** said. "Congress has already passed two separate laws authorizing mining in the Superior National Forest, and the 1986 Forest Service and 2004 Forest Plans both concluded that mining is 'a desired condition.'

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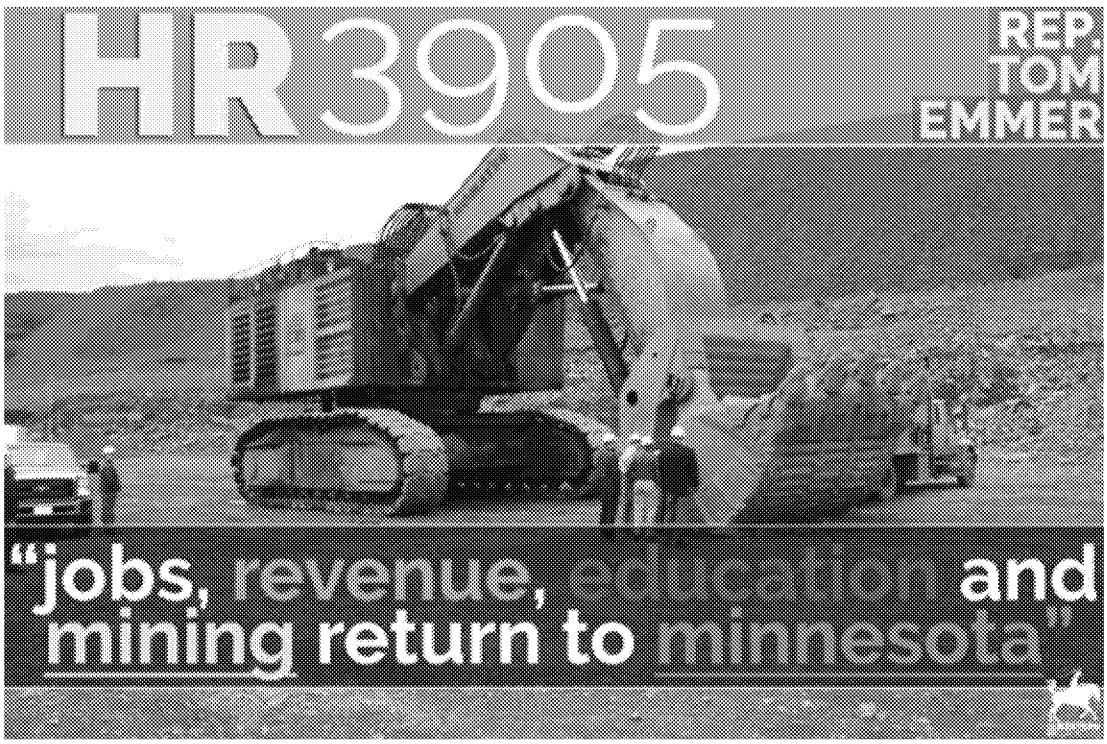
Congressman LaMalfa said, "While this bill addresses a 230,000 acre mineral withdrawal from Superior National Forest in Minnesota, it's really about jobs, economic growth, and maintaining clear standards for all projects across the nation. The arbitrary decision - the day before Obama left office - halted a $400 million dollar project, jeopardized 17,000 American jobs, cuts $3 billion from k through 12 schools, and slashes $2.5 billion annually from local governments and the state. Mining operations across the country already commit to a strict environmental review process to ensure the safety of the public and the protection of natural resources. This bill ensures that all projects are held to clear, consistent requirements, not arbitrary political decisions."

"This is a straightforward issue and the answer is clear. The bill rolls back harmful Obama-era mineral withdrawals. Congress has consistently authorized the appropriate legislation to protect our environment and this bill only clears the air when it comes to misconceptions about mining." said **Congressman Lamborn**.

Congressman Westerman stated, "Earlier this year I had the opportunity to travel to Minnesota with Congressman Emmer and Nolan and others to visit the Superior National Forest in Northeast Minnesota. While Northeast Minnesota is a long way from the Fourth District of Arkansas, the people, areas and economics are somewhat similar. This is a rural area where local economies and constituencies depend on the ability to sustainably and responsibly harvest and mine the natural resources found there. Unfortunately, the extreme partisan politics of the previous administration placed the wants of special interest environmental groups before the needs of Minnesotans and others that depend on natural resources management. This politically motivated decision has the ability to destroy the local economy, kill job creation, and significantly harm education in Minnesota. As someone who represents schools, communities, and counties that depend on programs like SRS and PILT, I know the harm that will be wrought on school districts, specifically rural school districts, should the withdrawal and application rejection go forward. I believe that H.R. 3905 is a vital piece of legislation to not only Minnesota but for other states and communities that depend on natural resource utilization."

Congressman Lewis said, "The MINER Act gives us the chance to provide good jobs for families in our communities while ensuring we protect the natural beauty that makes Minnesota such a picturesque state. In too many instances we have seen the federal government put roadblock after roadblock in the way of important infrastructure projects nationwide. For years mining and energy sector projects have been stopped before they can even draft a proposal for consideration. The MINER Act addresses this overreach by federal bureaucrats and brings power back to Minnesota. Ultimately, people who live here know best how to protect our land while

providing vital opportunities to use the natural resources we have been blessed with to benefit our citizens and their families."



Background:

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This action immediately placed this vast area off limits to future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development for two years while the 20-year withdrawal is being considered. The total withdrawal application boundary spans approximately 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands.

In conjunction with this massive mineral withdrawal, the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management inappropriately rejected Twin Metals Minnesota's application to renew two hardrock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest – leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

These bureaucratic decisions could decimate local economies, stifle job creation as well as cause significant harm to K-12 education and mining in Minnesota. These were political, anti-mining and anti-education actions taken by the Obama Administration.

The University of Minnesota-Duluth estimates the creation of 12,000 construction jobs and 5,000 long-term mining jobs if mining projects already being pursued in Duluth Complex are allowed to move forward. These are good-paying jobs, as the average annual mining wage in Minnesota was $78,635 in 2015.

Education will be significantly harmed as Minnesota is projected to lose up to $3 billion in royalty revenues for the State's Permanent School Trust Fund that would support nearly 900,000 K-12 students statewide if the withdrawal application and cancelled leases are not rejected.

To date, Twin Metals has invested upward of $400 million – a significant investment – in reliance on the two federal mineral leases that the BLM executed with the company's predecessors and renewed each time they expired.

In 1950, Congress took action to make land available for mineral exploration and development within the Superior National Forest. Then, in 1978, Congress passed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act, a compromise that prohibited mining within the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters Wilderness Area but again specifically authorized mining in the Superior National Forest. The 1986 Forest Service and 2004 Forest Plans both concluded mining in this area is "a desired condition."

The MINER Act halts last-minute political mineral withdrawals by requiring Congressional approval for any future withdrawal actions in Minnesota, renews two mineral leases that were denied for political reasons under the same terms they were renewed twice previously and ensures any future mining projects in Minnesota National Forests will have to satisfy all existing environmental permitting requirements including NEPA.

Article IV of the Constitution vests Congress with authority over public lands. This legislation secures the opportunity for job creators to present mining plans in an area *already authorized for mining* twice by Congress and rejects political and unwarranted actions taken by the previous administration that will harm responsible mineral production, kill jobs and decimate education revenues. No one is proposing to mine in the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, an area that already has significant buffers, and the bill actually protects this area. 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages and $2.5 billion annually for our economy are at risk if we don't pass H.R. 3905. Further, there are more than four billion tons of ore containing copper, nickel and other metal resources within the area the previous Administration tried to shut down, which represents the largest known undeveloped deposit of strategic and critical metals in the world.

An awesome video produced by the people of Minnesota on the issues addressed by the bill can be viewed **HERE**.

Bill text can be found **HERE.** The Committee Report can be found **HERE**. The Committee one pager can be found **HERE**. A printable list of endorsements and supporters can be found **HERE**.

- A release and letter signed by 26 Members calling for rescission of the 234,328-acre mineral withdrawal application and renewal of two improperly terminated leases can be found HERE.
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- Apache County (Arizona)
- Apache Sun Golf Club
- APEX
- Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
- Arizona Cattle Feeders Association
- Arizona Golf Association
- Arizona Pork Council
- Arizona Liberty
- Arizona State Rep. Bob Thorpe
- Associated General Contractors of Minnesota
- AZ BASS Nation
- AZ Deer Association
- The Bass Federation
- Better in our Back Yard
- Cactus and Pine Golf Superintendents Association supports H.R. 3905
- City of Ely
- Colorado Mining Association

- Competitive Enterprise Institute
- Concerned Citizens for America (Arizona)
- Conservatives for Property Rights
- Dena Cordova Jack, Executive Vice President, Mountain States Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
- Global Minerals Engineering LLC
- Golden Vertex Corporation
- Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
- Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 31
- International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 49
- The Jamar Company
- Jefferson County Commissioner Donald Rosier, P.E.
- Jobs for Minnesotans
- Laborers District Council of MN & ND
- Laborers International Union of North America
- Laurentian Chamber of Commerce
- Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council
- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
- MiningMinnesota
- Minnesota Pipe Trades Association
- Minnesota Power
- Minnesota State Rep. Josh Heintzeman
- Montana Mining Association
- National Mining Association
- National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

- New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
- New Mexico Federal Lands Council
- New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.
- North America's Building Trade Unions
- Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 589
- Range Association of Municipalities and Schools
- Scott W. Yates, President, Denver Lumber Co.
- Shake Rattle & Troll Outdoors
- Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative
- Twin Metals Minnesota
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- Water Resource Institute
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- Yavapai County Cattle Growers
- Yavapai County Supervisor Board Chairman Thomas Thurman
- Yuma County (AZ) Chamber of Commerce

###

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/28/2017 11:39:42 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Legislative Analysis H.R. 3905
Attachments: H.R. 3905 Legislative Analysis.pdf

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

Legislative Analysis

H.R. 3905, the Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act (MINER Act)

Rep. Tom Emmer (MN-06)

On the House Floor:

On Wednesday, November 29, 2017, the House will consider H.R. 3905, the Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act (MINER Act), a bipartisan bill introduced by Reps. Tom Emmer (MN-06), Colin Peterson (MN-07), Jason Lewis (MN-02) and Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04).

Short Summary:

The MINER Act halts last-minute political mineral withdrawals by requiring Congressional approval for any future withdrawal actions in Minnesota, renews two mineral leases that were denied for political reasons under the same terms they were renewed twice previously and ensures any future mining projects in Minnesota National Forests will have to satisfy all existing environmental permitting requirements including NEPA.

Article IV of the Constitution vests Congress with authority over public lands. This legislation secures the opportunity for job creators to present mining plans in an area *already authorized for mining* twice by Congress and rejects political and unwarranted actions taken by the previous administration that will harm responsible mineral production, kill jobs and decimate education revenues. No one is proposing to mine in the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, an area that already has significant buffers, and the bill actually protects this area. 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages and $2.5 billion annually for our economy are at risk if we don't pass H.R. 3905. Further, there are more than four billion tons of ore containing copper, nickel and other metal resources within the area the previous Administration tried to shut down, which represents the largest known undeveloped deposit of strategic and critical metals in the world.

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These bureaucratic decisions could decimate local economies, stifle job creation as well as cause significant harm to K-12 education and mining in Minnesota. These were political, anti-mining and anti-education actions taken by the Obama Administration.

The University of Minnesota-Duluth estimates the creation of 12,000 construction jobs and 5,000 long-term mining jobs if mining projects already being pursued in Duluth Complex are allowed to move forward. These are good-paying jobs, as the average annual mining wage in Minnesota was $78,635 in 2015.

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The MINER Act halts last-minute political mineral withdrawals by requiring Congressional approval for any future withdrawal actions in Minnesota, renews two mineral leases that were denied for political reasons under the same terms they were renewed twice previously and ensures any future mining projects will have to satisfy all existing environmental permitting requirements including NEPA.

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Other Congressional Actions on these issues:

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What H.R. 3905 doesn't do:

- Supersede current federal, state, or local environmental review. Any project proposed in areas that allow mining (all outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area) must still undergo the normal NEPA environmental analysis, which we also require for any lease issuances under the bill.
- Mine in the boundary waters. In fact, the legislation clarifies that "*nothing should be construed to permit prospecting for development and utilization of mineral resources within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or Mine Protection Area.*" (Section 4(f))

What They Are Saying:

- **53 bipartisan state legislators** (including leadership of both parties) – "*As elected leaders of the Minnesota Legislature, we are writing in strong support of H.R. 3905. This legislation supports jobs, economic development and industry in Northeast Minnesota, and will reverse an onerous, overreaching and politically-motivated decision by the Obama Administration. H.R. 3905 has our bipartisan support, and it is our sincere hope that it will become law for the well-being of our state and its citizens.*"

- **Competitive Enterprise Institute** – "*The bipartisan H.R. 3905 is a welcome reassertion of congressional authority over public lands. Article IV of the Constitution vests Congress—not the President—with plenary power over public lands. Members on both sides of the aisle should take umbrage at President Obama's lame duck machinations to withdraw from the multiple use framework more than 230,000 acres of public lands in Minnesota—with the mere stroke of a pen. By treating public lands regulation as a means to build a presidential legacy through midnight regulation, the previous administration flouted the spirit of participatory and inclusive lands-use statutes as designed by Congress. Lawmakers should correct the course by passing the excellent H.R. 3905.*"

- **International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 49** – "*Unfortunately, the economic future of the region is now threatened by federal agency actions initiated in December 2016 that would cancel valid, long-standing federal mineral leases and withdraw 235,000 acres of federal land in the region from future mining development, contrary to previous directives by Congress. If allowed to stand, these agency actions will eliminate the possible creation of thousands of good-paying construction jobs, billions of dollars in economic growth, and billions more in revenues for Minnesota's public schools through mineral development on state school trust lands.*"

- **Range Association of Municipalities and Schools** – "*The results of the withdrawal and a potential 20 year moratorium would have a devastating impact on the financial support for our state wide public school system and future generations of Iron Rangers who would be employed in any future mining developments. It has been estimated that within 20 years of mining for precious metals, our Permanent School Trust Fund would reap nearly $3 billion dollars in royalties. The Miner Act does not infringe or restrict the very strenuous and stringent environmental review and enforcement process and specifically re-emphasizes that there will be no mining in the Boundary Waters (BWCAW) or the buffer zone surrounding the BWCAW.*"

- **American Exploration & Mining Association** – "*H.R. 3905 will eliminate delays, return to good stewardship of fair process and restore the opportunity to explore strategic metals critical to our economy and national security in one of the richest mineral deposits in the nation…The emerging mining industry is an investment in the future well-being of our state and nation; without this legislation, that future is at risk.*"

- **Associated General Contractors of Minnesota** – *"H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes, relaxes no environmental standards, and specifically restates Congress' prohibition on any mining activity in the BWCAW and surrounding protective buffer. H.R. 3905 would reaffirm long-standing Congressional intent in the management and development of critical minerals in Minnesota, eliminate bureaucratic delays in developing environmentally-responsible mine projects proposals, and restore the promise of future job growth and economic opportunity to an economically distressed region of the state."*

- **National Mining Association** – *Northern Minnesota is blessed with a world class, economically significant, mineral deposit containing copper, nickel and precious metals. In an unprecedented move — one clearly motivated by politics rather than science — the previous administration denied two mineral lease renewal applications that had been renewed several times without issue dating back to 1966. Furthermore, the previous administration initiated a full-scale mineral withdrawal of nearly 240,000 acres just days before leaving office...Importantly, the mineral deposits under these leases are critical to our domestic manufacturing, infrastructure and defense needs. The U.S. has become increasingly reliant on foreign imports with only 50 percent of the needs of our manufacturing industry being sourced from domestic mineral supplies.*

- **House Committee on Natural Resources Energy and Minerals Chairman and Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04)** – *"17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages and $2.5 billion annually for our economy are at risk if we don't pass H.R. 3905. Further, there are four billion tons of ore containing strategic and critical minerals in the area the Obama Administration tried to shut down. If left unchallenged, these political anti-mining actions will set a terrible precedent that could negatively impact communities throughout the country."*

- **Conservatives for Property Rights** – *"This legislation would remedy the broad bureaucratic discretion that led to unilateral government action limiting private mineral rights on several hundred-thousand acres of land in the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. The government's limitation on reasonable public lands use deprives the nation, the state of Minnesota, and surrounding localities of important benefits from valuable deposits of copper, nickel, and other minerals. Royalty revenues upward of $3 billion for the state's school fund alone will be lost should the government's land grab not be reversed."*

- **Congressman Tom Emmer MN-06** – *"Passage of the MINER Act ensures Minnesotans have a say in sweeping bureaucratic decisions made by Washington bureaucrats. Environmentally responsible mining and exploration in Northern Minnesota will unleash our ability to tap into our abundance of natural resources, and provide for a better way of life for our children, just as those in Northern Minnesota have done for decades. We can preserve our state's natural beauty without permanently destroying any future job creation or economic development. We can utilize the largest untapped copper-nickel deposit in the world, and do so in an environmentally sound way. Nothing in this legislation will circumvent any of the numerous strict local, state and federal environmental regulations and permitting requirements currently in place, including those that prohibit mining in the Boundary Waters. Instead, passage of this legislation simply rolls back unnecessary, politically motivated actions by the previous administration and returns power to Minnesota while bringing jobs to communities in Northern Minnesota who desperately need them, and boosting our local, state and federal economies."*

The bill is endorsed by:

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- Women's Mining Coalition
- Yavapai County Cattle Growers
- Yavapai County Supervisor Board Chairman Thomas Thurman
- Yuma County (AZ) Chamber of Commerce

Cost:

According to **Congressional Budget Office Analysis**, enacting H.R. 3905 would reduce direct spending by $2 million over the 2018-2027 period by increasing offsetting receipts.

Amendments:

I. **Nolan (D-MN)** – Would strip Section 3 of the bill, a provision aimed to ensure future administrations can't use the stroke of a pen to prevent responsible mining in area twice authorized for mining by Congress through law. The 1986 Forest Service and 2004 Forest Plans both also concluded mining is "a desired condition" in the Superior National Forest.
Chairman Gosar recommends a '**NO'** vote

II. **Grijalva (D-AZ)** – Increases taxes (royalty rates) on responsible mineral production by 16.66 percent. If adopted, this amendment would dry up investment and kill jobs.
Chairman Gosar recommends a '**NO'** vote

Constitutional Authority:

The sponsor has stated that Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause), which confers on Congress the power to make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the property belonging to the United States.

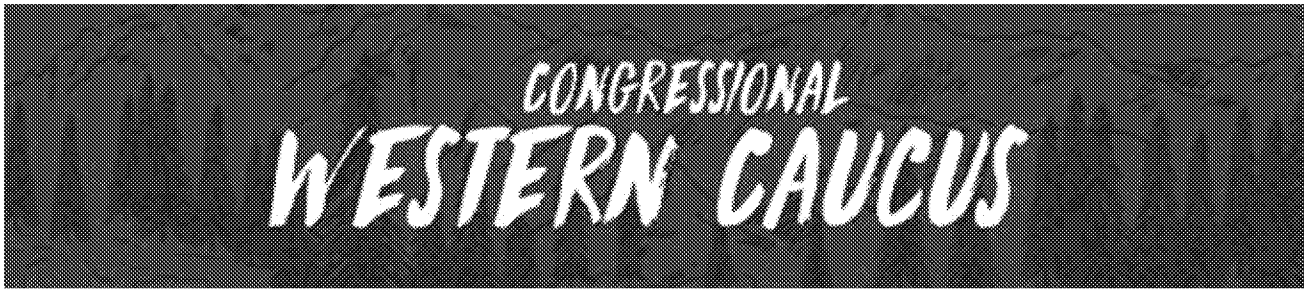
More Information:

If you have questions about H.R. 3905, please contact Landon Zinda in Congressman Emmer's office at **landon.zinda@mail.house.gov**.

If you have questions about this policy analysis or for the Congressional Western Caucus, please contact Jeff Small at **jeff.small@mail.house.gov** or Tanner Hanson at **tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov**.

Message

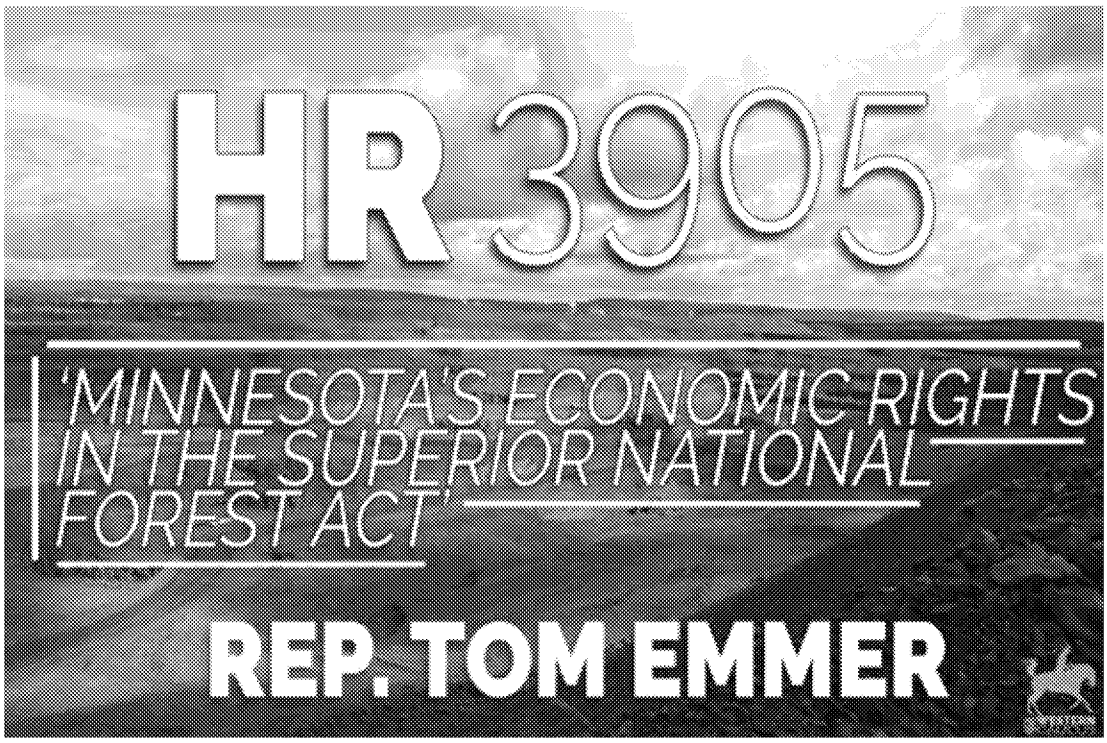
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/28/2017 10:30:52 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: The Word: H.R. 3905 | MINER Act | Rep. Tom Emmer



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 28, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

The Word: H.R. 3905 | MINER Act | Rep. Tom Emmer



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Members of Congress, local and national stakeholders, Minnesota State officials and other groups have offered strong public support for H.R. 3905, the "Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act," in anticipation of its scheduled consideration on the floor of the United States House of Representatives on Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

The full list of endorsements and letters of support can be found **HERE.** See a sample of the

overwhelming support below:

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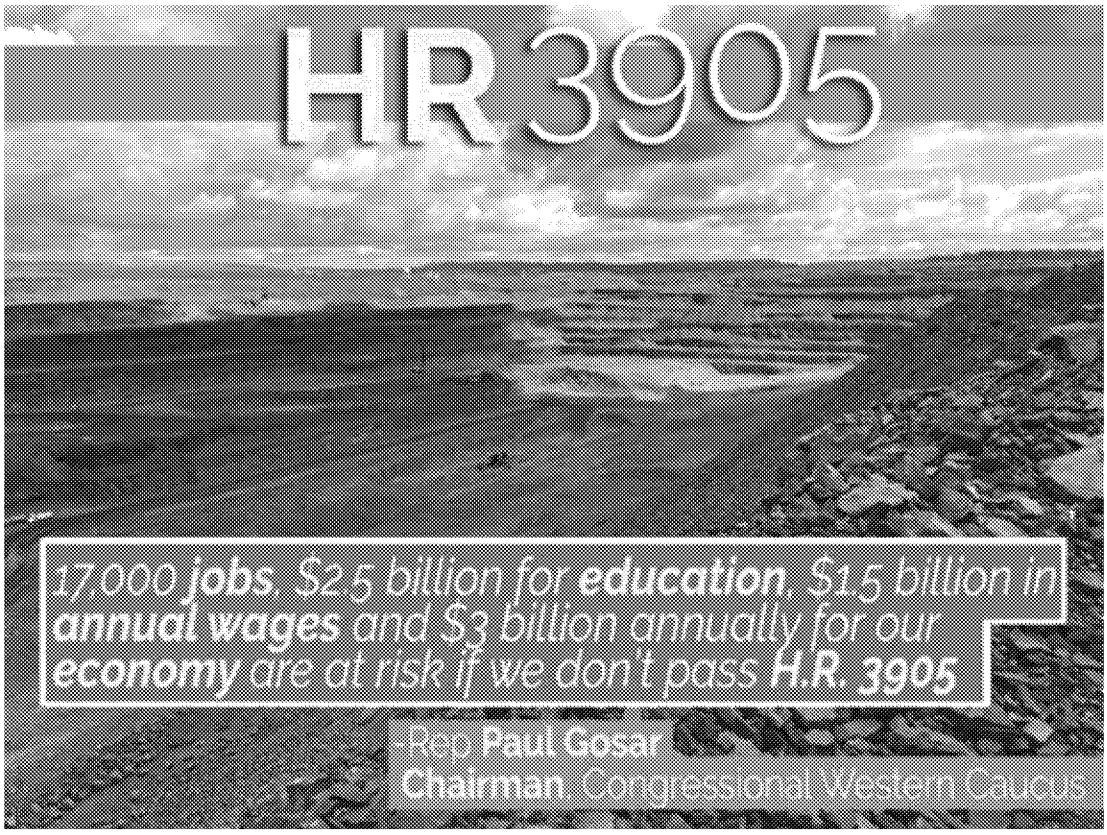

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###

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 7/18/2018 4:00:46 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Rush Request: Key Votes and Endorsements Requests for Interior Appropriations Bill
Attachments: Western Caucus Vote Recs and Priority Amendments.pdf

Apologies for the rush request and very short notice on this email but we have been slammed. **(It is most helpful to us to have endorsements and Key Votes on the below amendments by 5p.m. Eastern today. Biggs' amendment is only one we need by 2p.m today**.)

We need your help today to get some important amendments over the finish line and to keep some bad amendments out of the Interior Appropriations bill.

Key votes on recorded amendments from national organizations are the biggest ask form Chairman Gosar, our Members and Western Caucus at this time.

However, endorsements from local and national groups for the 12 Caucus priority amendments identified below are also extremely helpful.

To endorse any of the amendments, please email me with "Jeff, we endorse amendments_____." Please also send any Key Vote letters or emails my way and I will send them around.

Thank you for your consideration. Let me know if you have questions.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

Caucus' Interior Appropriations Amendment Priorities and Vote Recs

A list of the Interior amendments for fiscal year 2019 made in order can be found HERE. There are 46 more amendments that will be debated today, July 18th and 41 amendments that were debated yesterday. No recorded votes on amendments have occurred yet. Postponed Recorded Vote Amendments (First votes expected today: 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Summaries of pending votes below.) Recorded votes for the Second Amendment Vote series are expected to occur between 9:10-9:50 p.m. **Key Vote and Endorsement requests below.**

Pending Interior Appropriations Vote Recs – First Series…

Postponed Recorded Vote Amendments (First votes expected: 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.):

1. **Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ) Amendment.** Amendment No. 1 - Reduces the BLM Land acquisition account by $2.4 million in order to transfer 1.48 million to the NPS Parks Maintenance Backlog.
   Additional Background: The bill provides $24 million above the President's budget request for the BLM land acquisition account. The current total federal estate already exceeds more than 635 million acres. The Department of the Interior has a total of roughly $16 billion worth of deferred maintenance. The National Park Service (NPS) has the largest share of that amount with an $11.6 billion maintenance backlog in 2017. A recorded vote was requested by the minority.

Recommendation: Strongly support. Chairman Calvert supported on the floor.

2. **Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) Amendment.** Amendment No. 25 - Increases the budget for the Department of the Interior Inspector General's Office by $2.5 million by cutting the Office of the Secretary of the Interior's Department Operations account by $2.5 million. **Additional Background:** The DOI IG Inspector account is already funded in the bill at the President's budget request level of $52.49 million, a $1.43 million increase above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. Further, Western Caucus Members and others should oppose the offset that cuts funds from the DOI Operations Account.
   Recommendation: Oppose. Chairman Calvert and Chairman Gosar opposed on the floor.
3. **Rep. Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ) Amendment.** Amendment No. 27 - Redirects $3,000,000 to the Office of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation by cutting $3 million from the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians.
   Additional Background: The Navajo and Hopi Settlement Act of 1974 was intended to only last for five years after going into effect. This relocation program has lingered on for nearly 40 years longer than it was supposed to. Originally, the program was intended to help 1,000 Native American families. The program has helped 3,600 Navajo and 27 Hopi families. According to GAO, the office of the Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation has indicated its intent to close by September 2018. Accordingly, an amendment redirecting funds for fiscal year 2019 from an important office responsible for carring out the trust responsibility and managing Indian funds held in trust by the federal government defies common sense and is not a prudent use of scarce taxpayer dollars. Further, the Arizona Republic reported in 2015 that at that time, the " relocation program has exceeded its original $41 million price tag by more than $500 million."
   Recommendation: Oppose. Chairman Gosar opposed on the floor.
4. **Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC) Amendment.** Amendment No. 29 - Decreases and then increases the EPA Environmental Programs and Management account fund by $742,000. This increase is intended to redirect funding to the Environmental Justice program. **Additional Background:** The President's budget request in fiscal year 2018 recommended eliminating the Environmental Justice Program. The Republican Study Committee Budget has also proposed eliminating the Environmental Justice Program.
   Recommendation: Oppose. Chairman Calvert and Chairman Gosar opposed on the floor.
5. **Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI) Amendment.** Amendment No. 39 - Reduces funding for the National Endowment on the Arts and the Humanities by 15 percent.
   Additional Background: The President's budget request recommended eliminating funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Heritage Action and the Republican Study Committee Budget has also proposed eliminating funding for these programs. The bill provides $155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, $126,051,000 above the President's budget request. The bill provides a total of $155,000,000 for the National Endowment for the Humanities, $112,693,000 above the budget request.
   Recommendation: Support. Chairman Gosar supports the amendment.

Endorsement and Key Vote Requests for Caucus Amendment Priorities...

Mullin, Markwayne (R-OK), Perry (R-PA) – Amendment No. 43 - Prohibits the use of funds for enforcing the Obama Administration's EPA Methane Rule.
Additional background: The Obama EPA methane rule is unnecessary; given methane is a product that industry is in the business of selling, not wasting, but also because it is duplicative, costly, and detrimental to our economy. By the Obama EPA's own numbers, methane emissions decreased while production increased over the same time period. Congress must act to block this job-killing regulation estimated to cost our economy $530 million annually. An identical amendment passed the House for the fiscal year 2018 bill. Last year, the amendment was supported and/or key voted by Americans for Tax Reform, Americans for Prosperity and the American Energy Alliance.

Pearce (R-NM), Marshall (R-KS) – Amendment No. 62 - Prevents funds from being used to carry out any rule-making on the status of the Lesser Prairie Chicken.
Additional background: The House has passed similar amendments numerous times previously. This summer, the Fish & Wildlife Service is expected to announce a decision on listing for the Lesser Prairie Chicken under the Endangered Species Act. Previously, local landowners showed unprecedented support for LPC conservation by enrolling nearly 4 million acres in the plan and committing more than $26 million towards conservation. This type of commitment led U.S. District Judge Robert Junell to de-list the LPC in September of 2015.

Grothman (R-WI) – Amendment No. 56 - Prohibits funds made available by this Act to be used to implement or enforce the Obama Administration's 2015 EPA's ozone rule.
Additional background: On May 1, 2018, the EPA took action to comply with the Obama Administration's job-killing October 2015 Ozone Rule. 51 different areas and counties were classified as being in nonattainment. This action will cause harm to cities and counties by causing permitting delays, reducing transportation dollars and preventing new businesses from locating in areas designated as being in nonattainment. The amendment kills this rule that is non-attainable in many parts of the country, particularly the West.

Hice, Jody (R-GA) – Amendment No. 69 - States that no funds should be made available for Environmental Justice Small Grants issued by the Office of Environmental Justice.
Additional Background: The President's budget request in fiscal year 2018 recommended eliminating the Environmental Justice Program. The Republican Study Committee Budget has also proposed eliminating the Environmental Justice Program. The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) was established within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1992. In recent years, the Environmental Justice Small Grants program has been used for purposes entirely unrelated to the office's stated mission, like funding education programs on urban gardening, creating healthy environments in nail salons, or the so-called negative consequences of automobile dependency. The amendment will allow the EPA to refocus roughly $70 million dollars of taxpayer funds toward the agency's core mission over the next decade.

Gosar (R-AZ) – Amendment No. 63 - Supports recreational shooting, K-12 education and responsible energy development by prohibiting funds for the Ironwood Forest National Monument that was unilaterally designated under the Antiquities Act.
Additional background: The Arizona Mining Association, the Southern Arizona Business Coalition and two other industry groups asked interior to rescind this monument during the President's monument review. Asarco and Liberty Star Uranium & Metals Co. of Tucson have also asked to scrap the monument. President Clinton unilaterally created the Ironwood Forest National Monument in June 2000, locking up 128,917 acres of land, including a large amount of land that belongs to the Arizona State School Land Trust. This monument has caused harm to the common schools beneficiary, K-12 education. The monument proclamation explicitly prohibited future mineral and geothermal energy production. Further, the Ironwood Forest National Monument has enacted a complete ban on recreational shooting. If you look at the boundaries of Ironwood monument, it encircles the Silver Bell Mine and several other mining claims. This was clearly a political designation in order to prevent mining and that is the reason the monument was designated. If this were not the case, the monument would be significantly smaller and only protect a few artifacts. Asarco had invested $70 million prior to the monument designation in hopes to expand the mine. They will likely invest several hundred millions more, create jobs and grow the economy if the mine is no longer in the monument boundary. Countless other examples like this exist throughout the country. The Arizona Game and Fish department has expressed concerns regarding their ability to effectively manage the land that is incorporated in the monument. According to their June 1, 2017 response to this review of national monument designations, AZGFD has been unable to fully implement vital management activities such as: "fencing to protect wildlife habitats and/or restrict wildlife and fence removal…introduction, supplementation and/or translocations of native and/or naturalized species, predator control, Law Enforcement wildlife investigations and response to illegal wildlife activities. In November, 24 Members of Congress sent President Trump a letter recommending recession of this monument amongst other monument recommendations. The letter was endorsed by: the American Farm Bureau

Federation, Americans for Responsible Recreation Access, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Public Lands Council.

Rep. Biggs (R-AZ) Amendment. Amendment No. 1 - Reduces the BLM Land acquisition account by $2.4 million in order to transfer 1.48 million to the NPS Parks Maintenance Backlog.
Additional Background: The bill provides $24 million above the President's budget request for the BLM land acquisition account. The current total federal estate already exceeds more than 635 million acres. The Department of the Interior has a total of roughly $16 billion worth of deferred maintenance. The National Park Service (NPS) has the largest share of that amount with an $11.6 billion maintenance backlog in 2017. A recorded vote was requested by the minority.
Chairman Calvert supported on the floor. **The recorded vote on this amendment is expected to occur in today's 2p.m vote series.**

Abraham (R-LA), Westerman (R-AR), Crawford (R-AR), Harris (R-MD) – Amendment No. 66 - Prevents the enforcement of limitations or prohibitions on the use of genetically modified crops in commercial agricultural operations conducted on National Wildlife Refuges.
Additional Background: The Fish & Wildlife Service regularly enters into Cooperative Agriculture Agreements with farmers to plant and raise crops farm fields that are on National Wildlife Refuge land, and to leave a portion of that crop standing over the winter in order to provide cover and forage for wildlife. In the spring, those farmers plow everything under and start over again. In 2014 Fish & Wildlife began to prevent farmers who enter into these agreements from planting GMO seed. This action was not based in fact or in rules, and it is harmful to both wildlife and to the farmers who are providing them food and cover. Wildlife groups like Ducks Unlimited support this amendment, and I ask for your support too.

Emmer (R-MN), Nolan (R-MN) – Amendment No. 55 - Prohibits funding from being used to implement a January 13, 2017 a 234,328 acre land grab and mineral withdrawal in in Northeast Minnesota.
Additional background: A day before leaving office, the Obama Administration proposed a land grab that will cause significant harm to Minnesota communities in the form of 234,328 acre mineral withdrawal of National Forest System (NFS) lands, for a 20-year term, within the Rainy River Watershed on the Superior National Forest. 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore – this is what is at risk if the Obama land grab is not overturned. For more information, click HERE, HERE and HERE.

Lamborn (R-CO) – Amendment No. 49 - Prohibits the use of funds to implement or enforce the threatened species or endangered species listing of any plant or wildlife that has not undergone a review as required by section 4(c)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
Additional background: The amendment is straightforward. It simply ensures that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is following current law, specifically section 4(c)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, by conducting a review of all threatened and endangered plants and wildlife at least once every 5 years. The amendment passed last year by voice vote.

Smith, Jason (R-MO), Gianforte (R-MT) – Amendment No. 70 - Prevents the payment of attorney's fees as part of any settlement the Federal Government enters into under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.
Additional Background: The amendment prevents federal agencies from using funds to pay legal fees under any lawsuit settlement regarding a case that arises under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. In recent years we have seen a sharp increase in a practice called "Sue and Settle". This happens when a federal agency accepts a lawsuit from an outside advocacy organization and then, rather than defend itself, proceeds to settle that lawsuit in a closed-door agreement. Through this process; the advocacy group, often motived by a radical agenda, as part of the settlement gets to dictates the priorities and duties of that agency resulting in new regulations through legally-binding, court-approved settlements. If that isn't bad enough, taxpayers are responsible for footing the legal bill for the attorneys of the radical

organizations who filed suit. Between 2009-2012 the EPA chose not to defend itself in over 60 of these lawsuits with outside environmental advocacy groups. The resulting settlements were responsible for more than 100 new regulations and billions of dollars in compliance costs. This provision has passed the House in multiple Congresses.

Mullin, Markwayne (R-OK), Gohmert (R-TX), Gosar (R-AZ), Perry (R-PA), Gianforte (R-MT) – Amendment No. 44 - Prohibits funds from implementing the Social Cost of Carbon rule. **Additional background:** The Obama Administration continuously used SCC valuation models, which can be easily manipulated, in order to attempt to justify new job-killing regulations. Although President Trump issued an executive order to disband the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases, federal agencies continue to work on the Social Cost of Carbon valuation. Further, the president's executive order is open to inevitable legal challenges lobbed by extremist special interest groups. The House has a clear, strong record of opposition to the Social Cost of Carbon, voting at least 11 times to block, defund, or oppose the proposal.An identical amendment passed the House for the fiscal year 2018 bill. Last year, the amendment was supported and/or key voted by Americans for Tax Reform, Americans for Prosperity and the American Energy Alliance.

Loudermilk (R-GA), Griffith (R-VA) – Amendment No. 47 - Prohibits funds from being used to regulate trailers under the Clean Air Act.
Additional background: The Obama Administration overreached when EPA sought to regulate truck trailers as "self-propelled vehicles" under the Greenhouse Gas Phase 2 Rule (GHGP2.) The Obama Admin claimed that these engineering regulations will improve the fuel efficiency and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of tractor trailers. However, even if truck trailers were under the jurisdiction granted to the EPA by the Clean Air Act, these benefits only take place if the truck is traveling at highway speeds. According to the American Trucking Associations, at least half of all tractor-trailer usage occurs not on highways, but at lesser speeds around towns and cities. For these tractor trailers, those in compliance will have increased weight due to the engineering regulations, resulting in cargo loads being shifted to an increased number of trucks. Ultimately and ironically, this regulation leads to an increase in truck traffic and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The decision to modify truck trailer engineering should be voluntary based on whether the truck will be used more on highways or around towns and cities- it should not be mandatory.

Amendments Pending Debate Strongly Opposed by the Caucus:

Gallego (D-AZ) – Amendment No. 51 - Ensures none of the funds made available by this Act may be used to issue grazing permits or leases in contravention of BLM regulations.
Additional Background: This amendment from July 2016 previously failed by a recorded vote. The amendment attacks ranchers and attempts to relitigate the Bundy matter.

Connolly (D-VA), Price, David (D-NC) – Amendment No. 57 - Prohibits funds from being used to change or modify the 2015 federal coal ash rule (80 Fed. Reg. 21301 (April 17, 2015). This job killing rile implemented by the Obama Administration has some serious flaws. On Wednesday, the EPA issued finalized the first set of revisions to the 2015 regulations, **providing flexibility for States and $30M in annual cost savings. More Here.** More information can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/coalash.

Message

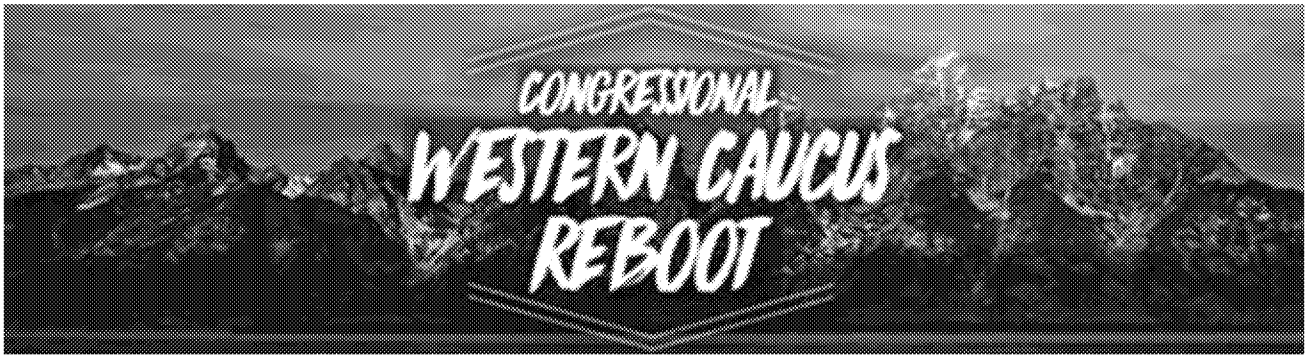
From: Bowman, Liz [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C3D4D94D3E4B4B1F80904056703EBC80-BOWMAN, ELI]
Sent: 11/21/2017 3:03:08 PM
To: Lyons, Troy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=15e4881c95044ab49c6c35a0f5eef67e-Lyons, Troy]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Shimmin, Kaitlyn [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=becb3f33f9a14acd8112d898cc7853c6-Shimmin, Ka]; Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Cory, Preston [preston.cory@mail.house.gov]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Hewitt, James [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=41b19dd598d340bb8032923d902d4bd1-Hewitt, Jam]; Konkus, John [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=555471b2baa6419e8e141696f4577062-Konkus, Joh]; Daniell, Kelsi [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cd867173479344b3bda202b3004ff830-Daniell, Ke]
Subject: Wastebook

We should be on the look out for any EPA mentions here: **MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED:** You guys are really excited about Sen. James Lankford's upcoming 2017 federal wastebook. A link to the 2015 and 2016 editions was the winner to start off the week.

Liz Bowman
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Office: 202-564-3293

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/18/2017 9:09:49 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 11.18.17



Week of 11.18.2017 in Review

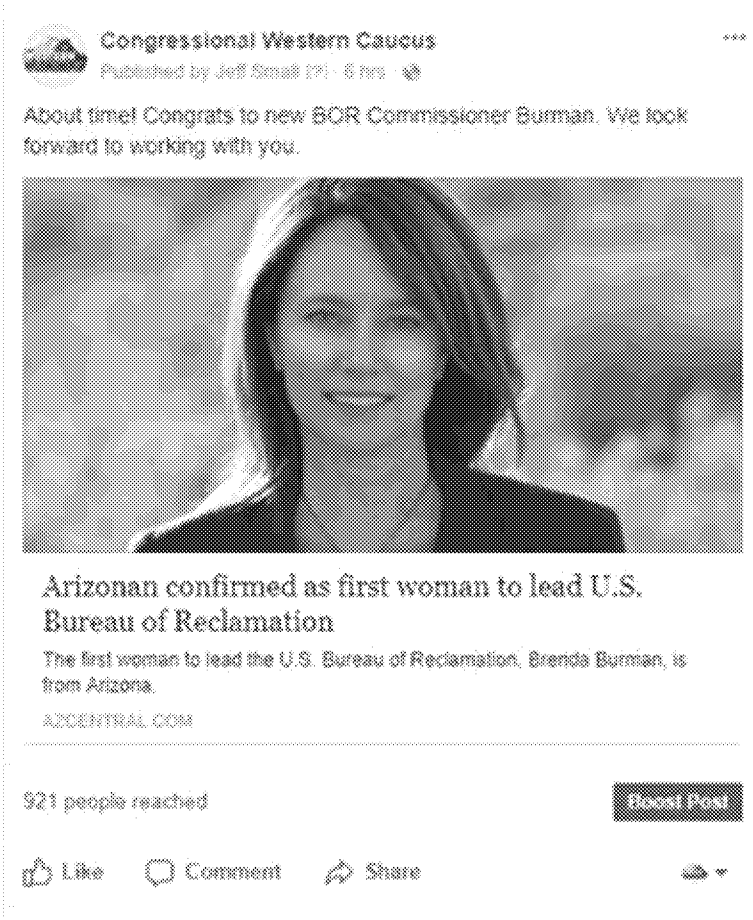
Western Caucus Member Meeting Features Conversation with Interior Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt

On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, over twenty Members of the Western Caucus attended the monthly Members Meeting which featured U.S. Department of Interior Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt giving opening remarks, followed by conversation between he and the Members.

Members had an engaging dialogue with the Deputy Secretary, with topics ranging from sage grouse management plans, venting & flaring, the Endangered Species Act and much more.

Attendees included Congressman Jason Smith, Chairman Rep. Paul Gosar, Rep. Dan Newhouse, Congressman Mark Amodei, Congressman Greg Gianforte, Congressman Steve Pearce, Congresswoman Aumua Amata, Rep. David Schweikert, Greg Walden, Congressman Don Young, Congressman Randy Weber, Congressman Tom Emmer, Rep. Rob Bishop, Congressman Chris Stewart, Rep. Brian Babin, and Congressman Alex Mooney.

Senate Confirms New, Female Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner



On Friday, November 17, the United States Senate confirmed Brenda Burman as the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Commissioner. She is the first woman to ever lead the Bureau, but was subjected to 142 days of delay before eventually being confirmed.

Brenda has established credentials and serious expertise in assuming the helm at BOR. From 2006 to 2008, she served as BOR's Deputy Commissioner for External and Intergovernmental Affairs and also as the Deputy Assistant Secretary. She thereafter worked as the Director of Water Policy at the Salt River Project in Arizona. She has also worked at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, The Nature Conservancy, and the office of U.S. Senator Jon Kyl. She holds a law degree from the University of Arizona.

BOR has nearly 5,000 employees and works to maintain around 500 dams, 330 reservoirs and 53 hydroelectric plants across 17 Western states.

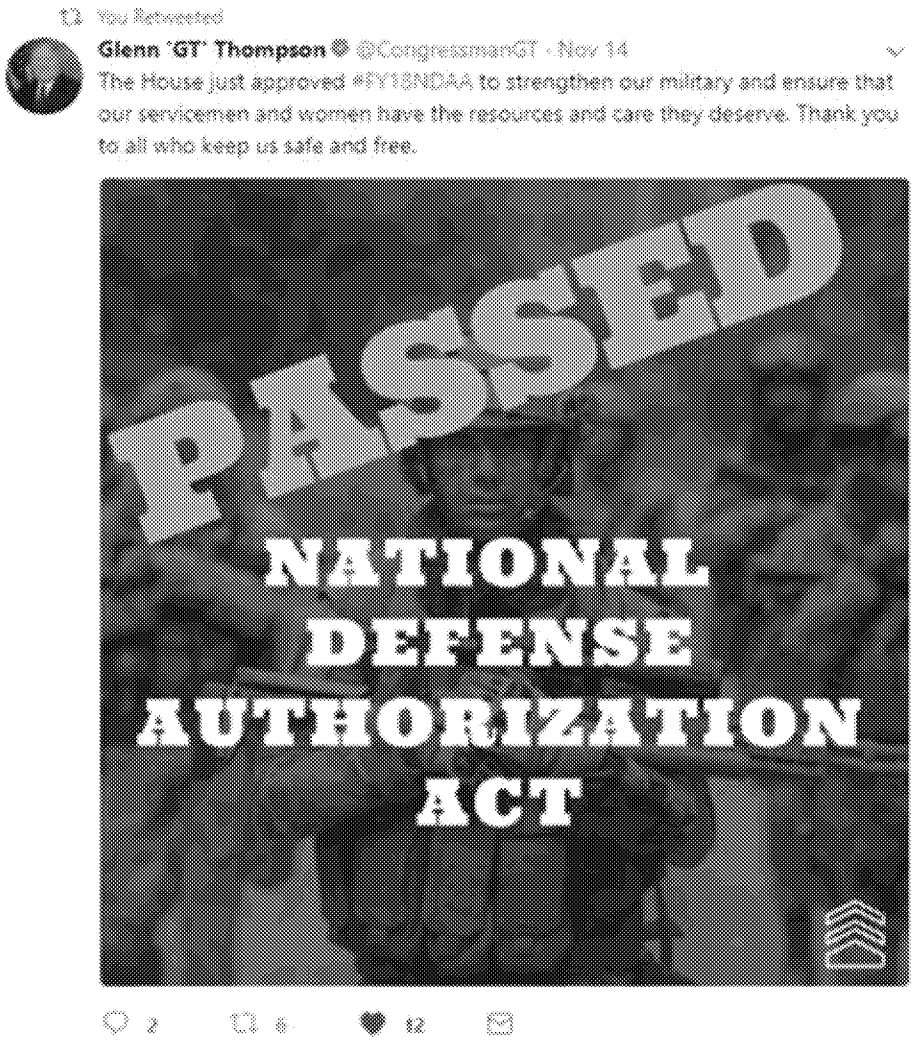
"I am deeply honored for the opportunity to lead this organization," said Brenda Burman. "The employees of Reclamation are dedicated to working through the most difficult water issues and managing water in the West. I look forward to working with Secretary Zinke, the Administration, and our many partners, contractors and customers to solve our most pressing water issues."

"Finally! After more than 142 days, I'm excited to welcome Brenda Burman to lead the Bureau of Reclamation," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. "Brenda is a veteran of the Bureau and her extensive experience on water projects across the country will be an incredible asset for the Department. After senseless and unprecedented hold-ups in the Senate, we can finally move forward with key water projects across the country."

"Brenda Burman is eminently qualified to lead the Bureau of Reclamation, and her past work with the Salt River Project and Interior, as well as her legal background, has equipped her well to manage and streamline the bureaucracy. She will do an equally fantastic job maintaining our hydroelectric, dam and reservoir infrastructure, as well as in identifying opportunities for energy and water development throughout the West. While it's obviously unfortunate that her confirmation was held up so long and without cause by Democrats in the Senate, we know she will hit the ground running in her new role," said Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar.

Read the full Department of Interior Press Release **HERE**.

House Passes National Defense Authorization Act Containing Largest Pay Raise for Troops in Eight Years



On Tuesday, November 17, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.

The NDAA authorizes appropriations for Department of Defense activities including equipment and weaponry procurement, research and testing, overseas operations, and counter-drug activities.

The NDAA for FY '18 passed by the House on Tuesday is notable for authorizing the largest pay-raise for our troops in eight years.

To read the bill as passed, click **HERE**. Click **HERE** to read the full press release by the House Armed Services Committee.

Talk Heats Up of Moving BLM HQ out West, possibly Salt Lake or Denver

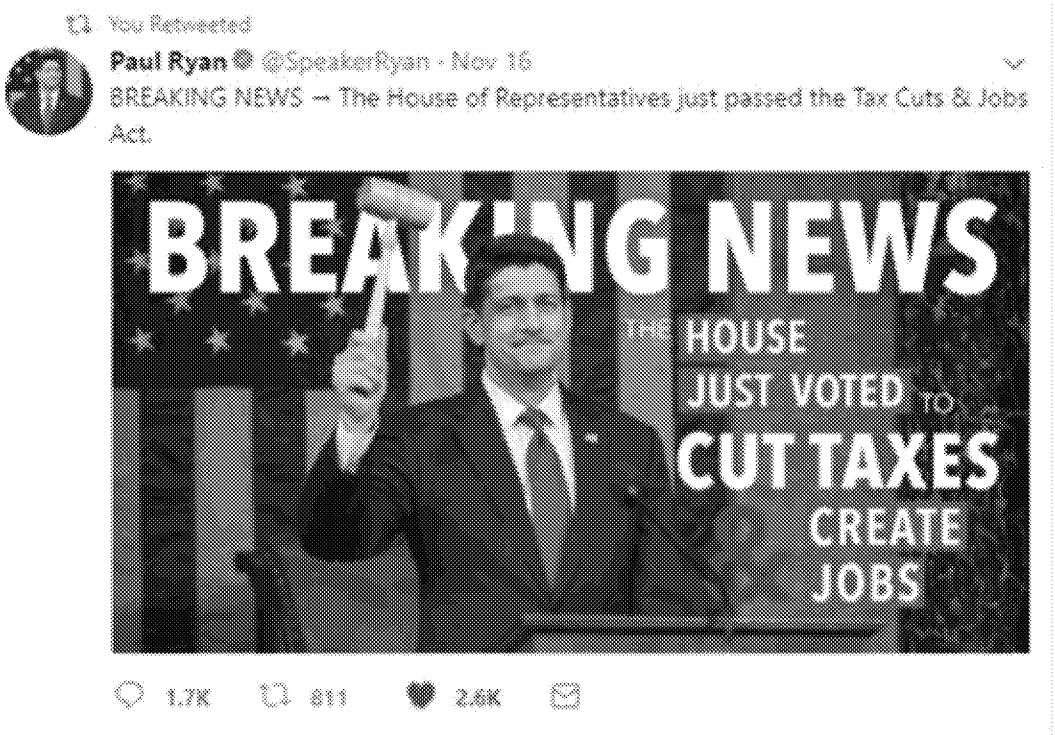
More and more, top officials at Interior and in the House of Representatives are reasoning that the benefits of uprooting the Bureau of Land Management headquarters and moving it westward may outweigh any potential drawbacks.

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke recently weighed in, telling the Salt Lake Tribune: "We're certainly looking at where would be the right place," and noting that "the preponderance of activity is in the West," for BLM's work.

The idea has been gaining currency steadily over time as distrust for bureaucracies far-removed from their physical jurisdiction has grown. Senator Cory Gardner and CWC Member Scott Tipton introduced legislation in May that would authorize BLM headquarters to relocate in the West.

To read more background information and other Congressional supporters of the idea, read the full story by the Free Range Report **HERE**.

POST OF THE WEEK...



WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Congressman Jody Hice (GA-10) discusses his efforts to work with Western Caucus to fulfill its priorities of multiple-use land policies, energy dominance and responsible use of our country's bounty of natural resources. He also discusses his efforts with the entire Republican Conference to negotiate the tax reform bill, H.R. 1, which passed the floor of the House this week. Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the address.

STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING US!

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/16/2017 4:50:30 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Important Upcoming Events - Western Caucus

1. **Western Caucus Members Only Lunch Meeting and Speaker Series | 12/12/17** | 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. | Rayburn 2247 | **Special guest speaker new U.S. Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke** | RSVP whether or not your boss can attend to tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov and jeff.small@mail.house.gov

2. **TRAVEL BOOKING REMINDER**: **Western Caucus Foundation Policy Roundtable in Las Vegas** | Flights and rooms are booking fast for the evening of December 7th- December 9th.
   - By now you should have received the below invite from the Western Caucus Foundation. Click **HERE** to see more information and a detailed itinerary.
   - Email Info@WesternCaucusFoundation.org for more information or to RSVP. This is an official trip so your office can use your MRA to pay for your flight and hotel. This trip takes place at the same time as the National Finals Rodeo. We hope someone from your team can make it!

Have a great Thanksgiving if we don't talk to you.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

From: Darrell Henry [mailto:info@westerncaucusfoundation.org]
Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2017 2:30 PM
To: Van Flein, Tom
Subject: Additional Info on Western Caucus Winter Policy Meeting in Vegas

WESTERN CAUCUS FOUNDATION

THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

The Western Caucus Foundation is following up with you as we've had questions from Member schedulers about our annual winter policy meeting with

members of the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses at the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 8th and 9th.

Click here for event information on the event, hotel information, and links to the agenda.

The Winter Western Policy Roundtable & Public Lands Forum will promote a dialog with attendees and official policy makers on current and upcoming 2018 Western Caucus priorities. The roundtables will discuss Administration and Congressional priorities, provide information and facts to policymakers, and promote a dialog with attendees and officials on issues related to the various topics on the agenda.

Members will be called on to provide general remarks and are encouraged to participate in the discussions at all the sessions they attend.

The two-day meeting will consist of a staff policy roundtable on Friday morning followed by a Public Lands Summit in the afternoon. On Saturday, there will be a Caucus Member-led Western Policy Roundtable in the morning, a keynote speech, and an optional field tour in the afternoon. The format is set up so that it will encourage engaging Q&A and cross table dialogue beyond the time slotted for prepared remarks.

Attending this event will be Members from the Congressional and Senate Western Caucuses, Congressional Staff, and Foundation supporters and guests. To date, we have expected our honorary Co-chairs Senator Steve Daines & Rep. Paul Gosar as well as Senator John Barrasso; Senator Dean Heller, Agriculture Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Conaway; Rep. Mark Amodei; Rep. Dan Newhouse, Rep. Kristi Noem, and others caucus members to be announced. We also will have key officials from Interior, USDA, EPA, and other agencies.

Click here for event information.

You may contact Darrell Henry, Executive Director, Western Caucus Foundation at 202-487-8727 or info@westerncaucusfoundation.org for further information.

Founded in 2013, The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF), a 501 (c)(3), is a cultural exchange organization committed to educating public policy makers and communicating with the public in an effort to enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture. The Foundation provides support, education, and networking opportunities to advance the public policies important to the West, and offers members a non-partisan and non-political organization to facilitate discussion of critical Western issues through a robust agenda of meetings, conferences, and programs.

To learn more about the Western Caucus Foundation please visit:**http://westerncaucusfoundation.org**

Western Caucus Foundation | 400 N. Capitol St., #382-B | Washington, DC | 20001

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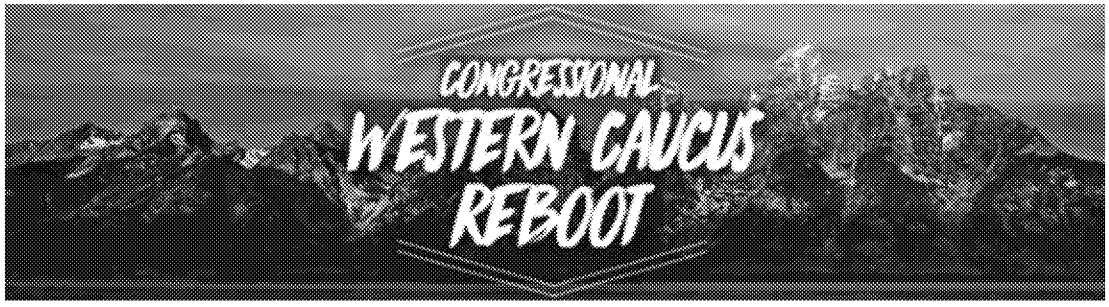
Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/11/2017 6:41:11 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 11.11.17



Week of 11.11.2017

Happy Veterans Day

Lamar Smith @LamarSmithTX21 · 23h

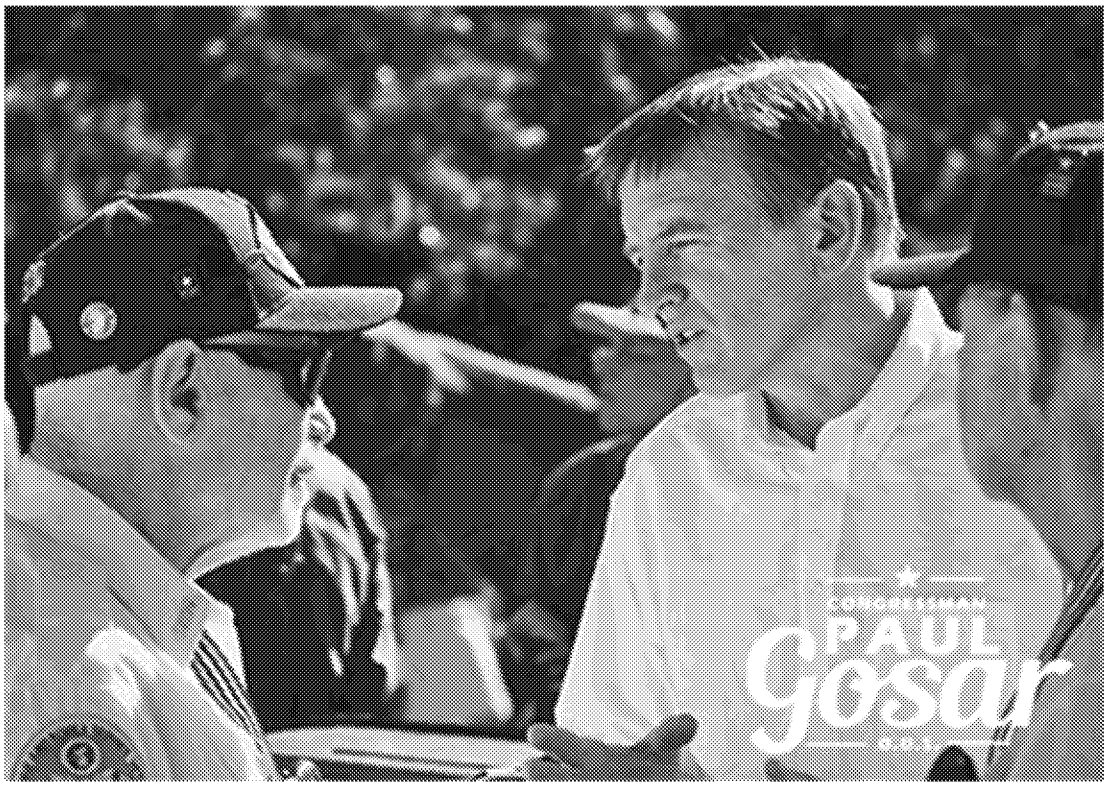
On Veterans Day, we honor all our veterans. These men and women put their lives on the line to defend our nation and our freedoms. The United States is stronger and safer today because of those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. Thank you for your service.

This week the House honored our veterans by passing several important pieces of legislation including:

- H.R. 918, Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act

- H.R. 1133, Veterans Transplant Coverage Act of 2017
- H.R. 1900, National Veterans Memorial and Museum Act
- H.R. 2123, Veterans E-Health and Telemedicine Support (VETS) Act
- H.R. 2601, Veterans Increased Choice for Transplanted Organs and Recovery (VICTOR) Act
- H.R. 4173, To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the Veterans Crisis Line
- H.R. 3657, To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide headstones and markers for the graves of spouses and children of veterans who are buried in tribal cemeteries
- H.R. 3562, To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs

To view a special Veterans Day message from Chairman Gosar click on the graphic below or click **HERE**.



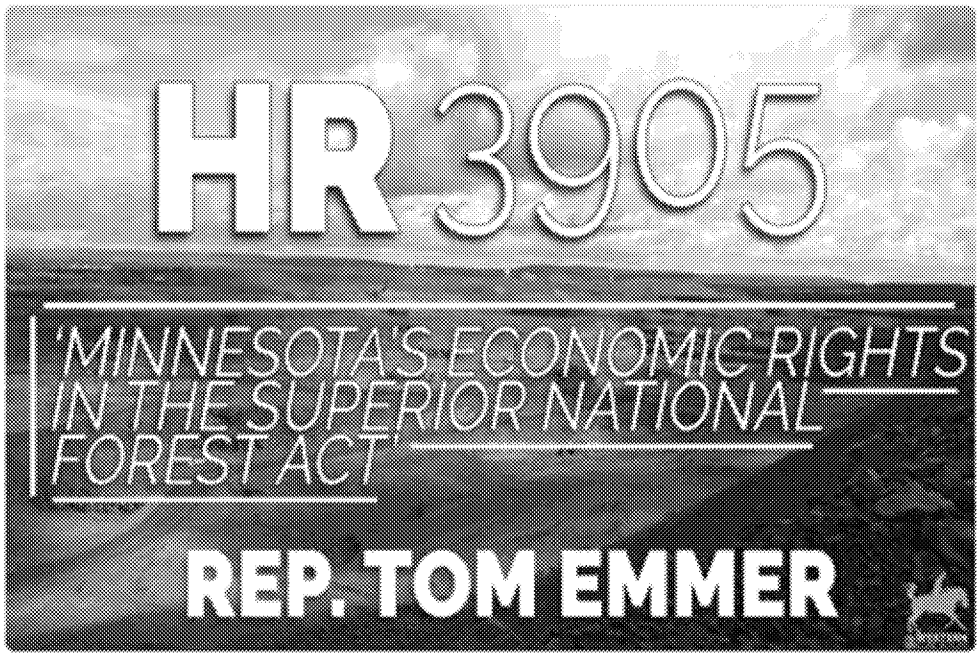
House Votes to Repeal Obama Joint-Employer Rule

On Tuesday, the House voted to repeal the Obama Administration's job-killing joint-employer rule. The Save Local Business Act protects small businesses and 1.7 million jobs by amending the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act to clarify that two or more employers may be considered a "joint employer" only if they have "actual, direct, and immediate" control over employees' essential terms and conditions of employment.

Resources Passes Emmer Bill to Protect MN Mining

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Nov 8

.@RepTomEmmer's Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act just passed @NatResources. Minnesota is projected to lose up to $3 billion in revenues for education without H.R. 3905. To read more click HERE → bit.ly/2hdASDZ



On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Western Caucus Member Congressman **Tom Emmer's (MN-06)** Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act. Minnesota is projected to lose up to $3 billion in revenues for education without H.R. 3905.

"Today, we came one-step closer to undoing the Obama Administration's politically motivated actions in Northern Minnesota," said **Congressman Emmer**. "I am proud that my bipartisan MINER Act passed the House Committee on Natural Resources. Passage of this legislation ensures Minnesotans have a say in sweeping bureaucratic decisions made in Washington. Environmentally responsible mining and exploration in Northern Minnesota will unleash our ability to tap into our abundance of natural resources, and provide for a better way of life for our children, just as those in Northern Minnesota have done for decades. We can preserve our beautiful state without permanently destroying any future job creation or economic development. We can utilize the largest untapped copper-nickel deposit in the world for Americans, and in an environmentally sound way. While there are still numerous environmental and safety benchmarks that must be met in the coming years before any mining can occur, passage of the MINER Act will let our federal, state, and local environmental review process to proceed. I am thankful for the leadership of Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Chairman Paul Gosar, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop, and the support of my colleagues – the future of Minnesota is brighter because of today's vote."

To read more click **HERE**.

Resources Passes SECURE American Energy Act

Natural Resources @NatResources · Nov 7

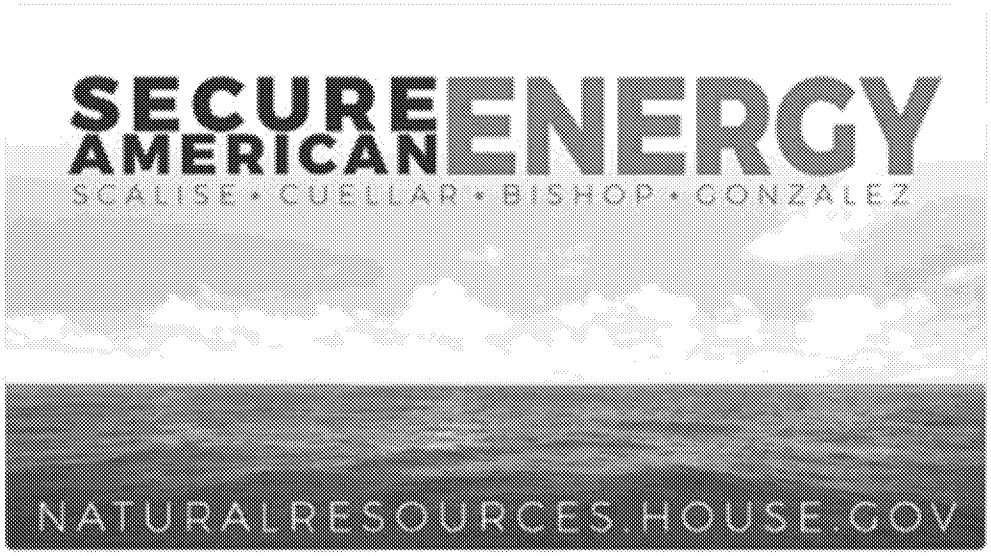
The SECURE American Energy Act:

✔Creates New Jobs

✔Provides Regulatory Certainty

✔Increases Revenue

✔Expands Access to Energy Resources



On Wednesday**,** the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Western Caucus Members **Steve Scalise (LA-01)** and **Rob Bishop's (UT-01)** bipartisan SECURE American Energy Act.

"After months of stakeholder input, Committee oversight and multiple legislative drafts, we have a comprehensive bipartisan upstream energy bill to bring to the House floor. These onshore and offshore provisions provide certainty and access to spur investment and job creation through the development of federal lands. With this legislation, we can unlock our vast energy potential, advance American energy dominance and generate revenues at all levels of government. I thank Whip Scalise for his continued leadership and the contributions of members, including Reps. Cuellar and González, in developing this bipartisan legislation," **Resources Chairman Bishop said.**

"The SECURE American Energy Act will create good jobs in communities all across our country, empowers states and optimizes onshore resource management, and raises revenue-sharing caps that dedicate critical funds to Louisiana's coastal restoration. This bipartisan bill is good for jobs and good for Louisiana. I'm proud that it passed out of the Natural Resources Committee today, and look forward to passing it through the House with a strong vote and getting it on President Trump's desk so he can sign it into law," **Whip Scalise said.**

To read more click **HERE.**

Resources Passes Tipton Planning for American Energy Act

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Western Caucus Executive Vice-Chairman **Scott Tipton's (CO-03)** Planning for American Energy Act. This commonsense bill requires an updated all-of-the-above energy plan every 4 years.

Congressman Tipton said, "The Planning for American Energy Act would set the United States on a path towards an all-of-the-above energy approach to better meet the changing needs of the American people, keep energy costs affordable, create more jobs, and strengthen national security. Creating a viable energy future in our country must be a top priority, and I'm glad that my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee agree. I look forward to seeing this important legislation pass through the House soon."

To read more click **HERE.**

Trump Must Go Big-League in Monument Review

On Thursday, Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** led a letter signed by 24 Members of Congress encouraging President Trump "to think big and act bigger" in his monuments review resulting from Executive Order 13792 issued on April 26, 2017.

Congressman Biggs stated, "The Western Caucus is working closely with the Trump administration to provide comments and recommendations on the twenty-seven monuments under review. These efforts are a good first step to overturn some of President Obama's unconstitutional land grabs. Moving forward, our Caucus will be working together to reform the outdated 1906 Antiquities Act. It is time to bring more jobs and economic freedom to the West, and I am confident that President Trump and Secretary Zinke share our affinity to see this happen."

"The original intent of the Antiquities Act was to set aside the smallest area of land possible in order to protect sites of historical or other significance, however, those parameters have been largely ignored in recent years," said **Congressman LaMalfa**. "Under previous Presidents, most notably the Obama Administration, this abuse of Executive power has truly gotten out of hand. In the case of the Cascade-Siskiyou monument that now bleeds into California's 1st district, unaccountable expansion now limits the public's access to the land and limits the federal government's ability to properly manage it. I'm happy to see the President is serious about reviewing and reforming this antiquated law, and I hope this recommendation to accept local input is considered thoroughly."

To read more click **HERE.**

Western members of Congress to Trump: Erase Bears Ears, 8 oth...

A group of Republican congressional members is pressuring the White House to eliminate or shrink most of the 27 national monuments under re...

House Passes Hydropower Policy Modernization Act

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Nov 8

Today, the House passed GOP Chair @cathymcmorris's HR 3043 - the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017 - which will ensure swift consideration of new hydropower project applications and cut into the backlog. Read the full press release HERE -> bit.ly/2Asxm2S

On Thursday, the House passed Western Caucus Member **Cathy McMorris Rodgers' (WA-05)** H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017. This bill ensures swift consideration of new hydropower project applications by designating the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as the lead coordinating agency and ensuring FERC imposes strict timetables on all other agencies.

"Hydropower is crucial to our way of life in the Pacific Northwest. It's clean, it's renewable, it's reliable, and it's one of the reasons why we in Eastern Washington enjoy some of the most affordable electricity rates in America," said **Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers**. "This bill won't change outcomes or environmental standards. Instead, it will speed up the relicensing process and save time and money. Providing relief from these costly and time-consuming regulatory processes will encourage investment in hydropower so we can continue to support this clean energy in our region."

"This bill simply intends to bring hydropower permitting into the 21st Century by improving efficiency, accountability and transparency within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission while also reducing federal duplication. Even our friends across the aisle agree with our efforts to promote hydropower development. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congresswoman and the Committee to continue supporting clean, renewable hydropower and advancing our nation's 'all-of-the-above' energy strategy," said **Congressman Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**.

To read more click **HERE.**

The Time for Tax Reform is Now

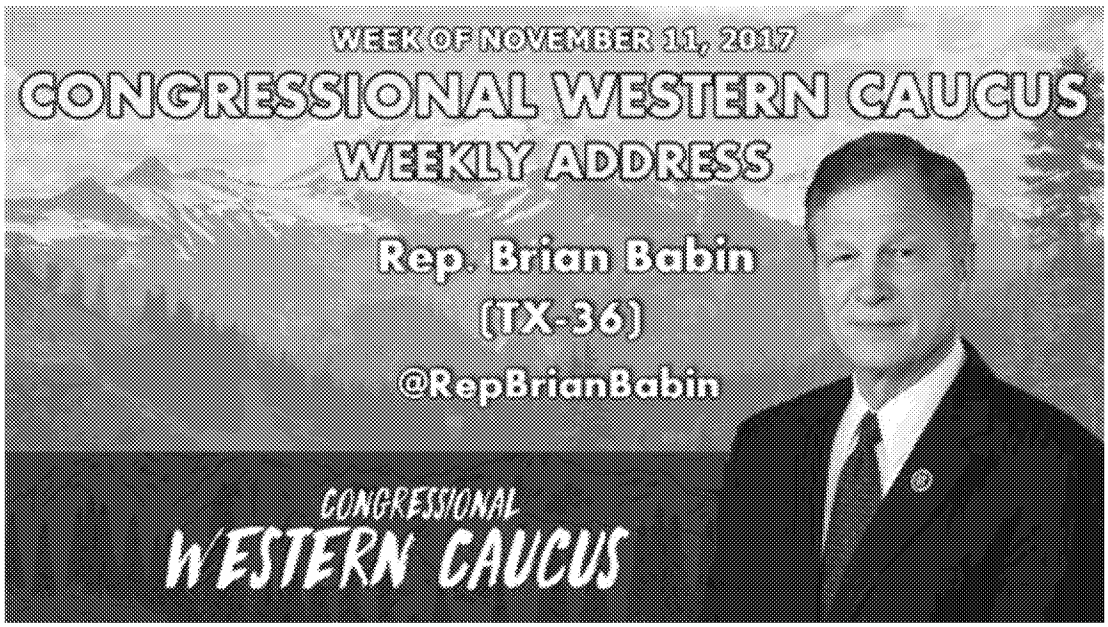
On Thursday, after a four-day markup, the House Ways and Means Committee passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will give typical American households a $1,182 tax cut, raise wages by more than $4,000 and create nearly one million full-time jobs.

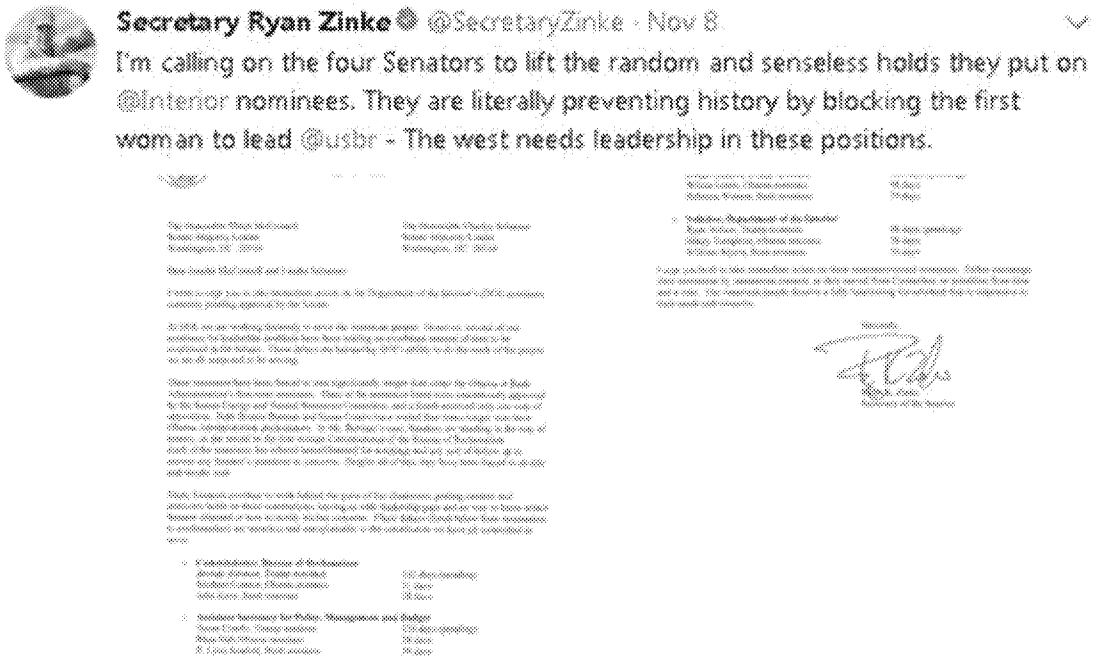
WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Rep. Brian Babin (TX-36) discusses the need for Endangered Species Act modernization and legislation he introduced with Western Caucus Member **Louie Gohmert (TX-)** entitled the "Saving America's Endangered Species Act" or the "SAVES Act".

Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the full video.



POST OF THE WEEK...



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Message

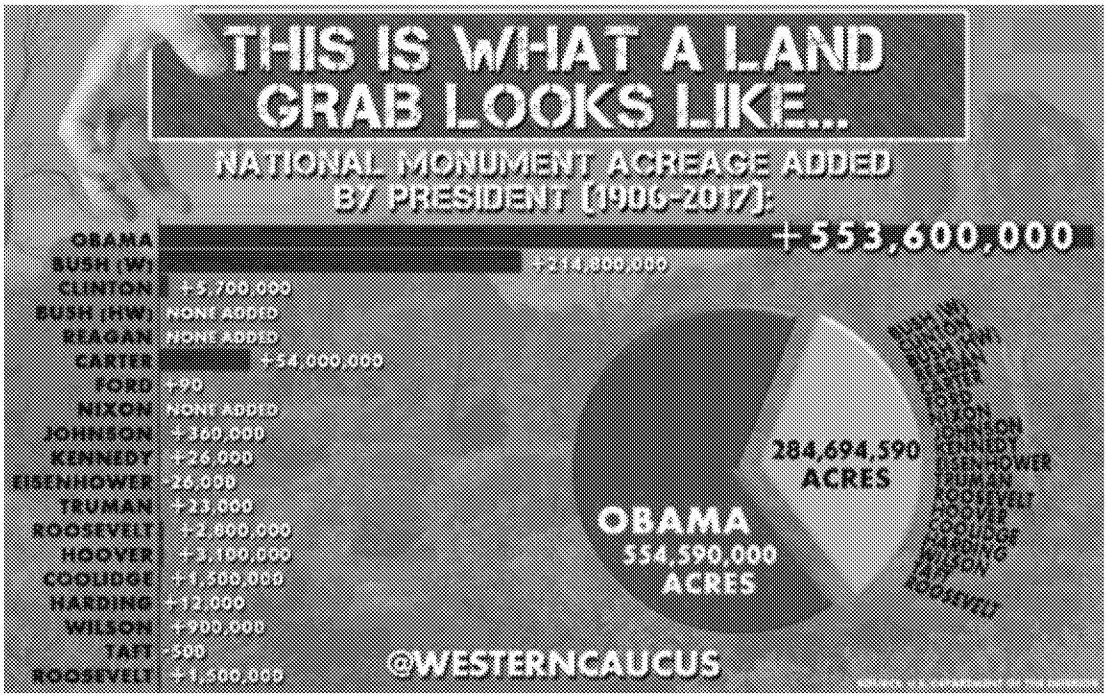
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/9/2017 10:27:15 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Encourages Trump to Think Big and Act Big-League in Monuments Review

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 9, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Western Caucus Encourages Trump to Think Big and Act Big-League in Monuments Review



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Western Caucus Members **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** and **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, and **Congressman Daniel Webster (FL-11)** issued the following statements after 24 Members of Congress sent a letter to President Trump applauding his monument review and offering recommendations for monuments:

"By issuing his Executive Order to review recent monument designations, President Trump showed he was committed to making sure our land policies make sense and work in the national economic interest," said **Congressman Gosar**. "More than that, though, his action is demonstrative of his Administration's commitment to the United States being a nation ruled by the laws, executed faithfully - not by one man doing as he pleases. There is overwhelming reason to believe the previous Administration did not share any of these goals, as evidenced by President Obama's frenzied use of the Antiquities Act. Today, we are grateful to President Trump for considering these recommendations as we continue working to right past wrongs on the path to American energy dominance and economic prosperity."

Congressman Biggs stated, "The Western Caucus is working closely with the Trump administration to provide comments and recommendations on the twenty-seven monuments under review. These efforts are a good first step to overturn some of President Obama's unconstitutional land grabs. Moving forward, our Caucus will be working together to reform the outdated 1906 Antiquities Act. It is time to bring more jobs and economic freedom to the West, and I am confident that President Trump and Secretary Zinke share our affinity to see this happen."

"The original intent of the Antiquities Act was to set aside the smallest area of land possible in order to protect sites of historical or other significance, however, those parameters have been largely ignored in recent years," said **Congressman LaMalfa**. "Under previous Presidents, most notably the Obama Administration, this abuse of Executive power has truly gotten out of hand. In the case of the Cascade-Siskiyou monument that now bleeds into California's 1st district, unaccountable expansion now limits the public's access to the land and limits the federal government's ability to properly manage it. I'm happy to see the President is serious about reviewing and reforming this antiquated law, and I hope this recommendation to accept local input is considered thoroughly."

"President Obama's administration abused the powers of the Antiquities Act with unprecedented monument designations that removed millions of acres of land from productive economic use and local control. Hundreds of millions of these acres included marine monuments in the Pacific; a similar future monument designation in the Gulf could destroy Florida's tourist and fishing economy. I am encouraged that President Trump and Secretary Zinke are reviewing these Obama-era actions and urge them to take appropriate action to rescind or reduce many of these monument designations. We must work with the Trump administration to reform the Antiquities Act to prevent future abuse. I am confident we can find solutions that preserve and protect archeological sites, which is the purpose of the Antiquities Act, without harming our growing economy," said **Congressman Webster**.

Background:

Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Gosar (AZ-04) and Western Caucus Member Andy Biggs (AZ-05) led a letter signed by 24 Members of Congress encouraging President Trump "to think big and act bigger" in his monuments review resulting from Executive Order 13792 issued on April 26, 2017.

The 24 signers of the letter include: Representatives Mark Amodei (NV-02), Brian Babin (TX-36), Andy Biggs (AZ-05), Dave Bratt (VA-07), Paul Cook (CA-08), Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large), Jeff Duncan (SC-03), John Duncan (TN-02), Blake Farenthold (TX-27), Trent Franks (AZ-08), Paul Gosar (AZ-04), Walter Jones (NC-03), Steve King (IA-04), Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), Doug Lamborn (CO-05), Tom McClintock (CA-04), Steve Pearce (NM-02), Aumua Amata

Coleman Radewagen (AS-At Large), Pete Sessions (TX-32), Randy Weber (TX-14), Daniel Webster (FL-11), Ted Yoho (FL-03) and Don Young (AK-At Large).

The letter was endorsed by: the American Farm Bureau Federation, Americans for Responsible Recreation Access, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Public Lands Council.

To read the full letter and recommendations click HERE.

Based on the parameters of President Trump's April 2017 Executive Order Secretary Zinke announced in the Federal Register that his review would include 27 different land and marine monuments.

The letter sent today is consistent with the Executive Order and recommends the revision, and in some cases, rescission of national monuments unilaterally designated by presidents in the last 20 years that are larger than 100,000 acres and/or that lacked public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

By going back to the drawing board and coordinating with state and local stakeholders, President Trump has an excellent opportunity to ensure communities are not harmed by the executive overreach of previous presidents and that these designations follow the spirit and letter of the law.

This letter emphasizes the extent to which the signer's consensus on monuments is that they must be statutorily compliant – i.e. in keeping with the "smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects" clause of the Antiquities Act, and that they must be of demonstrated scientific or historic interest. As such, the parameters forming this consensus necessarily demand the shrinking or rescission of a majority of the monuments under review.

The president's authority to set aside land for monuments and national parks is derived from the outdated Antiquities Act of 1906, which was intended by Congress to be used to protect prehistoric Indian ruins and artifacts on federal lands in the West. More than one hundred years later, the original intent of this law, which included language to limit these designations to "the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects," has been misused to the point of abuse. Compared to early application of the Antiquities Act, where the average size of a national monument was merely 422 acres, in recent years it became commonplace for a monument to exceed a million acres in size.

President Obama exceeded the intent of the Antiquities Act more than any other president in the history of the United States. With designations including the 1.35 million acre Bears Ears National Monument in Utah and the 300,000 acre Gold Butte National Monument in Nevada, President Obama designated or expanded 34 national monuments, more than any other president in history. These unilateral declarations locked-up 553,555,000 million acres of land and water.

National monument designations under the Antiquities Act typically have significant consequences that negatively affect grazing rights, water rights, wildfire prevention and other land management activities. These declarations also result in some of the most restrictive land-use regulations possible and also greatly impact hunting, fishing, OHV and other recreational activities.

Unilateral designations that circumvent Congress typically result in devastating consequences for rural America and our future economic prosperity. For every new acre claimed for the federal government, there is an acre of private, economically-productive land lost. Such actions

exacerbate challenges for local communities to fund public necessities like education and infrastructure, since lands added to the federal rolls can no longer be taxed.

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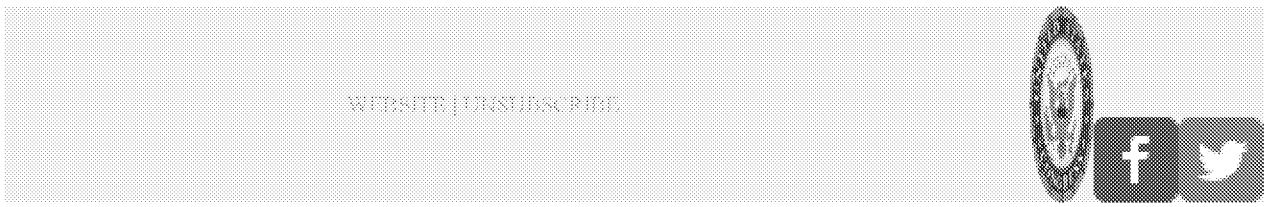
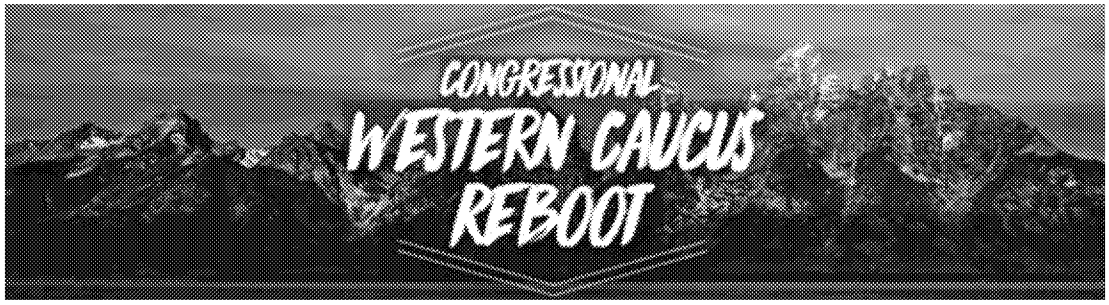


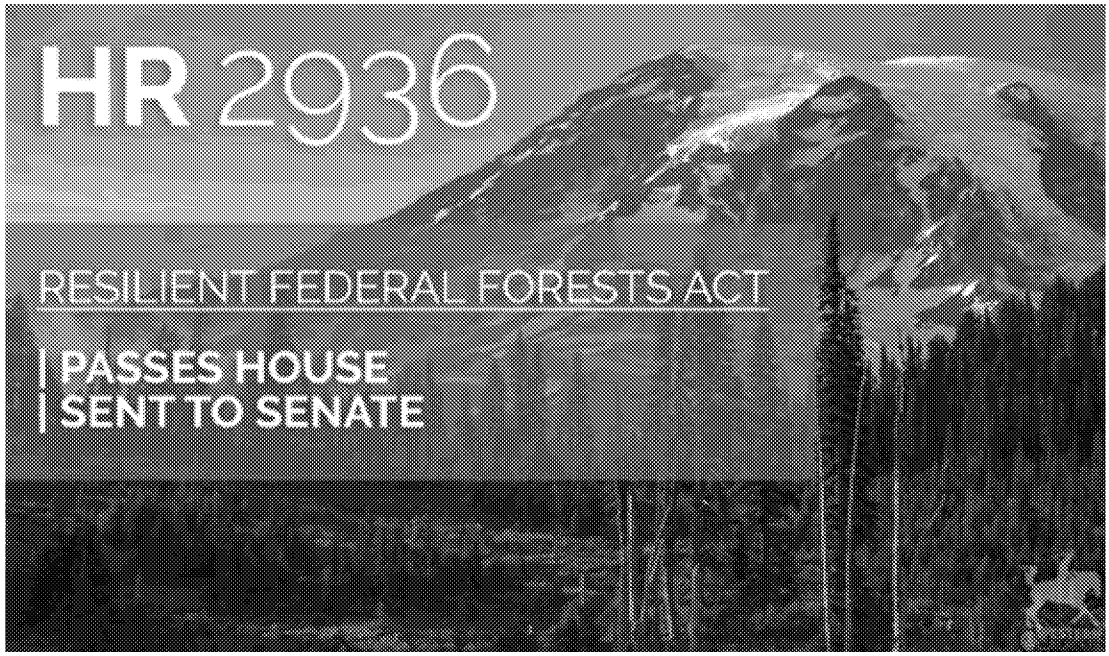
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/4/2017 8:01:04 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 11.04.2017



Week of 11.04.2017

House Passes Westerman's Resilient Federal Forests Act in Bipartisan Vote



On Wednesday, November 1, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Speaker of the House **Paul Ryan (WI-01)**, House Majority Leader **Kevin McCarthy (CA-23)**, Chief Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Executive Vice Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03),** Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart (UT-02)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, House Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, and Members Reps. **Doug Collins (GA-09)**, **Kristi**

Noem (SD-AL), **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)**, **Mimi Walters (CA-45)**, **Paul Cook (CA-08)**, **Jeff Denham (CA-10)**, **Doug LaMalfa (01)**, **Glenn 'GT' Thompson (PA-05)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-AL)**, and **Greg Gianforte (MT-AL)** issued statements following passage on the House Floor of Rep. Westerman's H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

Speaker Ryan said, "The Resilient Federal Forests Act addresses the obstructionist litigation by requiring litigants opposing forest management activity to come to the table rather than just saying "no." The legislation also incentivizes and rewards collaboration and encourages local participation in forest health projects. This legislation also fixes the fire "borrowing" issue, making sure these agencies have the funds they need to fight wildfires throughout the summer, and to start managing our forests proactively."

Congressman Gosar said, "Today, the House has taken a major step forward in making our federal forests healthy again. We have demonstrated our commitment to halting the practice of fire borrowing so that the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service don't have to rob fire prevention accounts in order to finance fire suppression. And we have finally passed reforms that will clear the way for proactive forestry management by the Forest Service once again. The cumulative effect of these actions will be that in a few years' time, phrases like 'wildfire season' and figures like $2.5 billion dollars spent on nearly nine million acres burnt will sound like made-up fictions. But before that can happen, the Senate needs to take a vote and the President needs to put his signature on my friend Congressman Westerman's great bill."

"This year has proven to be another catastrophic year for wildfires," **Congressman Westerman** said. "Dozens of lives have been lost, thousands of homes destroyed, and millions of acres burned. Congress spoke today and said enough is enough. We must give the Forest Service the tools it needs to stop these fires before they start. We must end the practice of fire borrowing and treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are, funding recovery efforts through FEMA. We must do what is right for our environment and stop these catastrophic wildfires. I thank Speaker Ryan, Leader McCarthy, and Chairman Bishop for their leadership on this issue and I thank my co-sponsors on both sides of the aisle."

Majority Leader McCarthy said, "Our federal forests are a tinderbox, and our current policy of neglect and over litigation created the conditions for wildfires. I've visited the results of this neglect, seen the communities wiped of the map, and walked through completely destroyed forests. In my own district, the Erskine Fire burned over 48,000 acres last year and destroyed nearly 300 homes.

"Devastating wildfires have ravaged the West, taking lives, destroying property and causing significant damage to our precious environment. These large wildfires are the result of decades of misguided forest management strategies, which have left federal land management agencies focused on firefighting rather than on managing forests to reduce these types of catastrophic fires in the first place," said **Congressman Tipton**. "The Resilient Federal Forests Act will take necessary steps to reverse this trend by streamlining the permitting process for management activities such as removing dead and downed timber, and allowing agencies to work with local experts to proactively mitigate devastating insect infestations."

"My constituents know as well as anyone the immense threat that wildfires pose to local communities. In just the past four years, the 4th District of Washington has seen the two largest fires in state history. We have lost hundreds of homes, business, and structures. My constituents are still struggling to recover from the Carlton Complex Fire in 2014 and the Okanogan Complex Fire in 2015. The human toll has been high. Several residents have lost their lives, including three firefighters in 2015. Active forest management is a matter of saving lives and livelihoods, of protecting our communities, and ensuring our constituents' healthy and safety, which is why I am proud to support passage of this legislation," stated **Congressman Newhouse**.

Congressman Stewart said: "Without a doubt, current federal policies have contributed to recent catastrophic wildfires. Wildfire management begins with proper land management. This bill reverses the tide of federal mismanagement and removes heavy handed regulations that have paralyzed forests managers for decades. I am proud that the House passed this legislation. Now the Senate must act to ensure we have healthy forests for generations to come."

To see the full press release, including background information and the statements of all 21 Members, click **HERE**. Read bill text is **HERE**.

Reps. Westerman and Gianforte Discuss Healthy Forests and Wildfires

On October 30th, Reps. Westerman and Gianforte sat down with KBZK Montana to discuss the worsening wildfire problem across the nation and in Montana, as well as the active management forestry strategies that will alleviate it.

Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the interview.

Majority Whip Scalise, Chair of House Natural Resources Bishop Introduces Oil & Gas Bill

On November 3rd, House Majority Whips Steve Scalise and House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop introduced H.R. 4239, the "Strengthening the Economy with Critical Untapped Resources to Expand American Energy Act," or SECURE American Energy Act. This bill would promote domestic energy development on America's Outer Continental Shelf as well as its onshore federal acreage.

House Natural Resources issued a statement on the bill, noting "Provisions in H.R. 4239 provide regulatory certainty and reliability, expand access to both conventional and renewable resources, establish revenue sharing with states, and streamline energy permitting processes to make federal lands and waters a competitive and attractive place for responsible development."

"The SECURE American Energy Act incentivizes offshore energy production by establishing revenue-sharing agreements for Alaska and qualified Atlantic states, and raises existing revenue-sharing caps so that Louisiana and other states can receive hundreds of millions in additional dollars to restore our coast. I am proud to introduce this important legislation with my colleagues Congressman Rob Bishop of Utah, Congressman Henry Cuellar of Texas, and Congressman Vincente Gonzalez of Texas," **Scalise said.** "The SECURE American Energy Act opens up more areas for responsible energy exploration, creating good jobs in communities all

across our country. Our bill empowers states and optimizes onshore resource management by delegating certain permitting functions to state regulatory agencies instead of Washington. I'm proud to introduce this important bipartisan bill with my colleagues, and I look forward to passing it through the House and getting it on President Trump's desk so he can sign it into law and we can create more jobs."

"The SECURE American Energy Act harnesses responsible development on America's federal lands to create long term energy strength and stability. Through cooperative federalism and commonsense regulatory practices we can fundamentally improve the way our federal lands and waters are managed for oil, gas and wind development. I thank Whip Scalise for his leadership and members on both sides of the aisle for their work and contributions to this bipartisan bill, and look forward to swiftly moving it through Committee and the House," **Bishop said.**

Read the full House Natural Resources Committee press release **HERE**. Bill text can be found **HERE**.

House Easily Passes Rep. Cramer's Vegetation Management Pilot on Suspension Vote

On Tuesday, October 31, the House of Representatives passed another forestry bill – Western Caucus Member Kevin Cramer's H.R. 2921, the National Forest System Vegetation Management Pilot Program Act of 2017. Rep. Cramer's bill would authorize the U.S. Forest

Service to "create a privately-funded pilot program to conduct limited and selective vegetation management near utility infrastructure outside of a right-of-way."

"A reliable supply of electricity is important on many levels, from human health and safety to commercial productivity," said Cramer. "Yet, deep within forests managed by federal agencies the risk for outages has been elevated with declining forest health and increased forest fires. Utility companies want to keep the electrons flowing, but a high liability standard keeps them from vegetation management beyond their right-of-way. My bill creates a pilot program completely funded by participating utility companies under a reduced liability standard near their right-of-way so companies will go in to reduce potential hazards to disrupt reliable service."

Click **HERE** to read Rep. Cramer's full press release on H.R. 2921's passage. Read the bill **HERE**.

WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Watch **Congressman Andy Biggs (AZ-05)** discuss his efforts working with Western Caucus and the Trump Administration in order to roll back cumbersome Obama regulations like CERCLA, the Workplace Examination Rule, BLM restrictions on recreational hunting, Sage Grouse management plans, and more. Click **HERE** or on the picture above to watch the address.

POST OF THE WEEK...

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/9/2017 1:24:51 AM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: GOP Chair McMorris Rodgers' Hydropower Modernization Bill Passes House

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 8, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

GOP Chair McMorris Rodgers' Hydropower Modernization Bill Passes House

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Republican Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, House Energy and Commerce Chairman **Greg Walden (OR-02)**, Executive Vice-Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)**, and Western Caucus Members **Doug Lamborn (CO-05), Ralph Abraham**

(LA-05) and **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** issued the following statements after passage of H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives:

"Hydropower is crucial to our way of life in the Pacific Northwest. It's clean, it's renewable, it's reliable, and it's one of the reasons why we in Eastern Washington enjoy some of the most affordable electricity rates in America," said **Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers**. "This bill won't change outcomes or environmental standards. Instead, it will speed up the relicensing process and save time and money. Providing relief from these costly and time-consuming regulatory processes will encourage investment in hydropower so we can continue to support this clean energy in our region."

"This bill is the culmination of five committee hearings and markups, along with several bipartisan staff meetings with the hydropower industry and tribes that have a stake in the licensing proceedings," said **Congressman Walden**. "The supporters of this bill, such as labor and industry organizations, recognize the vital role it will play in supporting job growth, local economic development, and providing much-needed reforms to the licensing process. Hydropower generates nearly 43 percent of electricity in Oregon and this dependable baseload power has helped drive the development of everything from value-added agriculture processing to data centers, creating jobs along the Columbia River and throughout Oregon. This emissions-free energy resource should not be bogged down in bureaucratic red tape any longer. At the end of the day, this important legislation promotes hydropower development, creates jobs, and provides consumers across the country with continued access to clean, affordable and reliable baseload power generation."

Congressman Gosar said, "The hydropower licensing backlog at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is unfortunate, but ultimately unacceptable if our country is going to achieve its true energy potential. Projects which are perfectly compliant with all relevant regulation are being held up for years due to a web of redundant referrals and the lack of a unified timetable for application reviews. Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers' bill threads the needle by designating FERC as the lead coordinating agency in order to eliminate redundancy and speed the process. This bill will also drastically decrease costs to relicense non-federal dams - a huge win for the West."

Congressman Tipton said, "Hydropower continues to play an important role as we work to develop an all-of-the-above energy strategy in the United States. The current licensing process for hydropower projects includes too many barriers and unreasonable wait times. The Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017 will help cut through some of the bureaucratic red tape that is preventing the development of this responsible and affordable energy source."

"This bill simply intends to bring hydropower permitting into the 21st Century by improving efficiency, accountability and transparency within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission while also reducing federal duplication. Even our friends across the aisle agree with our efforts to promote hydropower development. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congresswoman and the Committee to continue supporting clean, renewable hydropower and advancing our nation's 'all-of-the-above' energy strategy," said **Congressman Lamborn**.

Congressman Abraham said, "Streamlining our permitting process will cut the costs of doing business. I'm for anything that will let our small businesses develop faster and put more people to work, and this bill takes a smart approach to letting them do just that."

"Hydropower is a common sense use of California's waterways to potentially power thousands of homes. Unfortunately, it can take up to a decade to license a new project or relicense existing

infrastructure. This legislation is about modernizing that process and streamlining licensing requirements so that important projects can move forward as opposed to stalling for years. Local input is a critical component of this, as the 1st district is home to two of California's biggest hydro plants at Oroville Dam and Shasta Dam. It's important that we are able to utilize this practical and environmentally friendly method of producing energy," said **Congressman LaMalfa**.

Background:

Western Caucus Analysis

Hydropower has been a significant contributor to our country's energy infrastructure, having played a major role in the creation and pathing of the modern energy grid. Hydropower infrastructure generates massive amounts of power, especially in Western States. In the 13 western-most states, hydropower contributes **more than 22%** of all electricity generation. In states like Washington, Oregon and Idaho, hydropower is responsible for more than half of those states' electricity generation.

H.R. 3043 bill makes clear that hydropower is a renewable resource for purposes of all federal government programs and is a critical source of energy in the U.S. Specifically, the bill would define the term 'renewable energy' as electric energy generated from solar, wind, biomass, landfill gas, ocean (including tidal, wave, current, and thermal), geothermal, or municipal solid waste, or from a hydropower project.

Hydropower is already the most profuse of the renewable sources of energy, making up 46% of the energy generated in that category. But the potential to expand hydropower is promising. In fact, a **report by the Obama-era Department of Energy** concluded that U.S. hydropower production could grow by nearly 50% from current levels by 2050 by upgrading existent facilities, developing new facilities, and converting existent non-power-generating dams – approximately 97% of the country's current dam infrastructure – into hydropower facilities. That percentage could be even higher if the assumptions underlying it – including the fact of a stifling regulatory atmosphere – were adjusted.

The scale of existent hydropower infrastructure and its power generation capabilities, therefore, is matched only by its potential for expansion as our nation's preeminent clean renewable. In what is now a familiar story for energy generation, however, the prospect of hydropower's continued reliability and development will be subject to serious challenges by federal regulation absent legislative remedies. In particular, hydropower is stifled by decentralized regulatory jurisdiction by federal agencies and lack of recourse for administrative decisions which impede hydropower development despite statutory and regulatory compliance thereof.

Presently, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) exercises jurisdiction over 1,600 non-Federal hydropower projects at more than 2,500 dams under the Federal Power Act. FERC is authorized to issue renewable licenses lasting 30-50 years as well as time-unlimited exemptions for qualifying dams. According to FERC, the relicensing workload is increasing drastically; between FY 2017 and FY 2030, roughly 480 projects amounting to 45 percent of FERC-licensed projects will begin the relicensing process. Further, FERC is currently processing nearly 5,000 licensing and exemption-related filings each year, which is also expected to increase significantly.

The fact that multiple agencies and entities at the level of federal, state, local and Indian tribe are involved in the license review process, but that the process itself lacks overarching timetables and deadlines, means that the backlog at FERC is likely to become unsustainable absent reforms

which establish unified timetables and clearly demarcate agency jurisdictions during the course of a given application review period.

H.R. 3043 addresses these problems by establishing FERC as the centralized body issuing deadlines and defining parameters for other agencies involved in the hydropower application review process. The bill represents a vision for the future of American hydropower and job creation wherein the necessary demands of regulatory compliance and environmental sustainability work together with emerging technologies to ensure maximal development of our nation's energy production capacity. More than 143,000 people are employed in the hydropower industry.

Courtesy Energy and Commerce Committee

The House of Representatives today passed another Energy and Commerce Committee bill, H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017 by a vote of 257-166. H.R. 3043, sponsored by committee member and Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), seeks to modernize the licensing process for hydropower facilities.

Today, hydropower is the largest renewable energy source for electricity across the United States. It is an essential component of an all of the above energy strategy and there is tremendous opportunity to expand this emissions-free energy resource. However, the duration, complexity, and uncertainty of the hydropower licensing process has created significant barriers, preventing investments that would create jobs and benefit consumers.

H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act, would modernize the permitting process by: Improving administrative efficiency, accountability, and transparency; requiring timely decision making; and, reducing duplicative oversight from the multiple federal agencies that review hydro applications by designating the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as the lead agency.

Click **HERE** to read the text of the bill.

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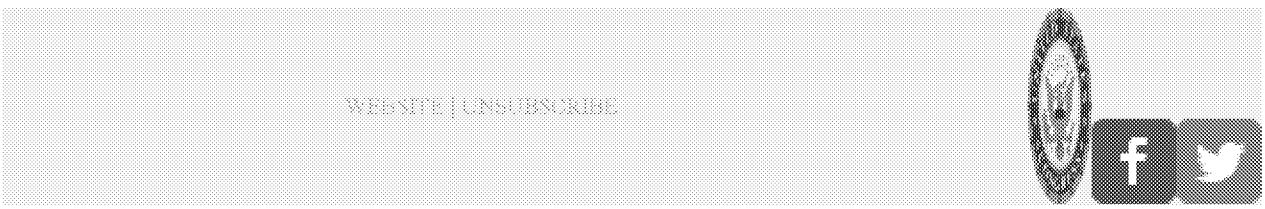


Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/8/2017 11:58:06 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Three American Energy Dominance Bills Pass Committee House with Bipartisan Vote, Sent to Senate

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 8, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Three American Energy Dominance Bills Pass Committee

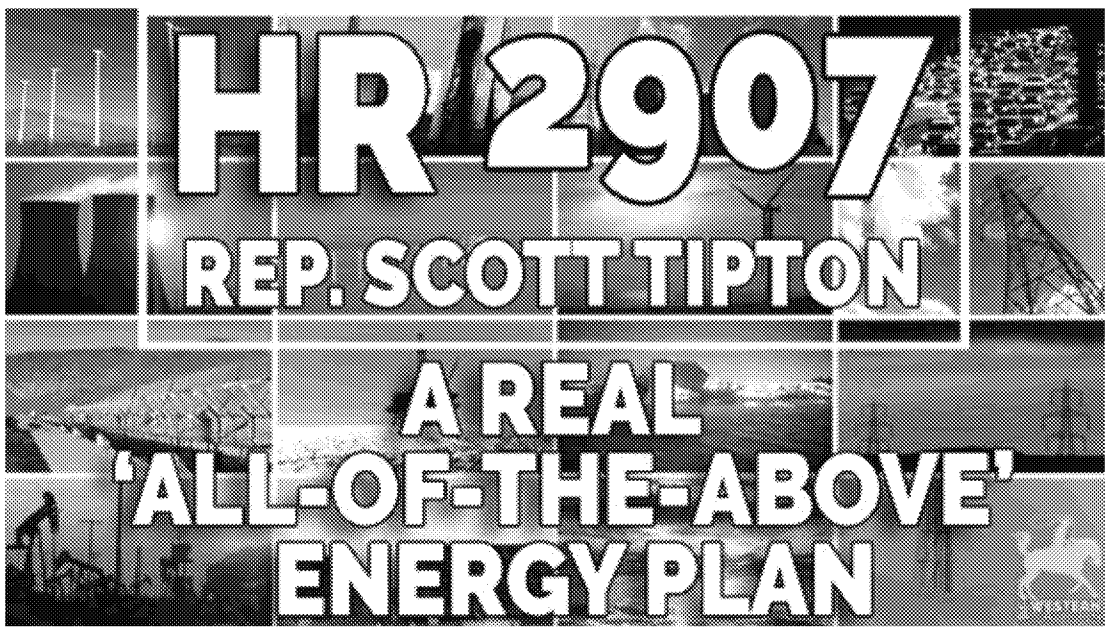
WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, House Majority Whip **Steve Scalise (LA-01)**, Executive Vice-Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)** and Western Caucus Members **Tom Emmer (MN-06), Ralph Abraham (LA-05)** and **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** issued the following statements after passage of Majority Whip Scalise's H.R.

4239 (the SECURE American Energy Act), Rep. Tipton's H.R. 2907 (the Planning for American Energy Act of 2017) and Rep. Emmer's H.R. 3905 (the Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act) during a House Committee on Natural Resources' full committee markup:

"After months of stakeholder input, Committee oversight and multiple legislative drafts, we have a comprehensive bipartisan upstream energy bill to bring to the House floor. These onshore and offshore provisions provide certainty and access to spur investment and job creation through the development of federal lands. With this legislation, we can unlock our vast energy potential, advance American energy dominance and generate revenues at all levels of government. I thank Whip Scalise for his continued leadership and the contributions of members, including Reps. Cuellar and González, in developing this bipartisan legislation," **Chairman Bishop said.**

"The SECURE American Energy Act will create good jobs in communities all across our country, empowers states and optimizes onshore resource management, and raises revenue-sharing caps that dedicate critical funds to Louisiana's coastal restoration. This bipartisan bill is good for jobs and good for Louisiana. I'm proud that it passed out of the Natural Resources Committee today, and look forward to passing it through the House with a strong vote and getting it on President Trump's desk so he can sign it into law," **Whip Scalise said.**

"We are blessed to live in a country with abundant natural resources, and the bills we passed today take great strides toward unleashing America's energy-producing potential, which will grow our economy and put more people to work," stated **Congressman Abraham**.



Congressman Tipton said, "The Planning for American Energy Act would set the United States on a path towards an all-of-the-above energy approach to better meet the changing needs of the American people, keep energy costs affordable, create more jobs, and strengthen national security. Creating a viable energy future in our country must be a top priority, and I'm glad that my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee agree. I look forward to seeing this important legislation pass through the House soon."

"Securing America's energy future will require a comprehensive plan and involvement from many federal and state entities, as well as utilizing all of the natural resources that our nation has

been blessed with. Creating a strong and structured energy infrastructure that gets the most out of our natural resources will ease sustainability concerns and create jobs along the way. To do this, we must also remove duplicative federal permitting regulations that accomplish in a year what the states could do in a month – bringing progress to a screeching halt. The three important bills that we passed today in the Natural Resources Committee will set the stage for us to achieve greater American energy independence and sustainability, and I'd like to see them move forward quickly," said **Congressman LaMalfa**.

"Today, we came one-step closer to undoing the Obama Administration's politically motivated actions in Northern Minnesota," said **Congressman Emmer**. "I am proud that my bipartisan MINER Act passed the House Committee on Natural Resources. Passage of this legislation ensures Minnesotans have a say in sweeping bureaucratic decisions made in Washington. Environmentally responsible mining and exploration in Northern Minnesota will unleash our ability to tap into our abundance of natural resources, and provide for a better way of life for our children, just as those in Northern Minnesota have done for decades. We can preserve our beautiful state without permanently destroying any future job creation or economic development. We can utilize the largest untapped copper-nickel deposit in the world for Americans, and in an environmentally sound way. While there are still numerous environmental and safety benchmarks that must be met in the coming years before any mining can occur, passage of the MINER Act will let our federal, state, and local environmental review process to proceed. I am thankful for the leadership of Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Chairman Paul Gosar, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop, and the support of my colleagues – the future of Minnesota is brighter because of today's vote."

Congressman Gosar said, "It would be amazing progress for our country's pro-energy agenda if we were able to get one of these bills through the House Natural Resources Committee. The fact that we passed all three in a single day is a testament to Chairman Bishop's talented leadership of the Committee. Majority Whip Scalise and Chairman Bishop's H.R. 4239 establishes improved processes for oil, gas and wind that will make better use of our plentiful offshore resources and empowers states to streamline onshore oil and gas development. This bill is the posterchild for

American energy dominance. Vice-Chairman Tipton's bill cultivates our country's potential by requiring the federal government to chart a course for comprehensive, all-of-the-above energy production. Finally, Mr. Emmer's H.R. 3905 reverses a heavy-handed move by the Obama Administration that unilaterally withdrew hundreds of thousands of acres in Minnesota from mineral development and improperly terminated two federal mineral leases. A President shouldn't be able to halt community-driven development that will provide billions for public education simply because he decides he doesn't like energy and mineral production. I thank all four gentleman for their commitment to sensible, sustainable energy policies."

Background:

Today, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed nine bills. The full markup video and more information can be viewed **HERE**.

Included in these measures are three important pieces of legislation that support American energy dominance, roll back job-killing mandates from the previous administration and embrace a true all-of-the-above energy policy:

- **H.R. 4239 (Rep. Steve Scalise),** *"Strengthening the Economy with Critical Untapped Resources to Expand American Energy Act"* or *"the SECURE American Energy Act"*.
- **H.R. 3905 (Rep. Tom Emmer),** *"Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act"* or *"the Miner Act"*.
- **H.R. 2907 (Rep. Scott Tipton),** *"Planning for American Energy Act of 2017"*.

H.R. 4239, the SECURE American Energy Act

Courtesy of the House Committee on Natural Resources

The SECURE American Energy Act seeks to optimize management of our nation's energy resources by increasing access to and promoting the development of oil, gas, and wind energy. Title I, or the ASTRO Act, facilitates access to oil and gas resources across America's Outer Continental Shelf ("OCS") lands. This bill establishes a revenue sharing framework to distribute revenues collected from oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf to certain coastal states.

The Act increases the amount that can be distributed to qualifying Gulf states under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, and limits the President's authority to withdraw certain areas of the OCS from oil and gas leasing. Finally, this bill increases regulatory certainty by requiring the execution of all approved oil and gas lease sales, should the Secretary of the Interior call for a revised national lease sale program. Furthermore, this bill strategizes offshore wind lease sales by requiring feasibility and compatibility studies, and streamlines the MMPA permitting process.

Title II, or the "ONSHORE Act," enables states with established permitting and regulatory programs to manage certain federal permitting and regulatory responsibilities for oil and gas development on Federal lands within their borders. This Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to designate preferred leasing areas for oil and gas development and to defer to the states regarding the regulation of hydraulic fracturing practices.

A press release from the House Committee on Resources on this bill can be viewed **HERE**.

H.R. 3905, the MINER Act

On January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous administration published a mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register to restrict approximately 235,000 acres of federal land, roughly 420,000 acres when you include state and private lands, in northeast Minnesota from future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development.

This immediately placed this vast area off limits to development for up to two years while the 20–year withdrawal application is being considered. Twin Metals two leases, were also improperly terminated by the previous administration. Leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

All this was done without the mining company most harmed by this action even being allowed to propose a mining plan.

The Boundary Waters is a 1.1. million acre wilderness area that already has buffer zones between the forest. No one is advocating to mine in the wilderness area or surrounding buffer zones. No one is looking to skirt environmental laws or *National Environmental Policy Act (*NEPA). Any mining plan, once it is actually allowed to be proposed, would have to go through NEPA.

The valuable mineral deposits are in the Superior National Forest, not the Boundary Waters Wilderness Area or surrounding buffers. In fact, there are more than 4 billion tons of ore containing copper, nickel and other metal resources within Minnesota's Duluth Complex, which represents the largest known undeveloped deposit of strategic metals in the world. Congress has authorized mining in the forest by law two different times, and the 1986 Forest Service and 2004 Forest Plans both concluded mining is "a desired condition" in the Superior National Forest.

Minnesota is projected to lose up to $3 billion in royalty revenues for the State's Permanent School Trust Fund that would support nearly 900,000 K-12 students statewide if the withdrawal application and cancelled leases are not rejected by the new administration.

An excellent video produced by Jobs for Minnesotans where you can hear from the people of Minnesota can be viewed by clicking **HERE** or on the picture below.

A press release from Rep. Emmer on this bill can be viewed **HERE**. A previous Western Caucus press release on this issue can be viewed **HERE**.

H.R. 2907, Planning for American Energy Act of 2017

Courtesy of the House Committee on Natural Resources

This bill directs the Secretary of Interior to develop an all-of-the-above energy production strategy for all onshore Federal lands every 4 years.

Under current law, the Administration is required to submit to Congress a plan for the offshore oil and gas leasing program every five years. This requirement ensures that comprehensive planning for the responsible development of our offshore energy resources occurs at regular intervals.

However, such a planning requirement for onshore energy resources does not exist.

H.R. 2907 seeks to address inefficiencies in the current approach to onshore energy

development on Federal land by implementing an all-of-the-above Quadrennial Federal Onshore Energy Production Strategy based on projected energy demand over a 30-year period.

The bill instructs the Secretary to include domestic strategic production objectives for onshore oil and gas, coal, strategic and critical energy minerals, renewables, unconventional sources and helium, including on Tribal lands, as well as any other energy resources that the Secretary chooses to include.

A press release from Rep. Tipton on this bill can be viewed **HERE.**

###

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Message

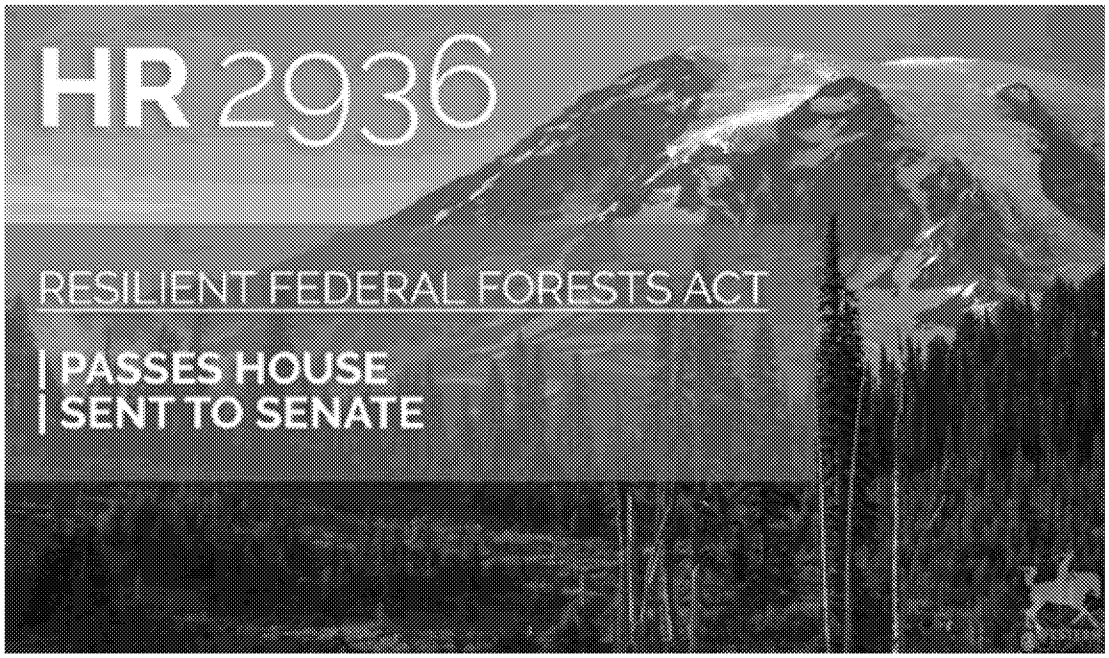
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/1/2017 11:19:31 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Westerman's Forestry Reform Bill Passes House with Bipartisan Vote, is Sent to Senate

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: November 1, 2017
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Westerman's Forestry Reform Bill Passes House with Bipartisan Vote, is Sent to Senate



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, Speaker of the House **Paul Ryan (WI-01)**, House Majority Leader **Kevin McCarthy (CA-23)**, Chief Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Executive Vice Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03),** Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart (UT-02)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, House Conference Chair **Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**, and Members Reps. **Doug Collins (GA-09)**, **Kristi Noem (SD-AL)**, **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)**, **Mimi Walters (CA-45)**, **Paul Cook (CA-**

08), **Jeff Denham (CA-10)**, **Doug LaMalfa (01)**, **Glenn 'GT' Thompson (PA-05)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-AL)**, and **Greg Gianforte (MT-AL)** issued statements following passage on the House Floor of Rep. Westerman's H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act:

Congressman Gosar said, "Today, the House has taken a major step forward in making our federal forests healthy again. We have demonstrated our commitment to halting the practice of fire borrowing so that the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service don't have to rob fire prevention accounts in order to finance fire suppression. And we have finally passed reforms that will clear the way for proactive forestry management by the Forest Service once again. The cumulative effect of these actions will be that in a few years' time, absurd phrases like 'wildfire season' and astronomical figures like $2.5 billion dollars spent on nearly nine million acres burnt will sound like made-up fictions. But before that can happen, the Senate needs to take a vote and the President has to put his signature on my friend Congressman Westerman's great bill."

Speaker Ryan stated, "The Resilient Federal Forests Act addresses the obstructionist litigation by requiring litigants opposing forest management activity to come to the table rather than just saying "no." The legislation also incentivizes and rewards collaboration and encourages local participation in forest health projects. This legislation also fixes the fire "borrowing" issue, making sure these agencies have the funds they need to fight wildfires throughout the summer, and to start managing our forests proactively."

Majority Leader McCarthy said, "Our federal forests are a tinderbox, and our current policy of neglect and over litigation created the conditions for wildfires. I've visited the results of this neglect, seen the communities wiped of the map, and walked through completely destroyed forests. In my own district, the Erskine Fire burned over 48,000 acres last year and destroyed nearly 300 homes.

"This year has proven to be another catastrophic year for wildfires," **Congressman Westerman** said. "Dozens of lives have been lost, thousands of homes destroyed, and millions of acres burned. Congress spoke today and said enough is enough. We must give the Forest Service the tools it needs to stop these fires before they start. We must end the practice of fire borrowing and treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are, funding recovery efforts through FEMA. We must do what is right for our environment and stop these catastrophic wildfires. I thank Speaker Ryan, Leader McCarthy, and Chairman Bishop for their leadership on this issue and I thank my co-sponsors on both sides of the aisle."

"Devastating wildfires have ravaged the West, taking lives, destroying property and causing significant damage to our precious environment. These large wildfires are the result of decades of misguided forest management strategies, which have left federal land management agencies focused on firefighting rather than on managing forests to reduce these types of catastrophic fires in the first place," said **Congressman Tipton**. "The Resilient Federal Forests Act will take necessary steps to reverse this trend by streamlining the permitting process for management activities such as removing dead and downed timber, and allowing agencies to work with local experts to proactively mitigate devastating insect infestations."

"My constituents know as well as anyone the immense threat that wildfires pose to local communities. In just the past four years, the 4th District of Washington has seen the two largest fires in state history. We have lost hundreds of homes, business, and structures. My constituents are still struggling to recover from the Carlton Complex Fire in 2014 and the Okanogan Complex Fire in 2015. The human toll has been high. Several residents have lost their lives, including three

firefighters in 2015. Active forest management is a matter of saving lives and livelihoods, of protecting our communities, and ensuring our constituents' healthy and safety, which is why I am proud to support passage of this legislation," stated **Congressman Newhouse**.

Congressman Stewart said: "Without a doubt, current federal policies have contributed to recent catastrophic wildfires. Wildfire management begins with proper land management. This bill reverses the tide of federal mismanagement and removes heavy handed regulations that have paralyzed forests managers for decades. I am proud that the House passed this legislation. Now the Senate must act to ensure we have healthy forests for generations to come."

"We in New Mexico are all too familiar with the economic and environmental devastation created by catastrophic wildfires," said **Congressman Pearce**. "How we manage our federal forests is badly in need of updating to ensure communities, watersheds, endangered species, local businesses, and firefighters are kept safe. We must increase and expedite forest thinning and other forest treatment projects to restore forest health across the country. Today's common sense bill will cut government red tape and streamline the approval processes for essential forest management projects to ensure our fire-prone, federal forests get the treatment they need."

"The Forest Service has warned us that our forests are in terrible shape," said **Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers**. "When you don't actively manage forests, diseased and dying trees serve as fuel for the next major fire. We've seen these catastrophic fires right here in Eastern Washington, and we must take action to protect our forests and reduce our risk of fire. This legislation proposes real solutions to create healthier, more resilient forests."

"Wildfires have threatened too many of our forests in northeast Georgia and around the country, so we're taking smart steps through the Resilient Federal Forests Act to get the federal agencies the tools they need to protect our land," said **Congressman Collins**.

"The years-long pine beetle epidemic has turned much of South Dakota's Black Hills into a tinder box," said **Congresswoman Noem**. "We are fortunate to have so many dedicated foresters working in this area, and I'm proud to have scored some critical victories in support of their efforts over the years. The *Resilient Federal Forests Act* would put additional tools at their disposal. With the House's stamp of approval, I strongly urge the Senate to take the legislation up quickly and allow these critical resources to be deployed."

"Wildfire disasters don't typically receive as much national attention as other natural disasters," said **Congressman Schrader**. "But all corners of the country watched as the fires out west devastated homes and communities during this devastating wildfire season. Our current laissez-faire approach to forest management, with exclusively reactive efforts to fight increasingly horrific wildfires that threaten and destroy our communities is completely inadequate and becoming more and more costly. The bipartisan bill we passed today rewards communities that are proactive and collaborative in the stewardship of their forests, with rural advisory committees and wildfire protection plans to manage their forests without redundant NEPA processes. With this bill, we're empowering good leadership and good management, providing for research and development and innovation in renewable forest timber construction technologies, and bringing together environmental and timber communities. While this bill is by no means perfect, and is not a silver bullet, it's a step forward in the right direction as we work to curb the unnecessary and costly destruction caused by these fires."

Congresswoman Walters stated, "Three weeks ago, the Canyon Fire burned over 6,000 acres, destroyed 25 structures, damaged dozens more, and forced over 16,000 Orange County residents to evacuate their homes and businesses. The cost of extinguishing this wildfire and its economic

impact have yet to be determined, but it is clear that hazardous fuel buildup endangers communities and costs taxpayers more and more each year. The current federal wildfire management program is unsustainable. I am proud to have supported the Resilient Federal Forest Act to put our U.S. Forest Service on a fiscally responsible path that will undoubtedly save countless lives in the years to come."

"This past year we've continued to see firsthand in California the devastating consequences of wildfires, both environmentally and economically. This critical bipartisan legislation will help reduce the threat of future wildfires by instituting reforms to improve forest management, improve wildlife habitat, and streamline the environmental review process," said **Congressman Cook**.

"When we fail to actively manage our forests and federal lands, we put ourselves and our neighbors at risk. The Resilient Federal Forests Act will allow us to reduce the presence of forest materials – such as dead or disease-infested trees – that fuel massive wildfires. It also solves the fire-borrowing problem to improve our response to wildfire suppression. I applaud my colleagues in the House for passing this important bill to help protect Californians and all Americans from out-of-control burning of our forestlands," said **Congressman Denham**.

Congressman LaMalfa said, "A complete lack of forest management has left our forests more combustible than ever – leaving our firefighters wholly unprepared to contain overwhelming wildfires that quickly get out of hand. Forest fires will occur, but we can take logical steps to manage them that will help prevent them from spreading and extinguish them more quickly – resulting in less damage and lower costs. The Resilient Federal Forests Act will allow the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to properly manage our federal forests, which will improve overall forest health and reduce the risk of such severe wildfires."

"Our national forests are becoming increasingly overgrown with hazardous fuel due to lack of active management," said **Congressman Thompson**. "The Resilient Federal Forests Act is a vital piece of legislation for the Forest Service, allowing for more authority and flexibility for improved forest management. As a member of both the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committees, I understand how important it is we provide our Forest Service with the tools needed to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires, insect and disease infestation and damage to municipal watersheds. I applaud my colleagues for their support of this common-sense legislation to combat future forest fires."

Congressman Lamorn said, "Wildfire funding is vital for western states, particularly my home of Colorado. I support legislation that protects our land and secures protection for our future. The Resilient Federal Forests Act speeds up the reforestation process, incentivizes collaboration among government and organizations, and creates new programs to effectively respond after a disastrous wildfire."

"I am proud to support Congressman Westerman's Resilient Federal Forests Act, to take a proactive approach to forest management and disaster mitigation. This legislation improves our ability to prepare for, and prevent, future wildfires and shifts the federal government away from its current practice of simply responding to crisis after crisis, costing billions of dollars and putting homes and American families at risk," said **Congressman Emmer**.

Congresswoman Cheney stated, "This year has been one of the largest wildfire years in our nation's history and we have seen livelihoods across the west threatened. In my home state of Wyoming, we find ourselves in an indefensible situation. Mismanagement of our forests by the federal government and years of bad policy are causing and exacerbating fires, putting our forests,

our water, our wildlife, and, most importantly, our people at risk. The Resilient Federal Forest Act is an important first step and a bipartisan effort to begin to help improve management of our forests."

"The Resilient Federal Forests Act provides common sense reforms that will benefit Montana's forests, economy, and environment. Meaningful forest management will improve the health of our forests, boost wildlife habitats, create good-paying Montana jobs, and reduce the severity of our wildfires. The amount of public support for more active forest management has been tremendous. Conservation organizations, foresters, stakeholders, and local leaders throughout Montana recognize the need for better forest management, and I commend them for taking steps to help ensure we start managing our forests again. I will continue to advocate for healthier forests in Montana and throughout the West. I encourage the Senate to act quickly on this bill to provide Montanans with relief and a long-term solution to address catastrophic wildfires," concluded **Congressman Gianforte**.

Background:

Over the last decade, wildfires have overtaken the West. The underlying problems have gotten to be so severe that states which traditionally do not have wildfire problems are finding themselves having to reckon with thousands of acres burned, homes evacuated and the air filled with smoke.

Some figures drive this point home. 8.8 million acres burned across the United States this year alone, costing the United States Forest Service (USFS) $2.5 billion dollars in fire suppression costs. Over 50,000 significant fires were burning this summer at once, and a total of 80 million acres were considered high-risk due to forest service lacking the resources to apply management to them beforehand.

The search for legislative solutions to the wildfire problem began from the ground-up in the 115th Congress. The House held multiple hearings and consulted dozens of experts in seeking to draft wildfire and management reform legislation. Environmental concerns and air quality were key factors throughout this process, with additional hearings devoted to these issues.

Two major problems were identified: for one, the USFS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have encountered significant regulatory and judicial roadblocks to instituting the sort of active management of our forests that would reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire.

But even if the aforementioned impediments were ameliorated, these agencies still faced a more significant problem: themselves. Because of the increasing costs of wildfires, USFS has been maxing out its suppression account each year and has been forced to raid its forest management and other accounts in order to put out fires. They've had to use resources designed to *prevent* forest fires in order to *put them out*. This merry-go-round practice is called "fire borrowing," and it has dramatically exacerbated the problem of catastrophic wildfires.

Congressman Bruce Westerman's H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act, provides solutions for each of these systemic issues. His bill is a package of forest management reforms that include regulatory expedition for forest management projects, a new arbitration pilot program for court cases in which an injunction against forest management projects is sought, as well as new incentives for agencies to coordinate with state and local governments to seek forest management solutions. The net effect of these reforms will be to reduce the barriers to proactive forest management while preserving environmental protections and the legal right to recompense for harm or breach.

Finally, his bill introduces a new funding mechanism for catastrophic wildfire disasters. H.R. 2936 would establish a wildfire sub-account within FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. Subject to Congressional appropriations, the new account would lie untouched and separate from other disaster funding until wildfire suppression costs expend all of the funds in BLM or USFS's own accounts. The bill would prohibit these agencies from engaging in "fire borrowing," and instead establishes a process whereby the Secretaries of Interior or Agriculture request of the President a transfer of funds in the amount required to cover suppression costs.

A list of outside support for the bill can be found **HERE**. Bill text is **HERE**. Click **HERE** to read more background information about the bill courtesy the House Natural Resources Committee.

###

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Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 11/1/2017 7:28:10 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Legislative Analysis - HR 2936 (Resilient Federal Forests Act)
Attachments: Western Caucus HR 2936 Legislative Analysis.pdf

CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS

Western Caucus Legislative Analysis

H.R. 2936 - Resilient Federal Forests Act
Rep. Bruce Westerman (AR-04)

On the House Floor:

Today, November 1, 2017, the House will consider H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act, a bill introduced by Representative Bruce Westerman (AR-04). This bipartisan legislation takes a two-pronged approach to forestry reform by: 1) Providing tools and removing barriers to effective forest management practices by federal land management agencies, and 2) Creating a new wildfire disaster sub-account subject to appropriations which the Departments of Interior and Agriculture can draw upon in the event that wildfire suppression accounts are depleted, thereby ending the practice of "fire-borrowing."

Summary:

Introduction

Comprehensive forestry reform is years in the making. The scale and destruction wrought by wildfires has been steadily increasing year after year. This last year was the most expensive fire season on record; the federal government spent nearly $2.5 billion to suppress fires across more than 8.8 million acres. These issues have only worsened the longer they've remained unaddressed at the federal level.

Complications arising from seasonal catastrophic wildfires are numerous. Property damage, displacement of homeowners and severely decreased air quality are the major first-order effects. House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden recently led a hearing examining the environmental and air quality impacts of worsening wildfires to dramatic effect. It is well-established that carbon release from a large wildfire is immense – for scale, a large wildfire's emissions are often greater than the total vehicle emissions from vehicles across an entire state over the course of a year.

The tangle of problems and costs caused by catastrophic wildfires are themselves rooted in inefficiencies and misallocations at the level of agency review processes, the judicial system, and poor federal funding mechanisms. The overall effect of these systemic causes of wildfires is to direct resources away from active forestry management – reinforcing the likelihood and severity of catastrophic wildfires in the first place.

This bipartisan bill adopts forward-thinking active management strategies that will combat catastrophic wildfires before they get started. Specifically, H.R. 2939 addresses each of these systemic causes of wildfires by instituting the following:

Funding Fix

"Fire borrowing" is a practice in which the United States Forest Service's – having quickly expended appropriated funds in its wildfire suppression account early in the wildfire season – uses its funds designated for other purposes in order to fund fire suppression. As has been the case in recent years, even fire borrowing has not ensured adequate funding for fire suppression, and subsequent disaster supplementals are necessary to get through the season. This practice is backwards from an appropriations standpoint. The fact that Forest Service raids the accounts intended for the very management that will prevent wildfires in subsequent years means that a funding fix is in order if we are to reduce the severity and frequency of catastrophic wildfires.

H.R. 2936 provides a mechanism fix by establishing a wildfire sub-account within FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. This bill establishes no new mandatory spending. Rather, the sub-account will be subject to Congressional appropriations, distinct from appropriations for the parent account. If either Agriculture via the Forest Service, or Interior via the Bureau of Land Management utilize the entirety of their accounts appropriated for wildfire suppression, they can request that the President declare a "major disaster" for wildfire. Subsequent to such a declaration, the President would then direct that funds in the new sub-account be transferred for immediate fire suppression use.

It should be noted that funds appropriated for the general Disaster Relief Fund at FEMA will not "compete" for allocation with the wildfire sub-account, as the accounts will be appropriated distinctly from one another.

Finally, agencies would be barred from transferring funds from their other accounts into their fire suppression accounts, i.e. from engaging in "fire borrowing." When traditional accounts are depleted, agency heads' next, and only, course of action is to initiate the process of requesting funds for the wildfire disaster account.

Expedited Regulatory Review

Another reform within H.R. 2936 authorizes expedited regulatory and agency review processes for forest management. Management projects which work to combat wildfires and ensure forest health would be subject to "categorical exclusions" under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Far from imposing environmental damage, such activities work to prevent ecological damage caused by unnatural wildfire and therefore are worthy of NEPA exclusion. Likewise, activities subject to a categorical exclusion would be exempt from the Endangered Species Act (ESA)'s consultation requirements provided the activity is unlikely to adversely affect a listed species. Agency consultation, if required by ESA, is also expedited.

Forestry Litigation Reform

Management strategies must be consistently implemented in order to be effective in preventing catastrophic wildfires. Legal challenges by external organizations have had the effect in past years of halting management activities that, though they are later given the judicial green-light, required resolution far quicker than the courts could provide, i.e., the window for management to be effective in preventing fires had come and gone. Because our forests don't always run according to the docket schedules of the courts, this can obviously prove problematic.

In response, H.R. 2936 establishes a seven-year pilot program that requires litigating parties to come to the table in binding arbitration and settle on solutions. Agriculture and Interior would have discretion over those cases which are to be arbitrated as opposed to litigated, providing them greater flexibility in experimenting with and determining the kinds of cases that are likely to be effectively arbitrated. In arbitration – a 90-day process – legal challengers to a forestry plan must provide an alternative to the activity being challenged, which is then considered against the original Forest Service or BLM proposal by the outside arbitrator. This pilot program is expected to keep the pace of management going at a speed necessary for the upkeep of healthy forests. The bill also limits the length of preliminary court injunction against forestry activities to 60 days on a renewable basis, a modified period which is appropriate given the timeliness of the activity in question.

Secure Rural Schools (SRS) modifications

The bill includes provisions aimed at bolstering revenue directed towards the SRS program. Namely, the bill would require that 50% of the funds for projects on federal land be directed towards uses that include the sale of forest products. This will have the net effect of increasing funding streams for SRS and increasing overall educational resources in those communities surrounded by federal land exempt from local property taxes.

The bill includes other SRS provisions aimed at ensuring that SRS payments are not provided in lieu of state funding and that program payouts are classified appropriately by counties and states to maximize educational funding.

* * * *

Read statements by House Natural Resource Chairman Rob Bishop and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy **HERE**. Read Chr. Rob Bishop's op-ed on forestry reform **HERE**. Bill text can be found **HERE.**

Similar legislation introduced by Rep. Westerman passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 262-167 in the 114th Congress.

What They Are Saying:

Click HERE to see a list of groups in support of H.R. 2936.

Speaker Paul Ryan - *"The Resilient Federal Forests Act addresses the obstructionist litigation by requiring litigants opposing forest management activity to come to the table rather than just saying "no." The legislation also incentivizes and rewards collaboration and encourages local participation in forest health projects. This legislation also fixes the fire "borrowing" issue, making sure these agencies have the funds they need to fight wildfires throughout the summer, and to start managing our forests proactively."*

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy - "*California is recovering after the worst wildfires in our state's history. This tragic disaster puts new emphasis on Congress to fix our fire management and suppression programs. This bill makes necessary changes to how forest management programs are funded and includes reforms to keep our forests healthy and less susceptible to the types of fires that ravaged our state this month. With the House acting on this bill next week, the Senate – including California's Senators – should follow suit in short order to prepare our communities against future wildfire threats.*"

National Association of State Foresters – *"NASF represents the heads of state forestry agencies in all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the US Territories... We feel the ['Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017'] would indeed create the end results our members support as our members want to see more active management of federal forest lands. Expedited planning and analysis, prompt response to catastrophic events, alternative dispute resolution, greater collaboration and less costly litigation are all outcomes that for which we strongly advocate."*

National Association of Counties & Western Interstate Region – "*On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) the only organization representing the nation's 3,069 counties, parishes, and boroughs, and the Western Interstate Region (WIR), we write to express support for H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. Thank you* [*Rep. Westerman*] *for your leadership in introducing legislation to promote the active management of our nation's federal lands and forests, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and promote collaborative approaches to address natural resource management challenges.*"

National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association – *"The 'Resilient Federal Forests Act' strikes a balanced approach in managing the national forest system by making more land available for logging in an environmentally sustainable way. Poor land management during the past 30 years has led to declining health of national forests. This has resulted in fewer jobs and productivity in the forest sector, fewer board feet of domestically produced lumber entering the market, and a marked increase in acreage ravaged by insects, disease and fire."*

National Association of Home Builders – *"On behalf of the more than 140,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to express NAHB's strong support for The 'Resilient National Forests Act of 2017' and express our appreciation to the House Committee on Natural Resources for continuing this important discussion on the health of our nation's forest. Better forest management practices that are also mindful of environmental considerations will help strengthen the housing supply chain and promote affordable housing opportunities for all Americans."*

National Cattlemen's Beef Association – *"H.R. 2936 is proactive, common sense legislation… It is scientifically proven that proper timber management and rangeland management through grazing is the key to maintain healthy forests and preventing catastrophic wildfires."*

Intertribal Timber Council – "*The Executive Board of the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) supports H.R. 2936, the 'Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017,' sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman. We wish to particularly express our strong support for Title VII, which will enhance tribal input and involvement in the restoration of federal forest lands. Such restoration projects are sorely needed to improve forest health and reduce threats to lands held in trust for Indians as well as non-trust federal land upon which Indian tribes access for traditional, subsistence and treaty guaranteed purposes."*

Coalition of 25 outdoor recreation and conservationist groups - "*Our nation's federal lands play a vital role in maintaining healthy forests that are resilient to threats at a landscape level from fire, pests, disease and insects. Through incentives and expedited process, consistent with informed science, the bill will help ensure that timber harvest and the creation of young forest habitat for wildlife remains viable on US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Additionally, it remedies the budget fire funding problem (borrowing from other line items) that our country faces when fighting catastrophic wildfires.*"

Cost:

According to Congressional Budget Office Analysis, enacting H.R. 2936 would cost $20 million over the 2017-2027 period subject to necessary appropriations. Direct spending would be increased by $6 million over 2019-2027, as part of the provisions providing payments to certain Oregon counties.

Title XI of the bill was added by the Rules Committee Print after CBO had scored. It would allow appropriation's into the wildfire sub-account to be eligible for funding under the Disaster Cap adjustment. This is a potential increase in the Disaster Cap, and not of actual spending, and therefore this adjustment found in the Rules print would not score under CBO scoring procedures (wherein only appropriated funds utilizing increased caps score).

Amendments:

I. **Schrader (D-OR)**: This amendment would strike timber production from the list of forest management activities designated for categorical exclusion.
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'No' vote

II. **Khanna (D-CA)** - Amendment No. 2 - Strikes Subtitle B of Title III, the Forest Management Activity Arbitration Pilot Program, from the bill
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'No' vote

III. **O'Halleran (D-AZ)** - Amendment No. 3 - Strikes sections 801 and 903
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'No' vote

IV. **Cardenas (D-CA)** - Amendment No. 4 - Requires the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with other relevant Departments, to conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility, safety and cost effectiveness of using unmanned aerial vehicles for the purposes of supporting wildfire response and suppression as well as forest restoration and management
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'Yes vote

V. **DeFazio (D-OR)** - Amendment No. 5 - Adds land exclusions to Sec. 913, including Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Wilderness Act, lands managed under the National Trails System
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'Yes vote

VI. **LaMalfa (R-CA)** - Amendment No. 6 - Directs OPM to create a "wildland firefighter" occupational series
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'Yes' vote

VII. **Pearce (R-NM)** - Amendment No. 7 - Establishes a pilot program to demonstrate effective tools and techniques for safeguarding natural resources
Chairman Gosar recommends a 'Yes vote

Constitutional Authority:

The sponsor has stated that Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: "The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State."

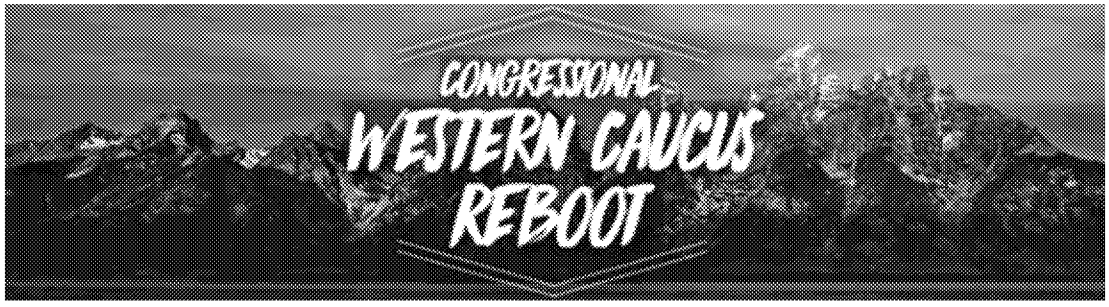
More Information:

If you have questions about H.R. 2936, please contact Cody Burkham in Congressman Westerman's office at Cody.Burkham@mail.house.gov.

If you have questions about this policy analysis or for the Congressional Western Caucus, please contact Jeff Small at jeff.small@mail.house.gov or Tanner Hanson at tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov.

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 7/16/2018 1:24:06 AM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 07.15.18



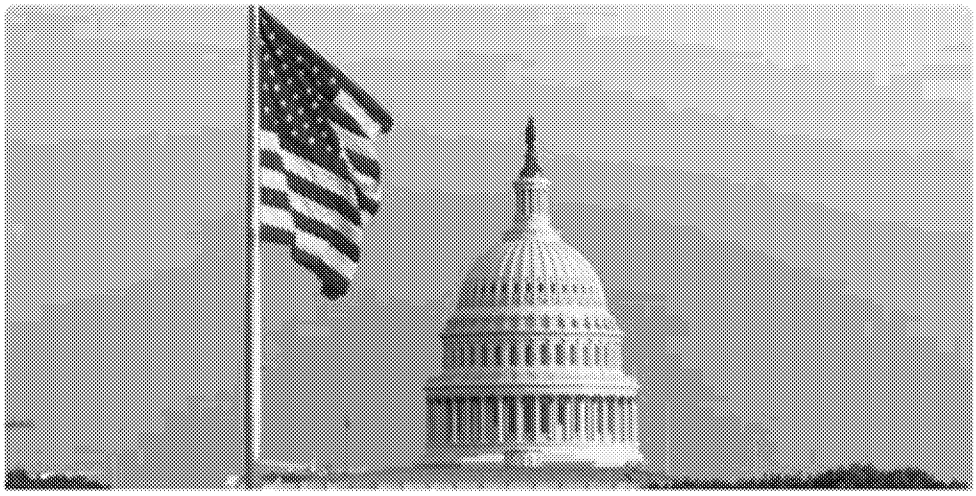
Week of 07.15.2018

#ModernizeESA

You Retweeted

Western Wire @WesternWireNet · Jul 12

Western Caucus Introduces Bipartisan Package Of Bills Aimed To Reform, Update ESA westernwire.net/western-caucus... @westerncaucus @RepGosar @RepTipton @RepWesterman @NatResources #endangeredspecies #copolitics #utpol #nmpol



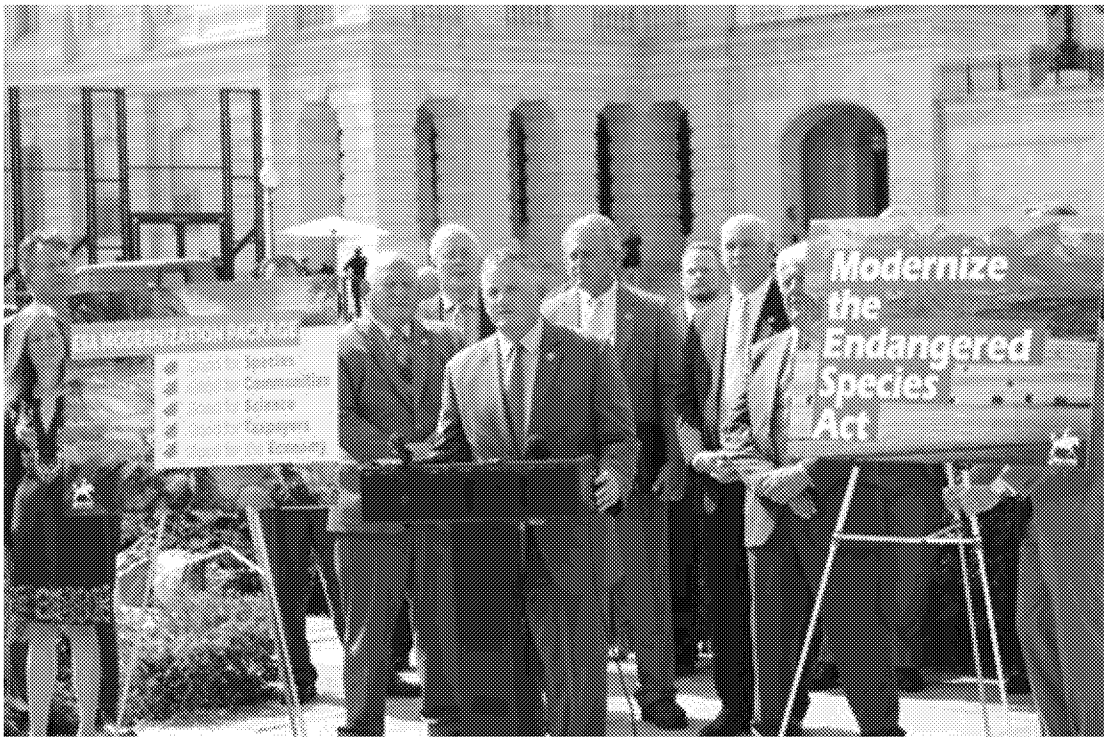
Western Caucus Introduces Bipartisan Package Of Bills Aimed To ...

Congressional Western Caucus members unveiled a raft of bipartisan bills aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act (ESA) at a legislative

On Thursday, the Western Caucus unveiled a bipartisan package aimed at modernizing the Endangered Species

Act (ESA) at a legislative forum and press conference. This impressive slate of nine bills has received endorsements from more than 115 organizations.

- For bill text, descriptions of individual bills and provisions, videos, pictures, full endorsements list and much more, click HERE to see the **dedicated Western Caucus ESA Modernization Package launch page**.

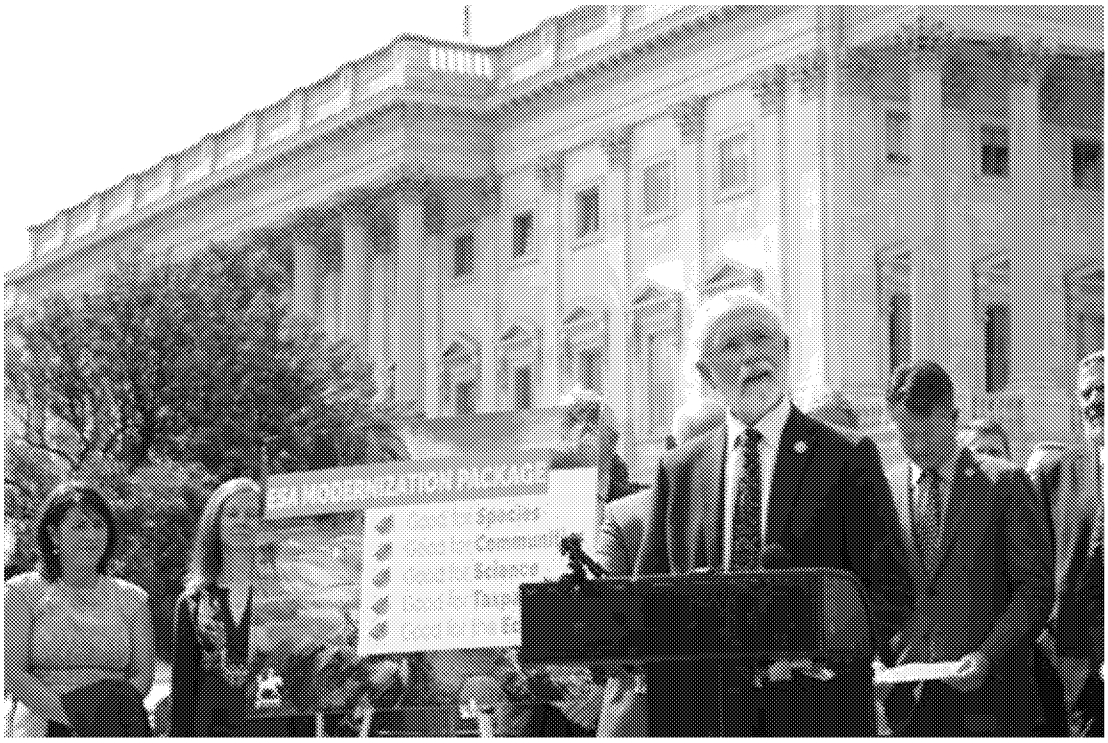


Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04) said, "15 Members of Congress, 12 panelists, nine bills, and a combined thousands of hours of experience dealing with the Endangered Species Act at all levels. That's what we put on display today when we introduced our bipartisan ESA modernization package and held a packed Legislative Forum and press conference. We showed everyone that Congress can come together to scope out a problem, listen and learn from affected parties, set out clear principles, devise bipartisan proposals and introduce them in a show of unity. Just one of those is usually enough to derail a Congressional effort, so I am very proud of this group of Members for coming together and unveiling a package of smart, targeted, thoughtful modernization provisions to the Endangered Species Act of 1973."

House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01) stated, "We're all aware that the Endangered Species Act hasn't undergone any significant updates in over 40 years. Neither endangered species, nor the American people, are benefited by this lack of modernization. It's past time for reform. The law needs to be updated to ensure it maintains its original intent and focus of species recovery and not simply serve as a tool for endless litigation. The Committee has worked for many years to put the ESA back on the right track. Now is the time to modernize this antiquated law to simultaneously benefit both endangered species and the American people."

Congressman Bruce Westerman (AR-04) said, "It is long past time that we reform the Endangered Species Act. In the more than 40 years since its introduction and passage, much has changed in our nation and its environment, but the law has not kept up with the evolving realities of the 21st Century. The PETITION Act would give the Interior Secretary the tools necessary to prevent frivolous lawsuits from stopping the work of the Fish and Wildlife Service, while ensuring more resources are available to protect truly endangered species. I thank my colleagues from the Congressional Western Caucus for their leadership on this issue and I look forward to our collective efforts to modernize an important piece of American law."

Congressman Andy Biggs (AZ-05) stated, "I thank Chairman Gosar and Chairman Bishop for their leadership on the Endangered Species Act modernization package. This action is long overdue, and will help millions of Americans around the country by protecting local interests – not special interests. As a part of this package, I introduced the LIST Act, which makes a number of improvements to bring the ESA up-to-date. Most notably, the LIST Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to de-list species when he receives an objective, measurable, and scientific study demonstrating a species has recovered. This will allow us to focus resources to protect species that actually need it. I support all of the bills introduced today, and I look forward to their movement through Congress."



Congressman Steve Pearce (NM-02) stated, "This bill would simply require the federal government to consult with states before making a listing decision under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Recent listings under the ESA have lacked adequate consultation and communication with the states who have these animals. Lack of communication is a lost opportunity for the Fish and Wildlife Service to utilize state expertise and information on species under review. Decisions to list species under the ESA often have serious adverse economic consequences, which is why the federal government should review all relevant information before making a decision. The EMPOWERS Act will help prevent rushed decisions that hurt local economies. Improvements must be made to the substance of listing decisions, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this commonsense bill forward."

Congressman Don Young (AK-At Large) said, "The Endangered Species Act (ESA) has been weaponized and misused by environmental groups for too long. I am pleased to be part of the Western Caucus' efforts to reign in the ESA, and to sponsor the Localizing Authority of Management Plans (LAMP) Act. This legislation, along with other bills introduced today by my colleagues, will work to truly modernize the ESA and return the focus of the law to its original intent of species conservation and recovery."

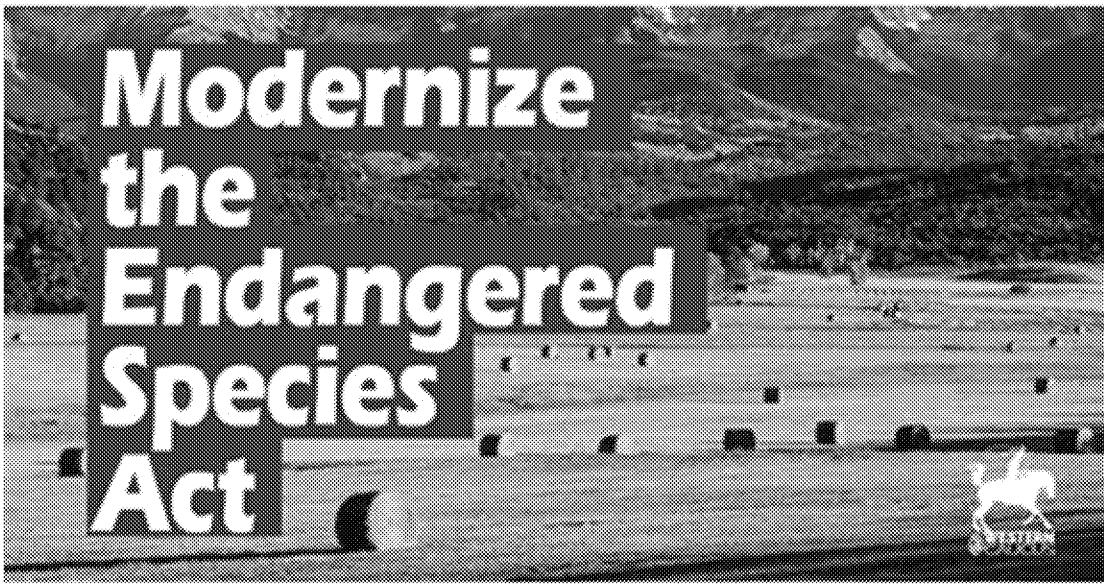
Congressman Mike Johnson (LA-04) said, "The ESA has been exploited for decades placing unnecessary burdens on our nation's hard-working farmers and ranchers. And while protecting wildlife and their habitats is of the utmost importance, the agriculture community is already proactively and heavily involved in conservation programs that implement critical protections for both. My bill helps modernize the ESA so we can continue to protect endangered species and let our farmers and ranchers get back to what they do best - providing a safe, sustainable food source for the American people."

Congressman Ralph Norman (SC-05) said, "I am happy to join my colleagues of the Western Caucus in support of the Endangered Species Act Modernization Package of Legislation, which makes necessary and common-sense updates to the Endangered Species Act. These bills continue to ensure protects for endangered species and successful species conservation, while increasing transparency, bringing accountability to the decision making process, and including States and local governments in the efforts to protect species. Importantly I am proud to have introduced the PREDICTS Act, which codifies the 'No Surprises' regulation and provides for greater certainty and improved planning for incidental take permit holders and landowners entering into agreements to improve the status and recovery of at-risk and listed species."

Congressional Western Caucus ***

Published by Jeff Small [?] · July 12 at 3:29 PM ·

National Association of Home Builders: "These are modernization reforms that improve the functionality of the ESA and take huge strides in helping our 140,000 members. Only 3% of species have recovered under ESA. Congress must make these reforms a priority for housing affordability." #ModernizeESA



Panelists that participated in the legislative forum included:

Panel 1

- Ryan Yates, American Farm Bureau Federation
- Jordan Smith, National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition
- Kathleen Sgamma, Western Energy Alliance
- Sam McDonald, Independent Petroleum Association of America
- Janelle Lemen, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- Myron Ebell, Competitive Enterprise Institute

Panel 2

- Richard Ranger, American Petroleum Institute
- Courtney Briggs, National Association of Home Builders
- Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation
- Rick Manning, Americans for Limited Government
- Ian Lyle, National Water Resources Association
- Ron McMurray, American Exploration & Mining Association

25 Years of Greatness!

On Wednesday, the Western Caucus celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Attendees at this event included Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, previous Chairmen and Executive Directors, numerous Caucus Members and staff, and tons of Western Caucus supporters. The reception, hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation, was a huge success.

Regulations Negatively Impacting Grazing Under Microscope

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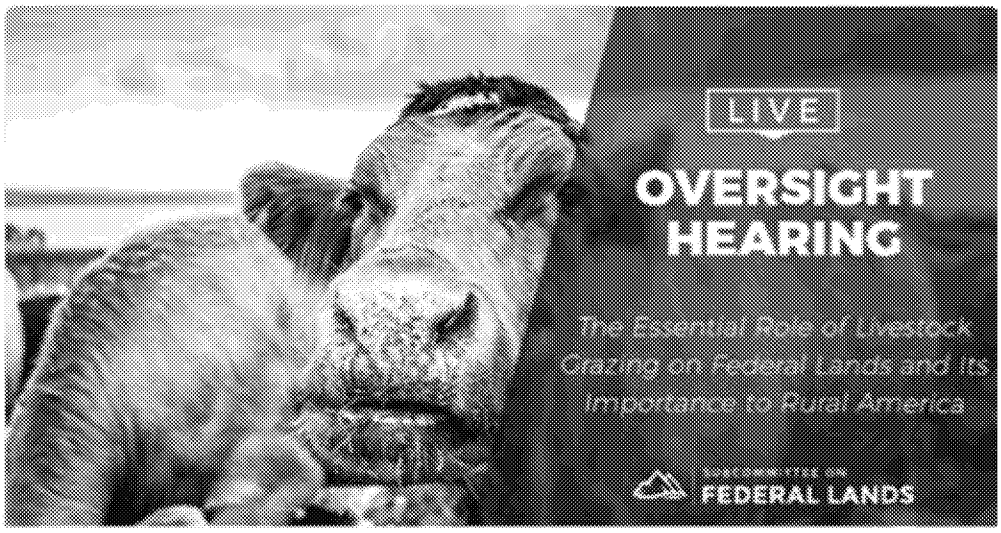
Natural Resources @NatResources · Jul 12

Grazing on public lands provides important economic benefits to federal land management agencies and the rural communities they serve. Unfortunately, many regulatory policies unnecessarily restrict access to public lands.



The Essential Role of Livestock Grazing on Federal Lands

naturalresources.house.gov

On Thursday, July 12, the House Committee on Natural Resources held an important oversight hearing examining regulatory policies for grazing on federal lands.

Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse testified, "Drought, wildfire, fluctuating prices and lawsuits have made livestock ranching a much more challenging endeavor in recent years. Fourth and fifth generation ranchers face the loss of their lands."

To watch the hearing, read the full witness testimonies and for more information click HERE.

House Passes Lamborn's Critical Water Infrastructure Bill

You Retweeted

Rep. Doug Lamborn @RepDLamborn · Jul 12

Our communities, farmers, and agriculture flourish when access to clean water is easy and affordable.

> **Rep. Doug Lamborn** @RepDLamborn
> The House just passed legislation to support and streamline critical water infrastructure by a vote of 233-184. This Act maintains congressional oversight while granting local water districts the flexibility to fulfill the needs of their communities. twitter.com/RepDLamborn/st...

On Thursday, the House passed H.R. 3281, the Reclamation Title Transfer and Non-Federal Infrastructure Incentivization Act, sponsored by Western Caucus Member **Doug Lamborn (CO-05).**

"I am pleased to have introduced and help pass the Reclamation Title Transfer and Non-Federal Infrastructure Incentivization Act. This Act will streamline the administrative process and remove cumbersome, bureaucratic hurdles for the Interior Department. Federal water projects have been a critical asset to many Colorado farmers for generations. The Bureau of Reclamation has played an essential role in constructing many of these facilities. However, over the years, populations in the west have continued to grow while the infrastructure aged. Many facilities are in disrepair and require new investment. Uncertain federal funding and burdensome regulation cripple development of critical water resources. This Act maintains congressional oversight while granting local water districts the flexibility to fulfill the needs of their communities. H.R. 3281 allows districts to leverage local investment and encourages local control. I support this Act to ensure Colorado's agriculture will continue to prosper and our communities to grow and flourish," **said Congressman Lamborn.**

House Passes the Dean's Magnuson-Stevens Legislation

On Wednesday, the House passed H.R. 200, the bipartisan Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act, sponsored by Western Caucus Vice-Chairman and the Dean of the House, **Rep. Don Young (AK-At Large)**.

"The North Pacific is the gold standard of fisheries management, and in Alaska the fishing industry

is crucial to our local economies and livelihood," said Congressman Young. "It's been over a decade since Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) was reauthorized which is why I'm proud to see this bill pass out of the House today with bipartisan support. My bill will update MSA to ensure a proper balance between the biological needs of fish stocks and the economic needs of fishermen and coastal communities. We know that each region works within their unique conditions which is why I fought to ensure the management process will be improved by allowing regional fisheries to develop plans that meet their local needs. I am proud to say my bill protects our commercial and recreational fishing interests, and will allow Councils to do their jobs in a more streamlined and effective manner. I thank my colleagues who helped pass this important fisheries legislation today which will deliver much needed relief to this industry. I look forward to working with my Senators to see this legislation get to the President's desk," **Rep. Young said.**

POST OF THE WEEK...

Congressman Bruce Westerman ***

July 13 at 9:17 AM ·

"The Endangered Species Protection Act was passed the year before I was born, which allowed the first listing of a species when I was child in elementary school walking around in bell bottoms. Little to nothing has been done to change that act since it was passed.

"Ladies and gentleman we have an eight-track law in a Spotify world. It is time we get this ESA up to speed and have it accomplish the purposes it was intended for."

STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING US!

WEBSITE

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Click Here to be removed from this list

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 10/18/2017 8:13:42 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Upcoming Western Caucus Events

Upcoming Events:

Congressional Western Caucus Member Only Monthly Luncheon and Speaker Series
Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2017
Time: 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Room: Rayburn 2247
Special Guests: From noon to 12:30 p.m., members will hear from **OMB Director Mick Mulvaney**. From 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m, the **Financial Services Round Table** will join us for a special financial services tax briefing tailored exclusively for Members. Some of their member companies include: Bank of America, Ameriprise, Santander, JP Morgan Chase, American Express, Capital One, Edward Jones.
Note: A catered lunch will be provided. Let us know if your boss has any dietary restrictions.
RSVP: Please RSVP for your member to Tanner Hanson at tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov and Jeff Small at jeff.small@mail.house.gov.

Congressional Western Caucus Staff Only Tax Reform Briefing
Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2017
Time: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Room: Rayburn 2247
Special Guests: The **Financial Services Round Table** will join us for a special financial services tax briefing tailored exclusively for Congressional Staff. Some of their member companies include: Bank of America, Ameriprise, Santander, JP Morgan Chase, American Express, Capital One, Edward Jones.
RSVP: Please RSVP to Tanner Hanson at tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov and Jeff Small at jeff.small@mail.house.gov.

Western Caucus Foundation Western Caucus Chiefs Only Reception
Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2017
Time: 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Location: Oracle Townhouse, 27 D ST SE, Washington, DC 20003
Note: By now you should have received the below invite from the Western Caucus Foundation.
RSVP: Click Here to RSVP

Western Caucus Foundation Staff Only Monthly Bicameral Policy Breakfast
Date: Friday, October 27, 2017
Time: 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
Room: SVC 203-02
Note: By now you should have received the below invite from the Western Caucus Foundation.
RSVP: No RSVP necessary.

Future Events:

Congressional Western Caucus Member Only Monthly Luncheon and Speaker Series
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017
Time: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Room: Rayburn 2247
Special Guest: Department of the Interior **Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt**
Note: A catered lunch will be provided. Let us know if your boss has any dietary restrictions.
RSVP: Please RSVP to Tanner Hanson at tanner.hanson@mail.house.gov and Jeff Small at jeff.small@mail.house.gov.

Western Caucus Foundation Member and Staff Western Roundtable Discussion, Public Lands Meeting, and Field Tour
December 8 – 9th
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Note: By now you should have received the below invite from the Western Caucus Foundation.
RSVP: To RSVP or for more information contact info@westerncaucusfoundation.org

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WESTERN CAUCUS
FOUNDATION

THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

Reception to Celebrate
House Western Caucus Chiefs of Staff

Wednesday, October 25th, 2017
5:00p.m. to 6:30p.m.
Location: Oracle Townhouse
27 D ST SE
Washington, DC 20003

Invited Guests also include: Staff of Western Caucus Members*,
Foundation Stakeholders, and Foundation guests.
*No Interns Please

Click Here to RSVP

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF), a 501 (c)(3), is a cultural exchange organization committed to educating public policy makers and communicating with the public in an effort to enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture. The Foundation provides support, education, and networking opportunities to advance the public policies important to the West, and offers members a non-partisan and

non-political organization to facilitate discussion of critical Western issues through a robust agenda of meetings, conferences, and programs.

To learn more about the Western Caucus Foundation please visit: *http://westerncaucusfoundation.org*

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Read to learn more

WESTERN CAUCUS FOUNDATION

THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

Western Policy Roundtable
& Public Lands Forum

December 8–9, 2017
Location: Southern Nevada

#VEGASSTRONG!

Please join our Special Guests:

- Senator Steve Daines, Senate Western Caucus Chairman
- Representative Paul Gosar, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman
- Representative Mark Amodei, Congressional Western Caucus Vice-Chair
- Department of the Interior officials
- And other members of the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses

- Additional guests will be announced at a later date.

Agenda to Include: public lands, ESA, energy, water and tribal nation issues.

Invited Guests include Members of Congress, Congressional Staff, Foundation Stakeholders, and Foundation guests.

Government rate available -- e-mail ***info@westerncaucusfoundation.org*** *for hotel details.*

RSVP Here

For those interested in the National Final Rodeo (occurring each evening)

click here: **About the WNFR** and **http://www.nfrexperience.com/home**.
"RODEO CHEAT SHEET" here: **Rodeo 101**

Founded in 2013, The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF), a 501 (c)(3), is a cultural exchange organization committed to educating public policy makers and communicating with the public in an effort to enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture. The Foundation provides support, education, and networking opportunities to advance the public policies important to the West, and offers members a non-partisan and non-political organization to facilitate discussion of critical Western issues through a robust agenda of meetings, conferences, and programs.

To learn more about the Western Caucus Foundation please visit:
http://westerncaucusfoundation.org

Western Caucus Foundation | 400 N. Capitol St., #382-B | Washington, DC | 20001

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WESTERN CAUCUS FOUNDATION

THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

Monthly Policy Briefing

Upcoming Monthly Staff Policy Briefing:
October 27, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.
Senate Visitors Center: SVC 203-02

Save the Dates:

December 8 – 9th **Western Roundtable Discussion, Public Lands Meeting, and Field Tour**
Location: Las Vegas, NV

www.westerncaucusfoundation.org

*****Foundation events are planned to fully comply with Congressional Ethics Rules and Other Applicable Laws******

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF) is a charitable and educational organization organized and operated under Section 501(c)(3). It will provide education and communications to policy makers and the public to further enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture.

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
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(202) 225-2315 main
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Message

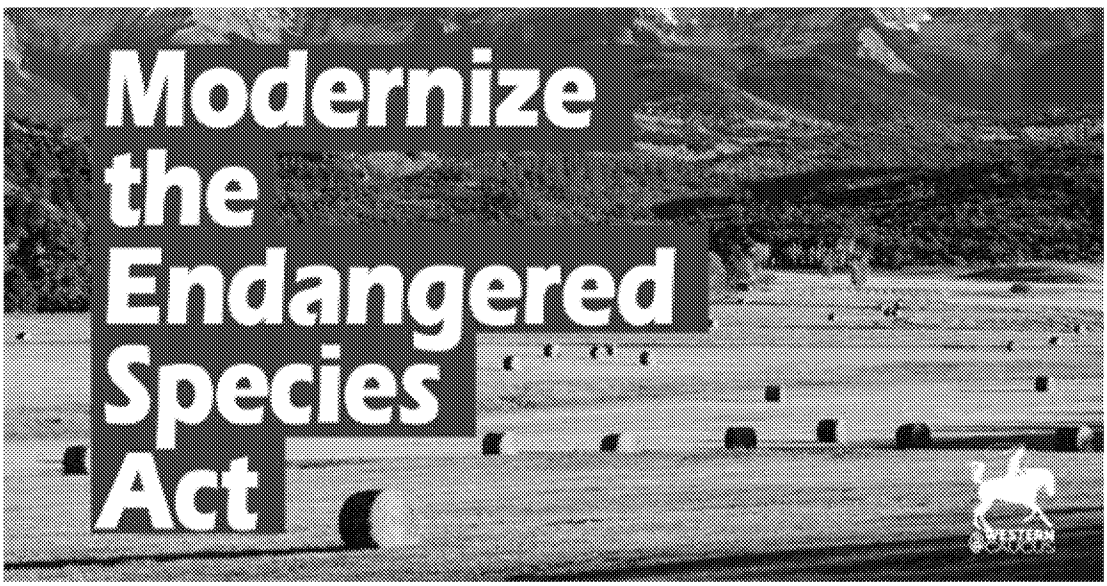
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 7/13/2018 1:10:48 AM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Caucus Kicks Off Bipartisan Endangered Species Act Modernization Package

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: July 12, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Caucus Kicks Off Bipartisan Endangered Species Act Modernization Package



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Executive Vice Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)**, House Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)** Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)**, Chief Regulatory Reform Officer **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, Vice-Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairman **Greg Walden (OR-02)** and Western Caucus Members **Debbie Lesko (AZ-08)**, **Mike Johnson (LA-04)**, **Ralph Norman (SC-05)**, **Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large)**, **Markwayne Mullin (OK-02)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)**, **Ron Estes (KS-04)**, **Roger Marshall (KS-**

01) and **Doug Collins (GA-09)** released statements after Members of Congress introduced a bipartisan slate of nine bills enjoying over 115 endorsing national and regional organizations – called the "Western Caucus Endangered Species Act Modernization Package" - which delivers broad and long-overdue improvements to the underlying 1973 Act:

Congressman Gosar said, "15 Members of Congress, 12 panelists, nine bills, and a combined thousands of hours of experience dealing with the Endangered Species Act at all levels. That's what we put on display today when we introduced our ESA modernization package and held a packed Legislative Forum and press conference. We showed everyone that Congress can come together to scope out a problem, listen and learn from affected parties, set out clear principles, devise bipartisan proposals and introduce them in a show of unity. Just one of those is usually enough to derail a Congressional effort, so I am very proud of this group of Members for coming together and unveiling a package of smart, targeted, thoughtful modernization amendments to the Endangered Species Act of 1973. My friend and Democratic Caucus Member from Oregon Kurt Schrader even came onboard to cosponsor the LOCAL and WHOLE Acts - and he tells me he's reviewing the other bills closely to see how they read to him. I challenge all Members, advocacy and industry groups and media observers to follow Rep. Schrader's lead and look closely at what we've proposed here, to consider carefully the testimony of millions of Americans as to the longstanding and fixable failures of the ESA to conserve species and balance interests appropriately - to do all of that, and then tell me you can't come onboard with our effort."

Congressman Bishop stated, "We're all aware that the Endangered Species Act hasn't undergone any significant updates in over 40 years. Neither endangered species, nor the American people, are benefited by this lack of modernization. It's past time for reform. The law needs to be updated to ensure it maintains its original intent and focus of species recovery and not simply serve as a tool for endless litigation. The Committee has worked for many years to put the ESA back on the right track. Now is the time to modernize this antiquated law to simultaneously benefit both endangered species and the American people."

Congressman Tipton stated, "The most effective approach to species recovery and conservation is through proactive localized efforts that take into account the unique landscape, habitat and ecological conditions of an area. When empowering those who have their boots on the ground every day to lead these critical conservation and recovery efforts, we can best assure the health and success of the species. The LOCAL Act would engage non-federal landowners, incentivize voluntary conservation efforts, and assist local communities in drafting and implementing conservation plans for threatened and endangered species. I urge my colleagues who want to be proactive about conservation and species recovery, rather than reactive, to support this bill and the Endangered Species Act modernization package as a whole."

Congressman Westerman said, "It is long past time that we reform the Endangered Species Act. In the more than 40 years since its introduction and passage, much has changed in our nation and its environment, but the law has not kept up with the evolving realities of the 21st Century. The PETITION Act would give the Interior Secretary the tools necessary to prevent frivolous lawsuits from stopping the work of the Fish and Wildlife Service, while ensuring more resources are available to protect truly endangered species. I thank my colleagues from the Congressional Western Caucus for their leadership on this issue and I look forward to our collective efforts to modernize an important piece of American law."

Congressman Biggs stated, "I thank Chairman Gosar and Chairman Bishop for their leadership on the Endangered Species Act modernization package. This action is long overdue, and will help millions of Americans around the country by protecting local interests – not special interests. As a part of this package, I introduced the LIST Act, which makes a number of improvements to bring

the ESA up-to-date. Most notably, the LIST Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to de-list species when he receives an objective, measurable, and scientific study demonstrating a species has recovered. This will allow us to focus resources to protect species that actually need it. I support all of the bills introduced today, and I look forward to their movement through Congress."

Congressman Pearce stated, "This bill would simply require the federal government to consult with states before making a listing decision under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Recent listings under the ESA have lacked adequate consultation and communication with the states who have these animals. Lack of communication is a lost opportunity for the Fish and Wildlife Service to utilize state expertise and information on species under review. Decisions to list species under the ESA often have serious adverse economic consequences, which is why the federal government should review all relevant information before making a decision. The EMPOWERS Act will help prevent rushed decisions that hurt local economies. Improvements must be made to the substance of listing decisions, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this commonsense bill forward."

Congressman Don Young said, "The Endangered Species Act (ESA) has been weaponized and misused by environmental groups for too long. I am pleased to be part of the Western Caucus' efforts to reign in the ESA, and to sponsor the Localizing Authority of Management Plans (LAMP) Act. This legislation, along with other bills introduced today by my colleagues, will work to truly modernize the ESA and return the focus of the law to its original intent of species conservation and recovery."

Congressman Mike Johnson said, "The ESA has been exploited for decades placing unnecessary burdens on our nation's hard-working farmers and ranchers. And while protecting wildlife and their habitats is of the utmost importance, the agriculture community is already proactively and heavily involved in conservation programs that implement critical protections for both. My bill helps modernize the ESA so we can continue to protect endangered species and let our farmers and ranchers get back to what they do best - providing a safe, sustainable food source for the American people."

Congressman Norman said, "I am happy to join my colleagues of the Western Caucus in support of the Endangered Species Act Modernization Package of Legislation, which makes necessary and common-sense updates to the Endangered Species Act. These bills continue to ensure protects for endangered species and successful species conservation, while increasing transparency, bringing accountability to the decision making process, and including States and local governments in the efforts to protect species. Importantly I am proud to have introduced the PREDICTS Act, which codifies the 'No Surprises' regulation and provides for greater certainty and improved planning for incidental take permit holders and landowners entering into agreements to improve the status and recovery of at-risk and listed species."

Congressman Walden stated, "We've seen time and again the impact of Endangered Species Act listings on communities across rural Oregon. Too often, the ESA decision making process has ignored local input and science on the ground. It's past time to bring greater transparency to this process, and recognize and reward the contributions our farmers, ranchers, and other private land owners make towards improving habitat. By making common-sense changes to modernize the ESA, we can protect the livelihoods of Oregonians and people across the rural West, while still achieving the goal I share with all Americans of recovering endangered species. These bills are an important step towards achieving those results."

Congresswoman Lesko said, "As a cosponsor of the LIST Act, I am proud to be a part of this reform package championed by the Western Caucus. This bill allows the Secretary of the Interior

to remove certain species from the endangered list when scientific evidence shows the species has recovered. Recovery has always been the primary goal of the Endangered Species Act, and this bill will allow more time and resources to go back into protecting the species that need help the most. The current Endangered Species Act is outdated and reforms are needed to achieve these outcomes. Thank you to my colleague, Congressman Andy Biggs, for introducing this commonsense measure."

Congressman Gianforte stated, "Montanans have a deep respect for and appreciation of our lands and the wildlife that occupy them. Montanans believe we can support multiple use of lands while conserving species. Unfortunately, environmental extremist groups have distorted the Endangered Species Act from its original intent and use it to unnecessarily shut down needed projects throughout Montana. Today's package of bills offers us an opportunity to modernize the ESA with targeted reforms that will encourage greater input from leaders on the ground, spur partnerships between communities to preserve habitats, and bring some common sense back to protecting endangered species."

Congressman Mullin said, "For over 40 years, the Endangered Species Act has created burdensome red tape and unnecessary obstacles for landowners, small businesses, and communities to comply with, all without making species any safer from extinction. With the introduction of these nine bills, Congress has an opportunity to modernize the Endangered Species Act by increasing transparency in the listing and delisting process as well as giving states a seat at the table when discussing in-state conservation efforts. I look forward to the House's consideration of these bills in order to streamline the Department of Interior's conservation efforts in a practical, responsible way."

Congressman LaMalfa said, "While the Endangered Species Act was signed into law over 40 years ago to protect and recover vulnerable species, only 2% of species listed as endangered have been fully recovered. That is far from a desirable success rate, and it's clear that reforms are needed. For example, the Gray Wolf and Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle are two species in my district that have been on the endangered species list for nearly 40 years. Despite overwhelming evidence that these species have recovered, environmental groups threaten litigation to hamstring the recovery and delisting process. The ESA was never intended to be used a tool for activist attorneys to use to sue the government as a business plan. It's about time we update and modernize the ESA to implement a more practical approach to managing and recovering endangered species. This way, hardworking Americans, businesses, and our wildlife will all benefit."

Congressman Kevin Cramer said, "The stream of frivolous lawsuits we've seen aimed at exploiting the Endangered Species Act has crippled its ability to protect the interests of both species and people. We are taking a careful approach to reform with the goals of common sense species protection and transparency. These changes are significant and reasonable steps towards ensuring private property rights and economic livelihood of North Dakotans are respected."

Congressman Estes said, "This package addresses a long overdue need to modernize the Endangered Species Act," said Rep. Ron Estes. "I am especially encouraged by an included initiative to count voluntary conservation efforts toward endangered species listings, including the Lesser Prairie Chicken. Recently, the Fish and Wildlife Service restarted efforts to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, despite millions of dollars in conservation efforts from Kansas farmers and ranchers through the range-wide plan. As someone who learned the importance of conservation of land and wildlife not from government,

but from growing up on a farm in rural Kansas, I am glad this package will allow voluntary conservation efforts to be recognized when determining future endangered species listings."

Congressman Marshall stated, "The heartland and at-risk species benefit most when conservation efforts work hand-in-hand with landowners. The Endangered Species Act was created 45 years ago and has only achieved recovery for about 2 percent of the listed threatened species – with that track record, seeking improvements to the Act should be a no-brainer. As an avid outdoorsman, I've seen first-hand the success of public and private dollars working with landowners to rebuild and preserve habitats for our Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) – without the bird being a listed species. On-the-ground conservation efforts, along with a little cooperation from Mother Nature has increased the LPC population by almost 71 percent since the 2013 drought. While there is still more that we can and should do, a top-down ESA approach only threatens conservation and is proven to be ineffective, that's why I am a proud cosponsor of the Western Caucuses Endangered Species Act Modernization Package. Local personnel have the greatest resources and knowledge of our wildlife needs, not Washington D.C."

Congressman Collins said, "Northeast Georgia is well known for its impressive lakes, mountains, flora and fauna. Like many in our region, I support conservation efforts to preserve these natural resources. Unfortunately, some of our laws—particularly the Endangered Species Act—have failed to live up to their purpose. The ESA has too often been weaponized by special interest groups, wasting taxpayer resources and needlessly burdening Americans without accomplishing its intended goal of recovering vulnerable species. The ESA reforms ushered in by the Western Caucus today would make commonsense updates to the law and allow communities to enhance their conservation efforts in order to protect wildlife more thoughtfully, and I welcome them."

Background:

Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus unveiled a bipartisan package of nine bills, all united by the goal of modernizing and improving the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA).

The ESA has been modified only sparingly since its introduction, with the result being that the hundreds of thousands of interactions that take place every day between parties affected by the Act and the statute as implemented have had almost no bearing on the way species conservation is managed in the United States at the federal level. Even Executive branch regulations governing implementation of the Act lie mostly untouched - and have for years.

Consequently, the sum total of experience and exposure to the ESA across decades by thousands of hugely different parties throughout the United States has been decisively ignored when it comes to improving the Act. Not a Caucus to let such an embarrassment of riches lie wasted, we saw an opportunity for serious reform.

The ultimate goal which every Member involved in the Modernization Package agreed on was that the ESA *must* be retooled in order to: 1) Fulfill its original intent of prioritizing real recovery and conservation of eligible species, and; 2) More effectively balance the interests of all parties involved in and affected by species and habitat listings - including species themselves, private citizens, industry, local governments, public infrastructure projects, nonprofit organizations and other entities.

The nine bills in question were sponsored by **Reps. Scott Tipton of Colorado (the LOCAL**

Act), Tom McClintock of California (the Endangered Species Transparency & Reasonableness Act), Steve Pearce of New Mexico (the EMPOWERS Act), Don Young of Alaska (the LAMP Act), Andy Biggs of Arizona (the LIST Act), Bruce Westerman of Arkansas (the PETITION Act), Ralph Norman of South Carolina (the PREDICTS Act), Paul Gosar of Arizona (the STORAGE Act) and **Mike Johnson of Louisiana (the WHOLE Act)**.

For bill text, descriptions of individual provisions, full endorsements list and much more, click HERE to see the dedicated Western Caucus ESA Modernization Package launch page. In all, over 115 stakeholder and advocacy groups endorsed the package, including substantial bipartisan support.

Over two dozen Members, stakeholders and advocacy groups gathered today, first for a 'Legislative Forum' that featured bill sponsors and other Members in dialogue with citizen and industry groups. Groups in attendance included representatives of: the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition, the Western Energy Alliance, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, Americans for Limited Government, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the American Exploration & Mining Association, the Arizona Farm Bureau, the National Association of Home Builders, the American Petroleum Institute, the National Water Resources Association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative, and several others.

Former Utah Democratic Member of Congress Jim Matheson, President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, stated: "NRECA applauds the Congressional Western Caucus' commitment to improve the Endangered Species Act. These efforts will protect threatened species while improving the efficiency and cost of maintaining electric co-ops' critical infrastructure that serves one in eight Americans."

Subsequent to the Legislative Forum, Members and participants proceeded to a scheduled press conference with a gaggle of reporters to issue statements on bill introductions and answer questions.

The entire Legislative Forum can be seen here. Watch a livestream of the press conference which included remarks by several Members and bill sponsors here.

Immediate reactions by media and outside groups to the package ranged from glowing endorsement (see here and here), to dispassionate reporting of facts and perspectives - to downright unhinged.

###

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Message

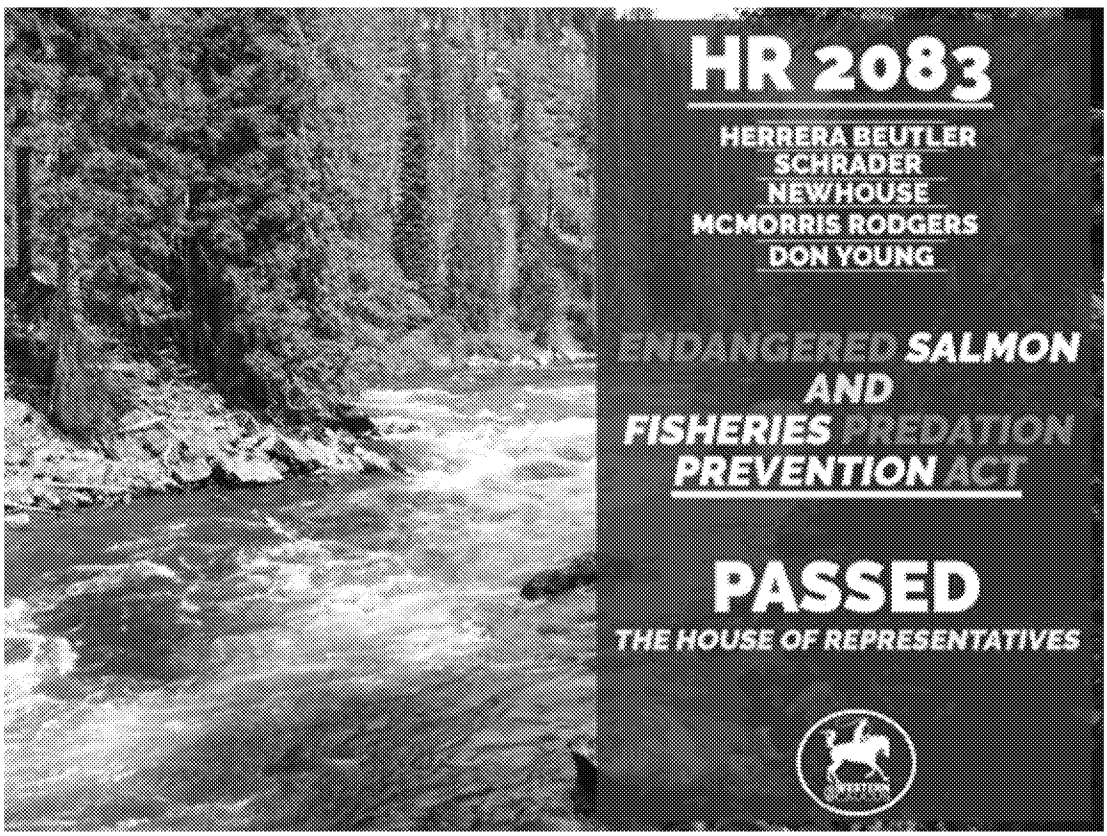
From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/26/2018 10:16:25 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: House Passes Bill to Protect Northwest Fisheries

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: June 26, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

House Passes Bill to Protect Pacific Northwest Fisheries



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including

Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Vice-Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Western Caucus Members **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** and **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)** along with numerous local and national stakeholders issued statements after the House passed H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act, by a bipartisan vote of 288-116:

"With today's passage of my bipartisan bill to improve the survival of endangered salmon and steelhead, we're taking a giant step forward in restoring an ecosystem sorely out of balance. The sea lion predation problem on the Columbia River will not go away without intervention from local and tribal managers, and I'm pleased that we're now able to give these officials the tools they need to remove the most problematic sea lions and protect our native fish runs for generations to come," stated **Congresswoman Herrera Beutler.**

"Salmon are an important part of the culture, identity, and the economy of the people and tribes of the Pacific Northwest. It is one of the reasons why we've, as a region, put so much time, energy, and resources into protecting and recovering these iconic fish," said **Congressman Schrader.** "Our bill will provide the states and tribal members the flexibility they need to protect these endangered fish and manage the threat posed by sea lion predation. I'm very pleased to have the support of so many of my colleagues in the House in tackling this issue in a bipartisan, thoughtful way. I want to thank Rep. Herrera Beutler and our states, tribes, and local communities for all of the hard work everyone has put in over several years now on this legislation and on working towards solutions to save our salmon."

"Billions of taxpayer dollars have been spent to improve salmon survival rates on the Columbia River, only to see rising predation from sea lions," stated **Congressman Newhouse**. "This legislation demonstrates a targeted approach and a bipartisan, concerted effort over many years to come to a consensus on how to stop the severe problem of sea lion predation. I was pleased to work with my colleagues on this commonsense, bipartisan effort to mitigate this threat to salmon and steelhead populations. I will continue to advocate for sound-science decision-making for our river system."

"The habitual Washington D.C. knee-jerk defense of the status quo is harming endangered species instead of protecting them. The fact of the matter is that the existing regulations are leading to the decline in endangered salmon in the Pacific Northwest, a key source of ecological vibrancy in the region. This bipartisan bill corrects the problem by giving states and tribes the tools to humanely manage sea lions and prevent further destruction of endangered fish and the region's economy. I appreciate Rep. Beutler's hard work on this legislation. It is surprising that certain Democrats, including the Ranking Member of the Committee, voted against saving endangered species and empowering tribes to exercise their treaty rights," **Congressman Rob Bishop** stated.

"I was happy to cosponsor this important legislation and I'm pleased to see it pass the House," said **Congressman Don Young.** "Something needs to be done to give endangered salmon a chance at recovery. When sea lions are positioning themselves just outside of a hatchery to eat the fish, we need a way to manage them. This legislation gives states and tribes an important tool to protect these endangered fish and support healthy salmon."

Congressman Gosar stated, "Allowing states and local governments to manage sea lion predation in the Northwest is just common sense. Taxpayers have doled out billions of dollars to increase these salmon populations and we shouldn't allow exploding sea lion populations to decimate these fisheries and undermine that progress. I am grateful for the efforts of Western

Caucus Members Herrera Beutler, Schrader, Newhouse, McMorris Rodgers and Don Young. Today's strong bipartisan vote is a result of their strong leadership."

The Governors of Washington, Oregon and Idaho supported this bill stating, "Over the last decade, predation by sea lions on salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and lamprey in the Columbia River has increased dramatically. State researchers have estimated that sea lions consume about 20 percent of the entire spring Chinook run. More recent year research by NOAA Fisheries has found that up to 45 percent of spring Chinook adult salmon disappear between the estuary and Bonneville Dam. Much of that loss can be attributed to sea lions…H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Protection Act, augments existing state, federal, and tribal authorities and allows quicker and more efficient intervention but still limits lethal removal."

More than 100 Pacific Northwest businesses supported H.R. 2083 stating, "Only Congress can amend this process to ensure salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations have a chance to recover and are not further weakened by unmanaged healthy pinnipeds. We must protect our iconic salmon and steelhead and we would be deeply grateful for your acknowledgement that the issue of pinniped predation in the Columbia river must be addressed legislatively. We cannot thank you enough for your support on this issue."

The Public Power Council & Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission supported this legislation stating, "This situation continues to expand supporters of this legislation among diverse interests in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Our joint support represents that healthy salmon and steelhead runs are critical to the future of the Columbia River treaty tribes and utilities. This bill would give fisheries managers greater tools to appropriately reduce predation of these endangered fish."

Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations supported H.R. 2083 stating,"This bill provides an immediate, surgical solution to a significant problem in a highly impacted western river, the Columbia. Impediments to fish passage and severe flow curtailment from hydropower dams have resulted in severe depletion of the Pacific Northwest's most productive salmon river. These impacts have cost commercial fishing families billions of dollars in lost opportunity."

Directors of Co-Managing Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho supported this bill stating, "HR 2083 provides managers flexibility to proactively remove sea lions that are foraging on ESA-listed salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon over 100+ miles from the ocean. These locations are where sea lions did not historically forage. Over a decade of scientific research has shown that 1) the diet of sea lions at these locations is almost exclusively salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon and 2) once sea lions locate these areas, they return year after year. It only makes sense to recognize the body of science that has accumulated on this issue and adjust our management accordingly to prevent sea lions habituating these areas."

Trout Unlimited supported this legislation stating, "This legislation will help to provide resource managers with the necessary tools to help reduce predation by pinnipeds, a problem which has become increasingly significant over the last decade, and is particularly impactful at key locations, such as Willamette Falls. Pinniped predation rates in the basin are significant. NMFS marine mammal biologists believe that sea lion predation accounts for 20% of Spring Chinook Salmon losses in the Columbia. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has completed a risk analysis that place the likelihood of extinction for wild winter steelhead in the Willamette river at 90% due in part to pinniped predation at the falls in Oregon City."

Background:

Today, June 26, 2018, the House passed H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act, a bill introduced by Western Caucus Members **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** and **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)** by a bipartisan vote of 288-116.

This important legislation aims to protect the further degradation of the salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations in the Northwest by allowing for the humane management of sea lions, a natural predator of salmon in the Columbia River watershed.

H.R. 2083 clarifies and streamlines the authorities authorized under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA).

The MMPA prohibits, with specified exceptions, the killing of marine mammals in United States waters or by United States citizens at sea. This federal law provides a conflicting mandate and limited flexibility to address broader ecological interactions, such as the one observed in the Pacific Northwest with sea lions and salmon species.

Section 120 of the MMPA does allow for states to apply to the Secretary of Commerce for the lethal taking of specified predator seals or sea lions that negatively impact endangered salmon. As a result, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) authorized the States of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington to remove sea lions in 2008 and reauthorized this authority again in 2016.

Frivolous litigation challenging these permits and their requirements is the primary reasons H.R. 2083 is necessary. Under certain conditions, the bill clarifies that one-year permits can be issued to states and tribes for lethal take of sea lion populations that are decimating endagnered salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Lower Columbia River and other specified tributaries. The bill includes an important provision that ensures sea lion mortality will not exceed 10% of the biologically acceptable limit.

A full list of endorsements can be found HERE. A one-pager can be found HERE.
A full list of cosponsors can be found HERE. Bill text can be found HERE.

###

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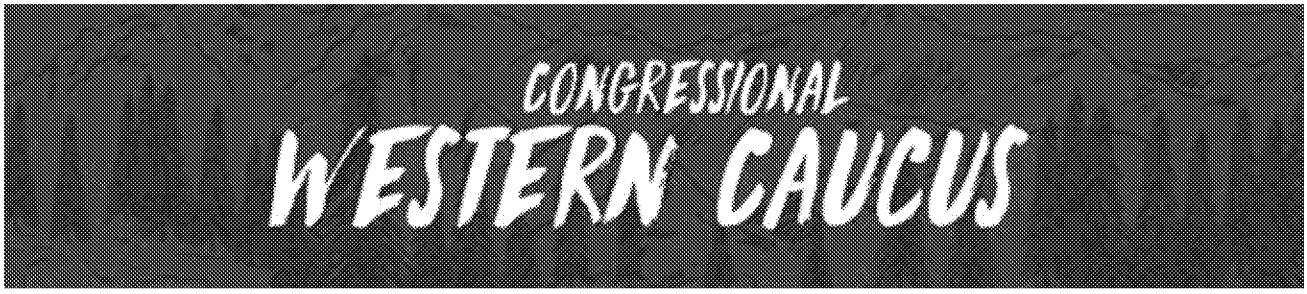
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 7/10/2018 11:25:45 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: President Trump Pardons Hammonds

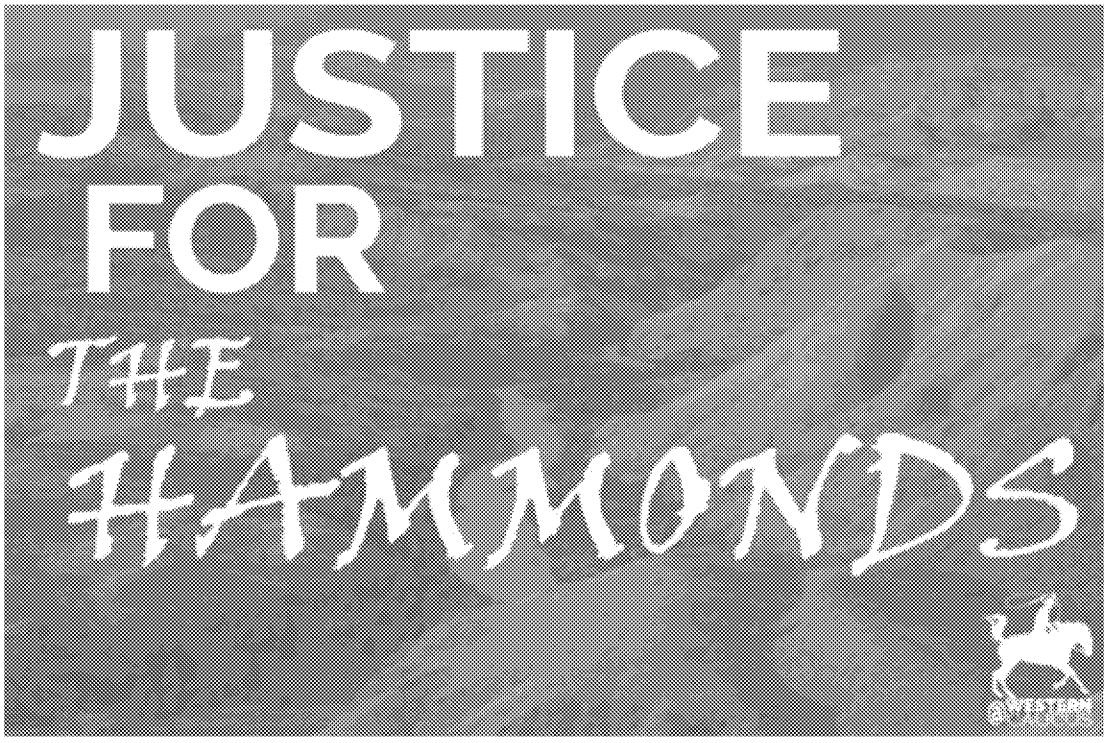


For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: July 10, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

President Trump Pardons Hammonds

His action makes right a heartless judicial excess - in keeping with the purpose of clemency



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairman **Greg Walden (OR-02)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)** and Western Caucus **Member Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** issued statements following the announcement of President Trump's decision to issue full pardons for Dwight and Steven Hammond of Oregon:

Congressman Gosar stated, "Besides being a commendable application of the principle of equal justice under the law, the President's action today is a strong symbolic gesture of good faith and good will directed towards rural western communities. I wish the Hammonds the absolute best as they are granted this awesome chance to return to their lives and families in Oregon."

Congressman Rob Bishop stated, "I'm glad President Trump chose to weigh in on the unjust sentencing of the Hammonds. I wish the Hammonds well in returning to their families and local communities."

Congressman Walden said, "Today is a win for justice, and an acknowledgement of our unique way of life in the high desert, rural West. I applaud President Trump for thoroughly reviewing the facts of this case, rightly determining the Hammonds were treated unfairly, and taking action to correct this injustice. For far too long, Dwight and Steven Hammond have been serving a mandatory minimum sentence that was established for terrorists. This is something that would 'shock the conscience,' according to Federal Judge Michael Hogan, who presided over the case and used his discretion in sentencing which later was reversed. As ranchers across eastern Oregon frequently tell me, the Hammonds didn't deserve a five year sentence for using fire as a management tool, something the federal government does all the time. Moving forward, I'm encouraging the House Judiciary Committee to act on my legislation to prevent this situation from happening to other ranchers. H.R. 983 would ensure farmers and ranchers are not prosecuted as terrorists for using fire for range-management purposes. For now, though, I am pleased that Dwight and Steven Hammond will return to their families and ranches in Harney County. I look forward to welcoming them back home to eastern Oregon."

Congressman Newhouse stated, "I applaud President Trump for pardoning Dwight and Steven Hammond. There are few incidences that occur in our nation that better depict just how out of touch and unresponsive our federal government is to our citizens than the sentencing of Dwight and Steve Hammond from Eastern Oregon. After the Hammonds started a backfire to protect their cattle grazing land and assist the greater wildfire control effort, the Hammonds were prosecuted by the Department of Justice for arson under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. After a federal judge only sentenced the Hammonds to three months, stating anything longer would be a 'shock to the conscience,' aloof federal prosecutors appealed and succeeded in attaining a five year prison sentence. I support President Trump's decision to pardon the Hammonds, whose struggles represent many rural communities' valid frustrations with the federal government's unresponsiveness, callousness, and poor land management tendencies."

Congressman LaMalfa said, "Dwight and Steven Hammond were let down by our justice system. After serving one sentence – on charges that could be seen as questionable to begin with – overzealous prosecutors wrongfully and unfairly forced the Hammonds to serve additional time in jail, despite their excellent standing in their community. Their case is a prime example of the previous Administration's overbearing regulation and enforcement on public lands, while their poor stewardship creates fire hazards and restricts access to land that cattle have grazed on for generations. I'm glad to see the President has pardoned these men, and that they will not spend another day unfairly locked away from their families and livelihoods. I join many in Northern California and Oregon in celebrating President Trump's willingness to resolve this injustice, and I will continue to pursue policy changes to ensure that those using fire as a management tool aren't treated the same way as terrorists."

Background:

President Trump today made use of the Executive's power of clemency in order to grant a full pardon to members of the Hammond family of ranchers in eastern Oregon - Dwight Lincoln Hammond, Jr. and his son, Steven Hammond - on account of the unconscionably severe sentencing that was successfully sought against them by the previous administration.

A fair read of the evidence in the case indicated that the Hammonds should not have been found guilty of anything but negligence for having engaged in what amounts to the routine, controlled burn of invasive plants on their own property - fires which unfortunately got out of hand. That mandatory minimum sentencing was successfully sought for these accidental matters which harmed no human lives indicates, at a basic level of fairness and justice, that clemency is an appropriate remedy for what was a heartless and overzealous prosecution.

From the White House press release:

Today, President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Grants of Clemency (Full Pardons) for Dwight Lincoln Hammond, Jr., and his son, Steven Hammond. The Hammonds are multi-generation cattle ranchers in Oregon imprisoned in connection with a fire that leaked onto a small portion of neighboring public grazing land. The evidence at trial regarding the Hammonds' responsibility for the fire was conflicting, and the jury acquitted them on most of the charges.

At the Hammonds' original sentencing, the judge noted that they are respected in the community and that imposing the mandatory minimum, 5-year prison sentence would "shock the conscience" and be "grossly disproportionate to the severity" of their conduct. As a result, the judge imposed significantly lesser sentences. The previous administration, however, filed an overzealous appeal that resulted in the Hammonds being sentenced to five years in prison. This was unjust.

Dwight Hammond is now 76 years old and has served approximately three years in prison. Steven Hammond is 49 and has served approximately four years in prison. They have also paid $400,000 to the United States to settle a related civil suit. The Hammonds are devoted family men, respected contributors to their local community, and have widespread support from their neighbors, local law enforcement, and farmers and ranchers across the West. Justice is overdue for Dwight and Steven Hammond, both of whom are entirely deserving of these Grants of Executive Clemency.

###

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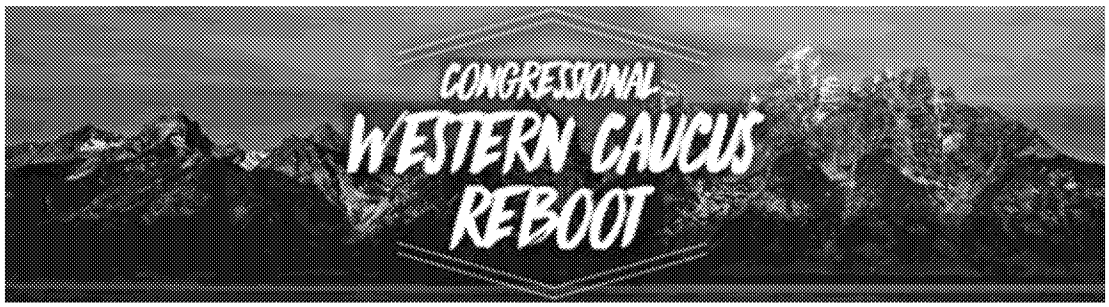
From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 10/28/2017 6:10:16 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 10.28.17

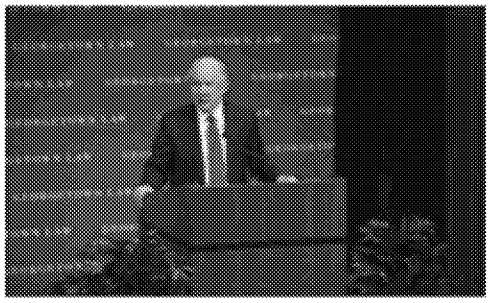


Week of 10.28.2017

Western Leaders Join House Letter To Justice Department On Activist Threats To Pipeline Infrastructure

BY MICHAEL SANDOVAL OCTOBER 27, 2017

More than 80 members of the U.S. House sent a bipartisan letter to U.S. Attorney Jeff Sessions and the Department of Justice asking for a review of legislation and prosecutorial action covering attacks on the country's pipeline infrastructure.


@TheJusticeDept

Led by Rep. Ken Buck (R-Colo.) and Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), the letter seeks DOJ input on the adequacy of federal statutes like the Patriot Act and Pipeline Safety Act in allowing the department to "prosecute criminal activity against energy infrastructure at the federal level."

On Monday, Western Caucus Members **Ken Buck (CO-04)** and **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)** led more than 80 members in sending a **bipartisan letter** to U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the Department of Justice requesting information on the Department's plans and actions to prosecute individuals who engage in criminal activity against energy infrastructure.

"Environmental activists who choose to use violence against our nation's energy infrastructure and the men and women who work in the energy industry should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law,"

Congressman Ken Buck stated. "While I will continue to support their right to protest policies they disagree with, we need to send a strong message to those who destroy property that such dangerous behavior will not be tolerated by the communities who live around and rely on this energy infrastructure."

For more information click **HERE.**

Western Caucus Member Jeff Duncan Named to Energy and Commerce

On Monday, the House Steering Committee selected Western Caucus Member **Jeff Duncan (SC-03)** to serve on the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

"I'm looking forward to Jeff joining our exemplary team here at the Energy and Commerce Committee. Jeff's long career in public service, from his work serving as a state legislator back in South Carolina to his time spent here in Congress, and time as a small business owner allow him to hit the ground running and make an immediate impact on the committee with some of the broadest jurisdiction in Congress," **said Chairman Greg Walden (OR-02)**.

White House OMB Director Mulvaney Meets with the Western Caucus

On Tuesday, at our Western Caucus Monthly Members Meeting, our Members heard from White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney. He walked our Members through the steps that he, President Donald J. Trump and the Administration are taking to reduce government bureaucracy, repeal job-killing regulations and get our federal debt under control! The Trump Adminstration has already blocked more than 800 Obama Regulations, saving our economy billions of dollars each year.

Secretary Zinke Announces Largest Oil & Gas Lease in U.S. History

US Dept of Interior @Interior · Oct 24

Today @SecretaryZinke announced @BOEM_DOI is proposing the largest oil & gas lease in US history on.doi.gov/2yNVPQW

On Tuesday, Department of the Interior Secretary and former Western Caucus Member Ryan Zinke announced the largest oil and gas lease sale ever held in the United States --76,967,935 acres in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, offshore Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

For more information click **HERE.**

The Time for Tax Reform is Now

On Tuesday, the **Financial Services Roundtable** joined us for a special financial services tax reform briefing tailored for Members and Staff. Presenters included: Jim Shea, Chief Tax Officer, Prudential Financial; Art Schneider, Head of Tax Consulting, Transamerica; Bill Rys, Director of Government Affairs for Tax, Citigroup.

Resources Examines Obama's Job-Killing Sage Grouse Policies

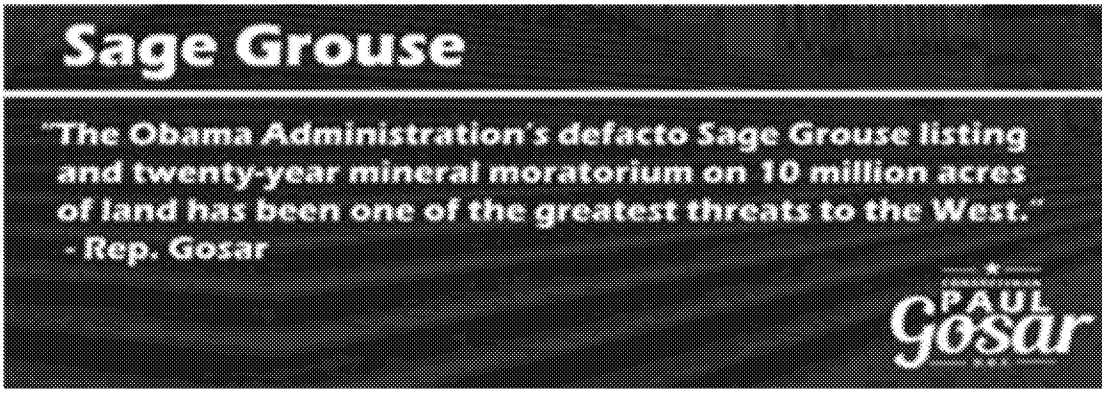
Natural Resources @NatResources · Oct 25

LIVE→ Committee discusses #SageGrouse management & emphasize the need for continued local control.

Full Committee Oversight Hearing

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing examining state-level solutions to the Sage Grouse problem.

Members and expert witnesses testified regarding the compelling need for local and state control over the recovery process. Regional differences and ecosystem variety mean that recovery can not be a top-down, Washington-mandated approach.



"[t]he federal government under the Obama administration insisted on managing Greater Sage Grouse recovery with a Washington, D.C., one-size-fits-all approach that fails miserably to address the individual management challenges present in each state. The purpose of today's hearing is to provide further evidence that state and local control leads to lasting success. States have consistently proven to be masters at caring for their own lands and wildlife, and sage grouse is no different," **Chairman Emeritus Rob Bishop (UT-01)** said.

"The Obama administration's de facto sage grouse listing and the 20 year mineral moratorium on ten million acres of land has been one of the greatest threats to the livelihood of western communities. Some of the most stifling consequences of the Obama era regulations were targeted at businesses," **Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04)** said. "Thankfully President Trump's Department of [the] Interior **cancelled** the massive proposed withdrawal allowing job creators and hardrock miners to get back to work."

Decades of activist litigation and efforts by the Obama administration to circumvent successful state management plans have been "bad for the West, bad for jobs and bad for sage grouse," according to Idaho Speaker of the House and fifth generation rancher Scott Bedke.

For more information click **HERE** and **HERE.**

House Passes Collins Bill to Stop Sue-And-Settle Abuse

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives today passed H.R. 469, the Sunshine for Regulations and Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2017, legislation introduced by Western Caucus Member **Doug Collins (GA-09)** to stop federal agencies from establishing regulations through litigation as a means of circumventing the legislative process.

"The House took action today to draw back the curtain on federal agencies that have colluded with special interest groups at the expense of American workers and families. The back-room litigation that the EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies favored throughout the last administration must come to an end.

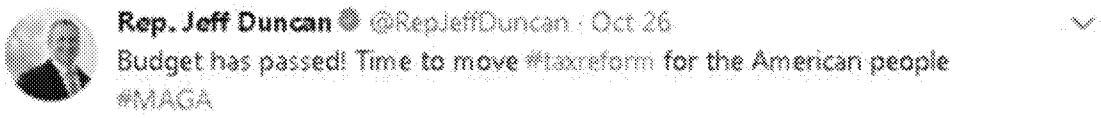
"A government by and for the people has no business allowing unelected bureaucrats to redraft laws behind closed doors, and I introduced the Sunshine for Regulations and Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act to end this practice decisively," said Collins.

For more information click **HERE.**

House Passes Budget, One Step Closer to Tax Reform

On Thursday, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus and the House of Representatives passed the fiscal year 2018 Budget paving the way for Tax Reform to move ahead through reconciliation.

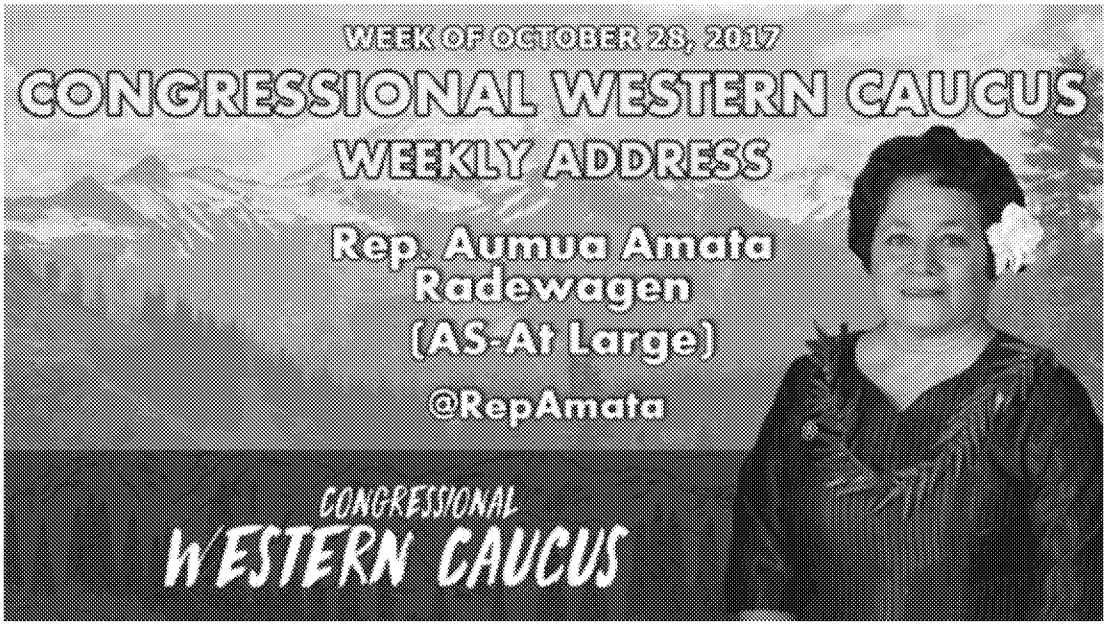
For more information click **HERE.**



WEEKLY ADDRESS...

Rep. Aumua Amata Radewagen (AS-AT Large) discussed how decisions in Washington about a marine monument placed American Samoa traditional fishing waters off limits, despite generations of use. Rep. Radewagen is a new member of the Caucus this Congress and is doing a tremendous job.

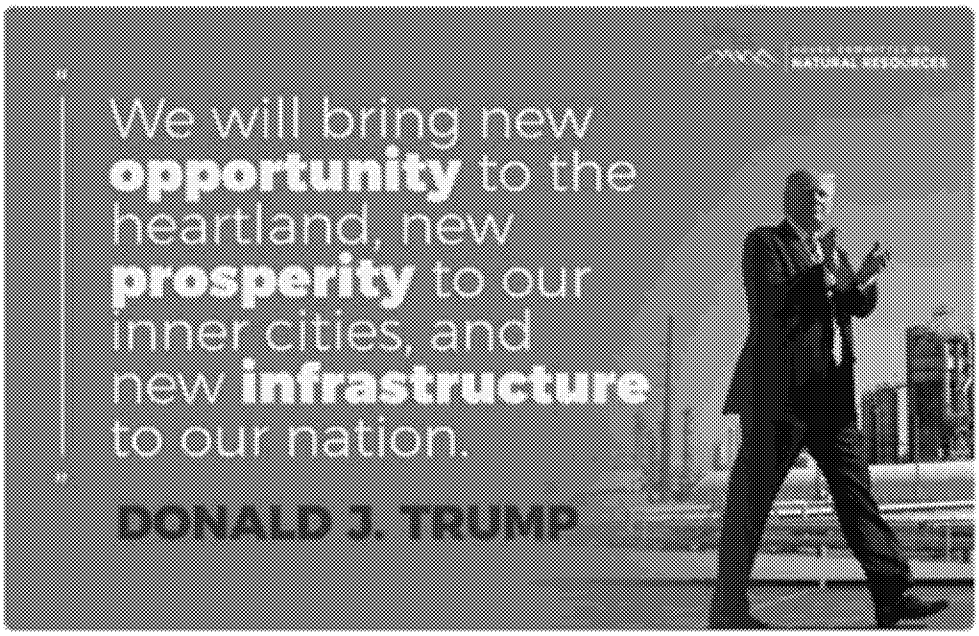
Click **HERE** or on the picture below to watch the full video.



POST OF THE WEEK...

Natural Resources @NatResources · Oct 26

"Together, we are going to start an #energy revolution – one that celebrates AMERICAN production on AMERICAN soil." -@realDonaldTrump



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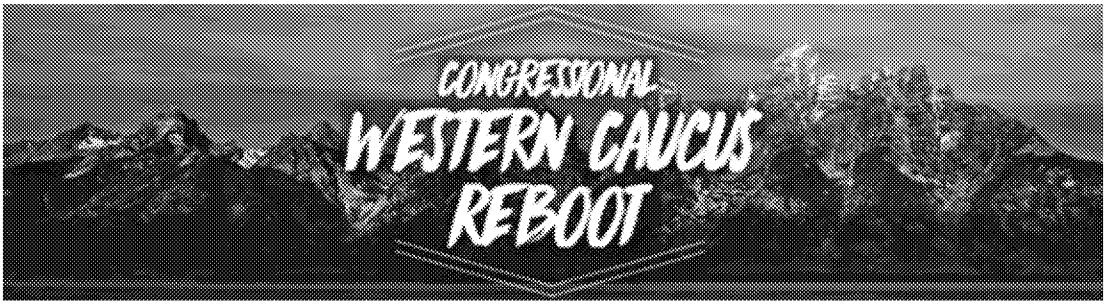
Sent: 7/2/2018 2:55:34 AM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 07.1.18



Week of 7.1.18

#AmericanEnergyDominance

Western Wire
June 27 at 8:58 PM

Top Western leaders and key Congressional members will be meeting in Denver on Friday to discuss energy policy and the economic impacts of the oil and natural gas industry on the local and federal level, Western Wire has learned.

The Western Energy Forum, hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation, will feature discussions about the benefits the oil and natural gas industry delivers to local communities and the importance of pursuing an "all of the above" energy policy, among other topics, according to the agenda.

WESTERNWIRE.NET

Western Leaders to Discuss Energy at Denver Forum

On Friday, our Members and staff participated in a Western Energy Forum with local stakeholders hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation. Chairman **Paul Gosar**, House GOP Chairwoman **Cathy McMorris Rodgers**, Executive Vice-Chairman **Scott Tipton**, Western Caucus Member Rep. **Mike Coffman**, former U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary **Gale Norton**, U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals **Joe Balash** as well as numerous staff from the House and Senate Western Caucuses made the trip to Colorado.

Congressional Western Caucus added 4 new photos. ***
Published by Jeff Small [?] · June 29 at 12:00 PM ·

Our Western Energy Forum hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation just kicked off in Colorado. Great opening remarks from Rep. Paul Gosar, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Congressman Scott Tipton, U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Joe Balash, Senate Western Caucus and Congressional Western Caucus! W/ Western Wire

On the agenda today: American energy dominance!

Tune in here: bit.ly/2IF7j1s

As reported by Western Wire, former Secretary Norton discussed new climate change lawsuits that aim to prevent responsible energy production. "Today I'm focusing on a new breed of environmental litigation, one that is as different from [prior] litigation as a lion is from a house cat," said former Interior Secretary Gale Norton."Climate change litigation has moved into the Rocky Mountains," Norton said. "Climate change debates are nothing new, but aspects of this litigation are significant."

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Jun 29
Great to hear from former @Interior Secretary Gale Norton and @RepMikeCoffman at today's #westernenergyforum.

The Western Energy Forum had great participation and comments from local stakeholders including: University of Wyoming's **Tim Considine**, Independence Institute's **Amy Oliver Cooke**, Colorado Oil & Gas Association's **Dan Haley**, Western Energy Alliance's **Kathleen Sgamma**, State Representative **Kim Ransom**, CLUB 20's **Christian Reece**, Global Energy Institute's **Christopher Guith**, Xcel Energy's **Frank Prager**, Arizona Public Service's **Jeff Burke** and Consumer Energy Alliance's **Andrew Browning**.

Western Wire @WesternWireNet · Jun 29

Univ. of Wyo.'s Tim Considine, @i2idotorg Amy Oliver Cooke, @ColoradoOilGas @danhaleyCO, @WesternEnergy1 @KathleenSgamma, @KimRansom, @club20westslope Christian Reece on America's energy renaissance cdn.digitalservices.online/wcf/ #WesternEnergyForum @westerncaucus

Following this informative discussion, ConocoPhillips gave our Members and staff a behind the scenes tour of some of their drilling, hydraulic fracturing and well operations.

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Jun 29

Phenomenal tour of @conocophillips oil and gas operations to conclude our #WesternEnergyForum.

Department of Transportation Unshackling Job Creators

Congressional Western Caucus ***

Published by Tanner Hanson [?] · June 29 at 1:15 PM ·

Great discussion on Wednesday at our monthly Member meeting with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

Under the Obama Adminsitration, DOT regulations alone added $3 billion a year in extra regulatory costs. Under Secretary Chao's leadership, DOT lowered regulatory costs by $312 million in 2017 and is on pace to further reduce those burdens by another $500-700 million more in 2018.

The Secretary's efforts to deliver the world-class infrastructure that our country deserves are exceptional. Madam Secretary, you are always welcome and we hope you'll come back sometime soon.

Pictured: Congressman Greg Gianforte, Congressman Ron Estes, Congressman Roger Marshall, M.D., Congressman Ken Calvert and Congressman Garret Graves.

On Wednesday, Department of Transportation Secretary **Elaine L. Chao** joined our Members for our monthly Member meeting. Under the Obama Administration, DOT regulations alone added $3 billion a year in extra regulatory costs. Under Secretary Chao's leadership, DOT lowered regulatory costs by $312 million in 2017 and is on pace to further reduce those burdens by another $500-700 million more in 2018. The Secretary's efforts to deliver the world-class infrastructure that our country deserves are exceptional.

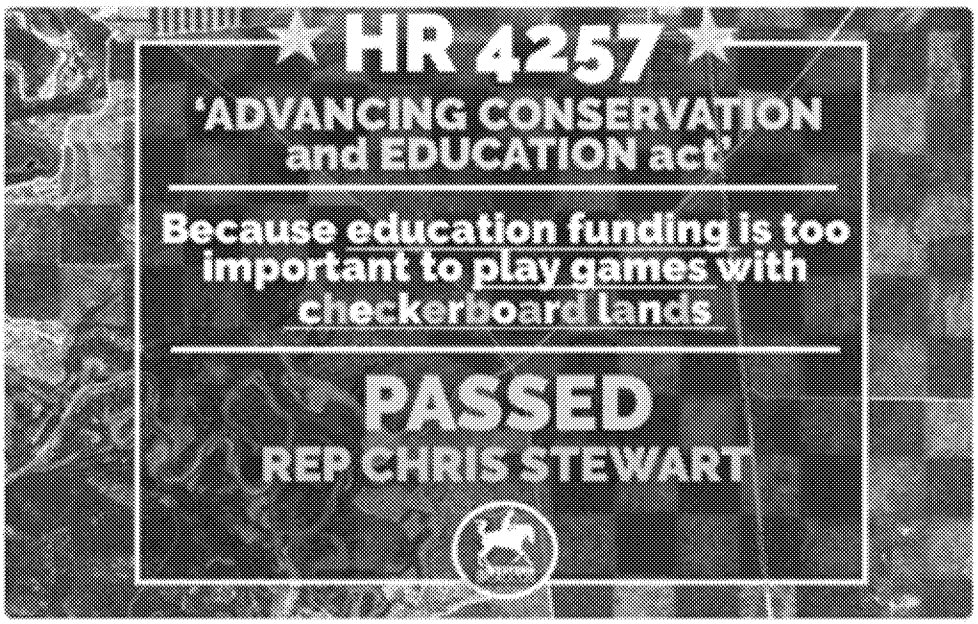
House Passes the Advancing Conservation and Education Act

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Jun 25

Checkerboarding might be needed for some board games to work, but it makes for bad federal lands policy.

For one, it DRAMATICALLY reduces state education revenues.

The @RepChrisStewart bill that passed the House today is a check on all that.



On Monday, the House passed Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart's** bill, H.R. 4257. This common sense piece of legislation allows for the consolidation of different checkerboards of state and federal lands in Western states in order to maximize their efficiency.

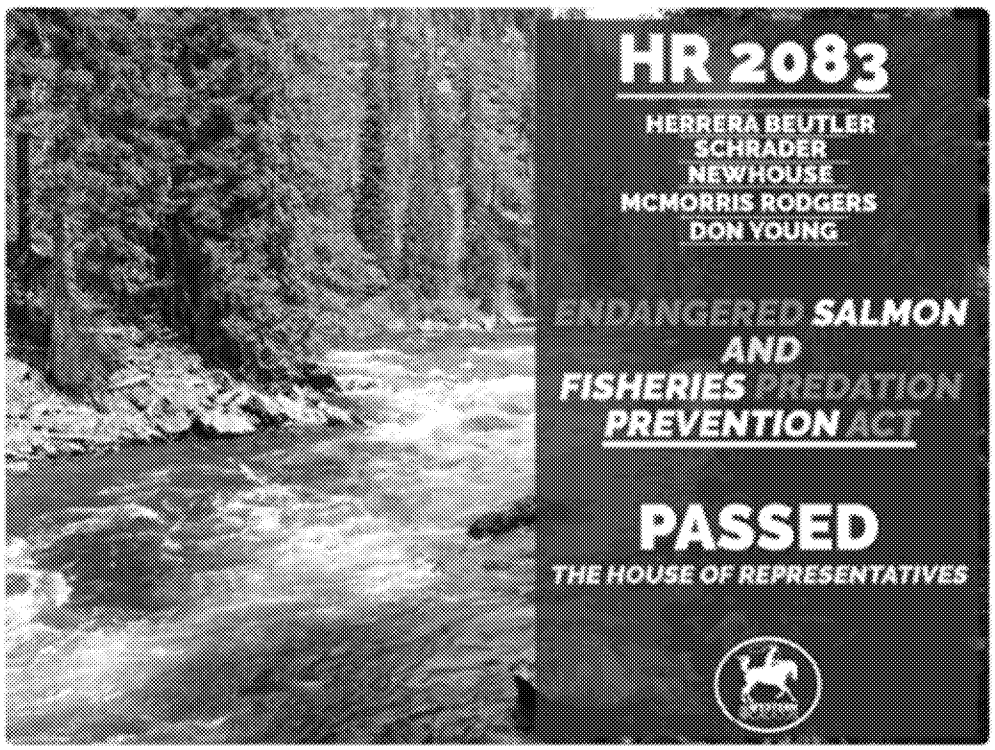
House Passes Bill to Protect Pacific Northwest Fisheries

Western Caucus @westerncaucus · Jun 26

Today the House showed it's serious about boosting salmon populations and supporting fisheries by passing this bill.

The work of @HerreraBeutler @RepSchrader @repdonyoung @RepNewhouse @cathymcmorris pushed this bill over the line!

Press release: bit.ly/2IvEs8J



On Tuesday, the House passed H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act, by a bipartisan vote of 288-116.

"With today's passage of my bipartisan bill to improve the survival of endangered salmon and steelhead, we're taking a giant step forward in restoring an ecosystem sorely out of balance. The sea lion predation problem on the Columbia River will not go away without intervention from local and tribal managers, and I'm pleased that we're now able to give these officials the tools they need to remove the most problematic sea lions and protect our native fish runs for generations to come," stated Congresswoman **Jaime Herrera Beutler.**

"Salmon are an important part of the culture, identity, and the economy of the people and tribes of the Pacific Northwest. It is one of the reasons why we've, as a region, put so much time, energy, and resources into protecting and recovering these iconic fish," said Congressman **Kurt Schrader.** "Our bill will provide the states and tribal members the flexibility they need to protect these endangered fish and manage the threat posed by sea lion predation. I'm very pleased to have the support of so many of my colleagues in the House in tackling this issue in a bipartisan, thoughtful way. I want to thank Rep. Herrera Beutler and our states, tribes, and local communities for all of the hard work everyone has put in over several years now on this legislation and on working towards solutions to save our salmon."

Read the full statements by other Members of the Western Caucus in our full press release here.

Resources Committee Passes Multiple Onshore Energy Bills

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed several onshore energy development bills, including **Rep. Steve Pearce's** H.R. 6107, Rep. **John Curtis'** H.R. 6088, Rep. **Liz Cheney's** H.R. 6087 and Rep. **Scott Tipton's** H.R. 5859.

"The energy industry, the lifeblood of our economy in Wyoming, has been severely burdened by lengthy and often frivolous protests on energy projects. I'm proud my bill will help stop the abuses of this system by charging a nominal fee for protests of oil and gas lease sales, applications for permit to drill, and right of way applications. The Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act brings much needed and long overdue relief to Wyoming oil and gas operators," **Congresswoman Cheney** stated.

"Energy independence is a vital step forward for our nation's well-being. Improving the federal government's slow permitting process is essential for making this great step forward. I have greatly enjoyed working with the Natural Resources Committee on this important bill. I thank my colleagues for joining with me to keep this bill moving towards the House Floor," **Congressman Pearce** said.

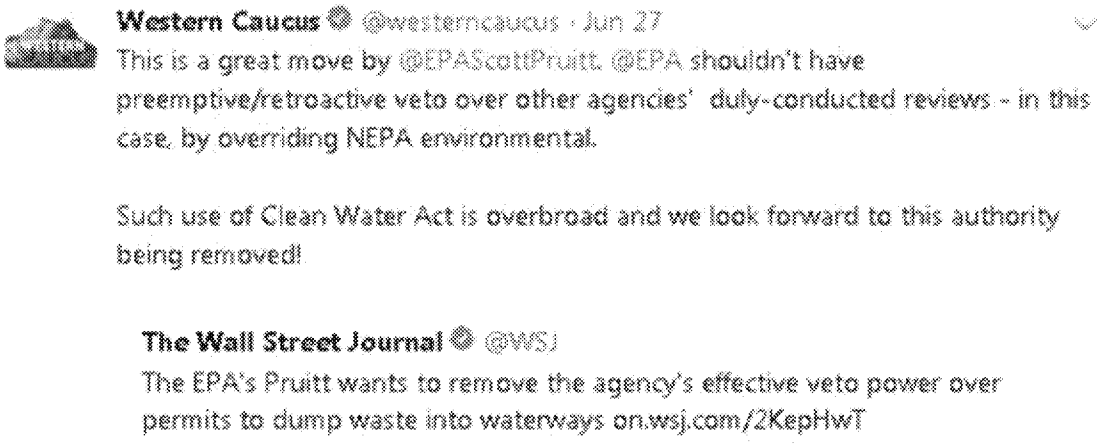
"This bill will help ensure that Utah's rural communities are growing by speeding up the burdensome approval process for responsible energy projects. I'm delighted to see this legislation move forward. It's a victory for Utah and American energy independence," **Congressman Curtis** stated.

"The Education and Energy Act is a win-win for the nation. This bill would allow us to provide more funding for K-12 and public higher education, all while creating good paying jobs, lowering energy prices, and setting the stage for U.S. energy resources to be exported to our allies. Property taxes continue to be the largest source

of funding for the public school system, so in rural counties in my district, where a majority of land is owned by the federal government and therefore not taxable, education budgets are tight," continued Tipton. "The Education and Energy Act would fix this disparity by sending more of the federal revenues back to the county from which the royalties were derived," **Congrssman Tipton** said.

To read the full release from the House Committee on Natural Resources click here.

EPA Acts to Prevent Future Preemptive and Retroactive Vetoes



On Wednesday, EPA Administrator **Scott Pruitt** outlined changes in a memo to the agency's permitting process that aim to prevent future preemptive and retroactive vetoes as well as increase certainty for landowners and job creators.

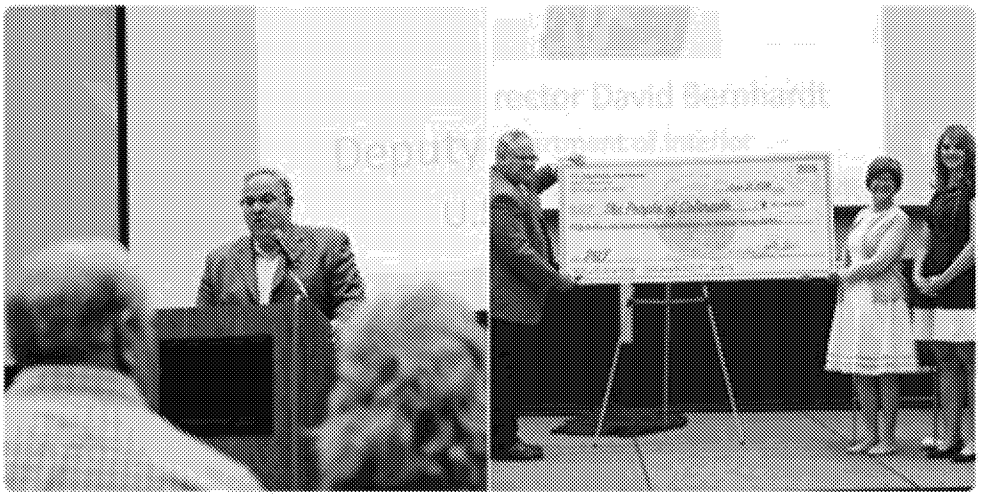
"Today's memo refocuses EPA on its core mission of protecting public health and the environment in a way that is fair and consistent with due process," said EPA Administrator **Scott Pruitt**. "We must ensure that EPA exercises its authority under the Clean Water Act in a careful, predictable, and prudent manner."

The Western Caucus called for such reforms in a May 3rd letter stating at the time that "preemptive project vetoes are a tool of tyranny."

POST OF THE WEEK...

David Bernhardt @DOIDepSec · Jun 27

It was an honor to announce $40,144,620 in PILT payments to my home state of Colorado, a 9% increase from last year. Counties often use this money to bolster law enforcement, search and rescue, and wildfire protection to its residents.



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Sent: 10/26/2017 6:58:57 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Tomorrow's Western Caucus Staff Policy Breakfast

Final reminder on tomorrow's monthly bicameral staff policy breakfast hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation.

Typically, 80-100 House and Senate staffers, leadership staff and speakers from industry attend this policy meeting.

In addition to an excellent discussion, there is always a great breakfast that includes bacon and eggs.

Monthly Bicameral Staff Policy Breakfast | Friday, October 27, 2017 | 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 203-02

We have a great lineup slated for tomorrow. Hope to see a person or two from your office in the morning.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

From: Small, Jeff
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 11:59 AM

By now you should have received the below invite to the next monthly bicameral staff policy breakfast hosted by the Western Caucus Foundation.

Typically, 80-100 House and Senate staffers, leadership staff and speakers from industry attend this policy meeting.

Monthly Bicameral Staff Policy Breakfast | Friday, October 27, 2017 | 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | SVC 203-02

Sincerely,

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Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

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THE HONORABLE STEVE DAINES
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

THE HONORABLE PAUL GOSAR
HONORARY CO-CHAIR

Monthly Policy Briefing

Upcoming Monthly Staff Policy Briefing:

October 27, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Senate Visitors Center: SVC 203-02

Save the Dates:

December 7 – 9th **Western Roundtable Discussion, Public Lands Meeting, and Field Tour**

Location: Las Vegas, NV

www.westerncaucusfoundation.org

*****Foundation events are planned to fully comply with Congressional Ethics Rules and Other Applicable Laws******

The Western Caucus Foundation (WCF) is a charitable and educational organization organized and operated under Section 501(c)(3). It will provide education and communications to policy makers and the public to further enhance, sustain, and preserve the West's dynamic and unique culture.

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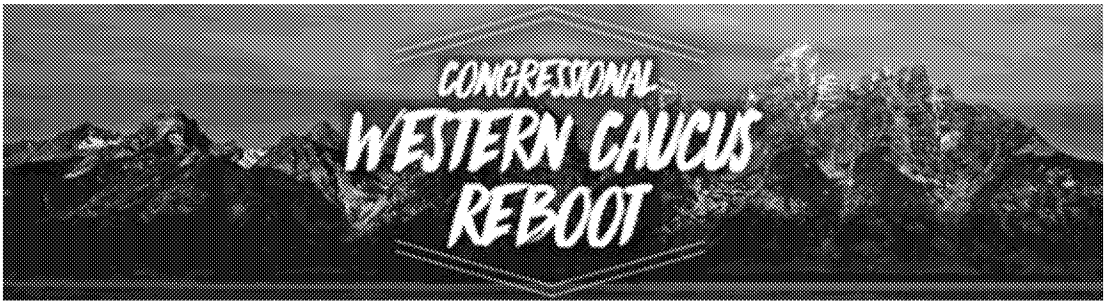
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 06.22.18



Week of 06.22.2018

Trump: 'We Need to Mine in Minnesota Again'

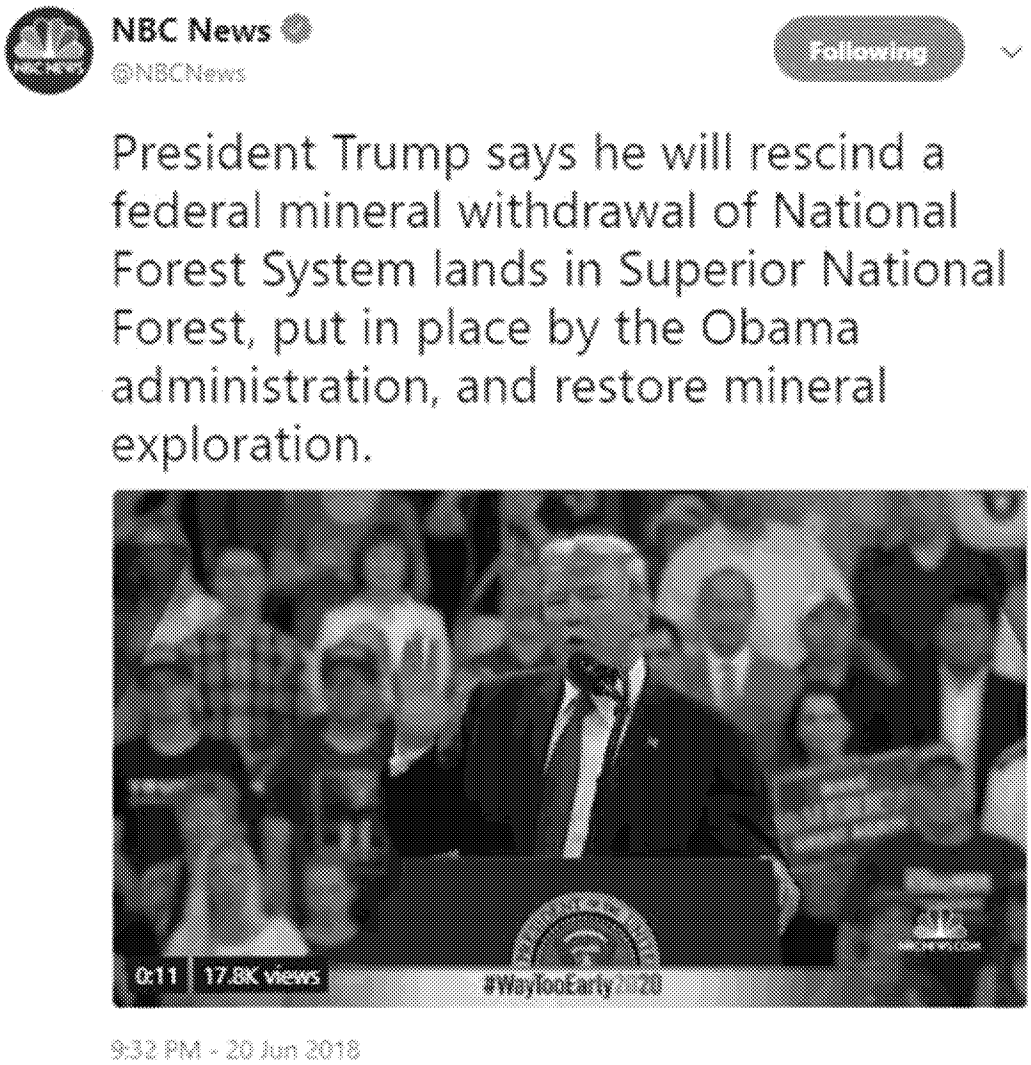
Caucus: 'Go on...'

On Wednesday evening, President Trump announced at a rally in Duluth, Minnesota that he would be cancelling the Obama Administration's political mineral withdrawal in the Superior National Forest.

On January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous Administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register to restrict for a 20-year moratorium lands within the Superior National Forest in northeast Minnesota.

It is being reported that, upon being briefed on the situation, the President immediately saw the importance to Minnesota workers and families of rescinding the massive withdrawal.

Watch his announcement by clicking here or on the picture below:



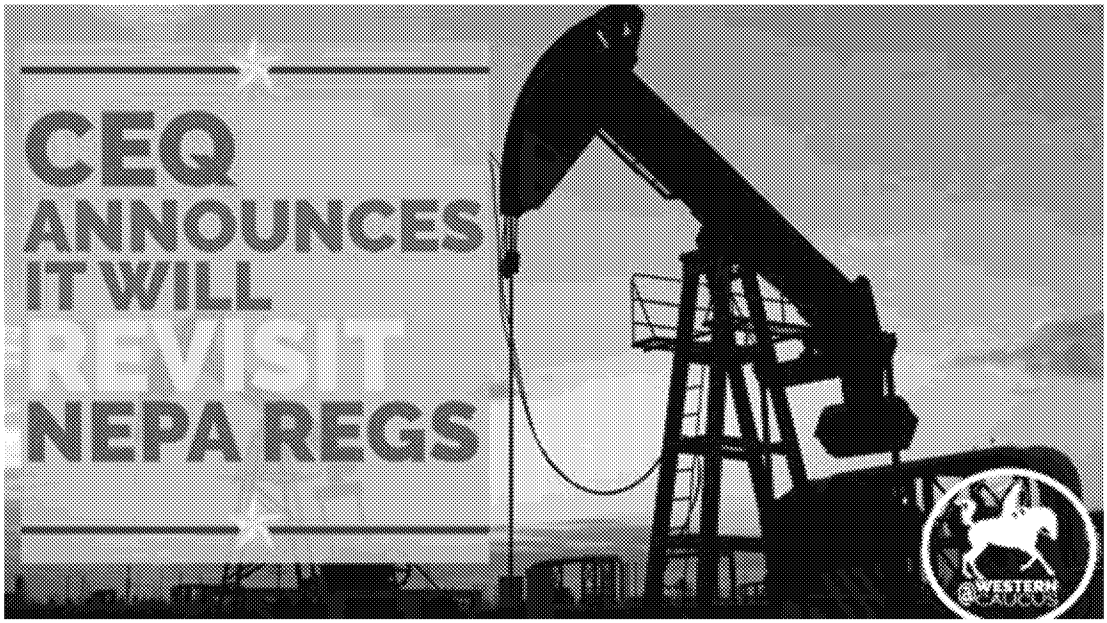
The Western Caucus - led by members Tom Emmer and Bruce Westerman as well as Chairman Gosar - has advocated for this outcome since the withdrawal was first put in place.

Click here to see the full Caucus press release from Thursday!

Congressman Emmer stated, "The President's announcement is great news for Minnesota. My MINER Act demonstrated strong bipartisan support for unleashing our state's mining potential and now, by reversing the politically motivated and short-sighted actions from the Obama administration on their way out the door, President Trump is stepping in to restore local control of Minnesota's mineral rights. I am hopeful that the steps needed to ensure a full reversal of the former administration's harmful actions are taken soon, specifically

ending the withdrawal proposal that has now dragged on for 18 months, to dramatically revitalize local communities and their economies."

Caucus Anticipates Streamlined White House NEPA Regs



On Tuesday, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Vice Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Congressman **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** released statements after the White House's Council on Environmental Quality published an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking indicating its intent to consider revising regulations governing implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Congressman Gosar said, "Issued in 1978 and amended in 1986, the Executive's NEPA regulations governing the law's implementation have barely been touched since they were first put in place. Given how much we have learned about how the law plays out in practice since then - and how impactful these regulations are - this fact borders on outrageous. Accordingly, we look forward to working with the White House's Council on Environmental Quality and other relevant federal entities to ensure that NEPA is implemented in a maximally efficient way. This restrictive law has been made far more onerous by executive decisions to bureaucratize rather than streamline its implementation, and it bodes well for our great companies and economy to see the President taking action here."

Congressman Rob Bishop stated, "NEPA's arbitrary and burdensome mandates are slowing infrastructure progress in the United States while doing little to actually improve environmental outcomes. I'm thankful CEQ and the Trump administration are serious about bringing our federal environmental review process into the 21st century, and today's action is critical step forward. My Committee will be working closely with CEQ and agency leadership to create a more logical NEPA enforcement process based on timely, transparent decision-making that yields better results for the economy and environment."

The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) advanced notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register announced it is considering updating implementing regulations for the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). According to CEQ, "Over the past four decades, CEQ has issued numerous guidance documents but has amended its regulations substantively only once."

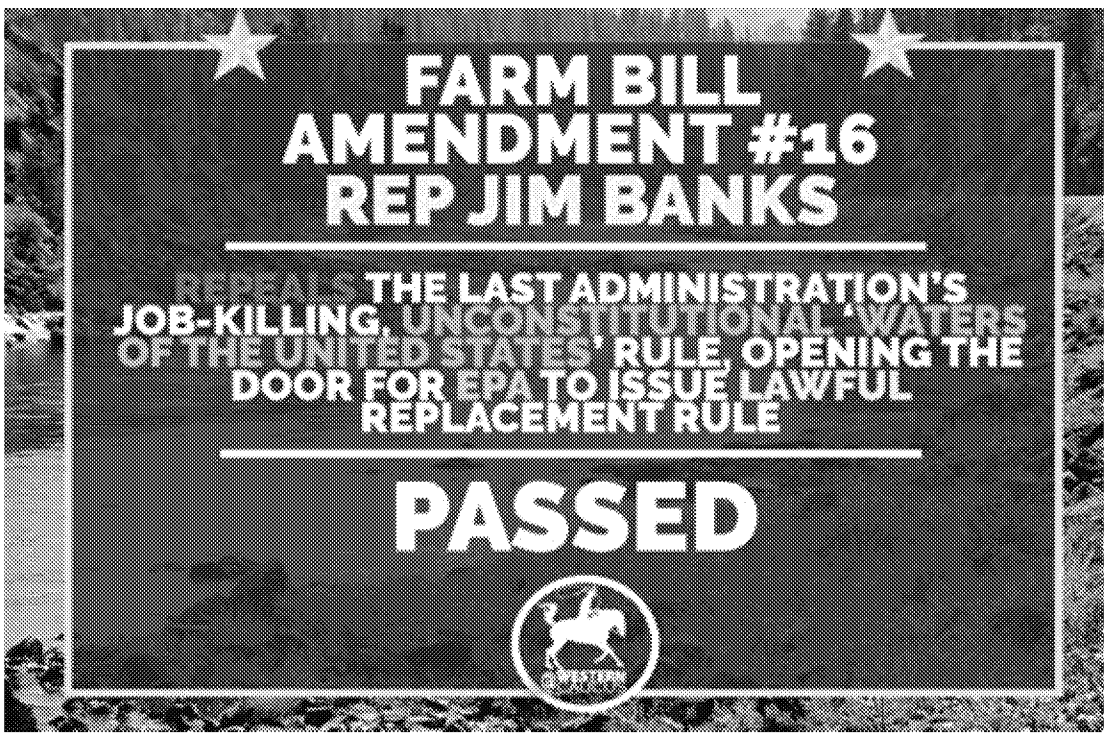
In the notice, CEQ poses 20 individual questions concerning various aspects of the NEPA process and regulation that public commenters have 30 days to respond to. The questions are divided into sections, including those on the current NEPA process, the scope of NEPA reviews and the general NEPA process. More specific questions, including those pertaining to public input into NEPA, proper inter-agency procedures and others are included therein.

The Administration is likely to take further action at the conclusion of this 30-day public comment period by releasing draft changes to NEPA regulations, which will also be subject to public comment.

To see the full press release click here.

Farm Bill Passes House

Contains Healthy Crop of Caucus Victories



On Thursday, the House considered and passed H.R. 2, the Farm bill, in a close 213-211 vote.

The bill included a plethora of Western Caucus victories by Members including **Representatives Westerman**, **Cheney**, **Gianforte**, **Gosar** and more.

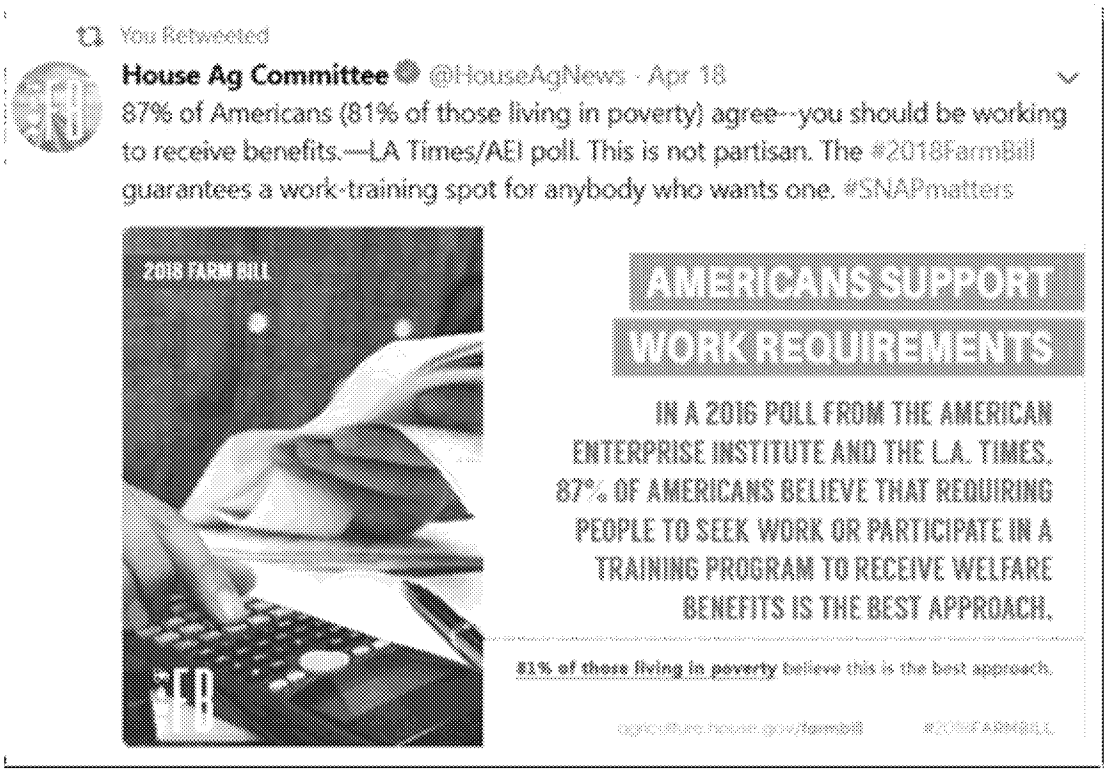
Congressman Tipton stated, "This year's Farm Bill addresses many issues that Coloradans face daily. In addition to maintaining and strengthening critical safety nets that will help farmers and ranchers provide families across the nation with healthy affordable food, this year's Farm Bill includes important provisions that will help bring high-speed broadband to rural communities, restore responsible forest management practices and prevent dangerous wildfires from ravaging the West, and repeal the burdensome WOTUS rule. I was glad to vote for legislation that will help Coloradans prosper, and I now urge my colleagues in the Senate to follow our lead on the 2018 Farm Bill."

H.R. 2 makes significant reforms to the farm and nutrition assistance programs and reauthorizes the farm bill for five years.

The bill is good for farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

The 2014 Farm Bill was initially estimated to save $23 billion over 10 years but has greatly surpassed that estimate and is now expected to save more than $100 billion.

H.R. 2 includes over 35 improvements to SNAP including establishing substantive work requirements for all work capable adults.



The bill has one of the strongest forestry titles of any Farm Bill and was made even stronger by the Western Caucus passed amendments. Specifically, the base bills includes 10 categorical exclusions and reauthorizes the Landscape Scale Restoration Program in order to allow for active management of our nation's forests and critical response.

Read the full statements by Members of the Western Caucus in the press release here.

Resources Commmittee 'Expedites' Pearce Permitting Bill to Floor

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed **Rep. Pearce's** H.R. 6106.

The "Common Sense Permitting Act" ensures that the regulatory green-light applied to safe, noncontroversial projects - called a 'categorical exclusion' - is applied all the time once it has been approved.

If enacted, it would ensure individual bureaucrats can't hold up projects that the impartial regulatory process has determined should be expedited.

See the text of this important legislation here.

EPA Decides Against Duplication of Discharge & Spill Regs

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News Releases from Headquarters > Water (OW)

Administrator Pruitt Proposes Rule to Provide Regulatory Certainty on Spill Prevention

06/21/2018

Contact Information:
(press@epa.gov)

WASHINGTON — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt signed a proposed rule that, if finalized, would impose no new regulatory requirements under the Clean Water Act (CWA) section 311(j)(1)(C) authority for CWA hazardous substances discharges prevention. EPA is proposing to conclude that additional regulatory requirements for CWA hazardous substances are unnecessary and would impose undue burden on approximately 100,000 facilities in the U.S. already subject to the existing framework.

On Thursday, **U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt** announced that additional regulatory requirements for hazardous substances discharges would be duplicative, unnecessary & impose undue burdens on 100,000 facilities in the U.S. already subject to an existing framework.

"After engaging the public and analyzing the best available data, EPA believes that additional regulatory requirements for hazardous substances discharges would be duplicative and unnecessary," said **Administrator Pruitt**. "If finalized, the proposed rule would give the regulated community the clarity and certainty they need to continue to uphold the law and ensure the nation's waterways are protected."

Read the full press release by EPA by clicking on the picture above or here.

Administration Releases Bureaucracy Reorganization Plan

On Thursday, the Executive Office of the President released a plan report entitled the "Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch" as responsive to **President Trump's** Executive Order 13781 to "improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch."

The 132-page report outlines goals, plans and mechanisms for achieving a successful Executive Branch reorganization, stating:

"This report outlines the Administration's analysis and recommendations for structural realignment of the Executive Branch to better serve the mission, service, and stewardship needs of the American people. While some of the recommendations identified in this volume can be achieved via Executive administrative action, more significant changes will require legislative action as well.

By sharing key findings, the Administration offers this report as a cornerstone to build productive, bipartisan dialogue around realigning the Federal Government mission delivery model to make sense in the 21st Century. As such, while some of the proposals are ready for agency implementation, others establish a vision for the Executive Branch that will require further exploration and partnership with the Congress."

See the full report here and Executive Order here.

POST OF THE WEEK...

You Retweeted

Natural Resources @NatResources · Jun 19

NEWS: @POTUS has reversed President Obama's bureaucratic overreach of our nation's ocean policy. This order enhances interagency coordination, improves access to ocean data, and increases engagement with marine, science, and tech industries.

Executive Order Regarding the Ocean Policy to Advance the Econom...

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows: Section 1. P

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Message

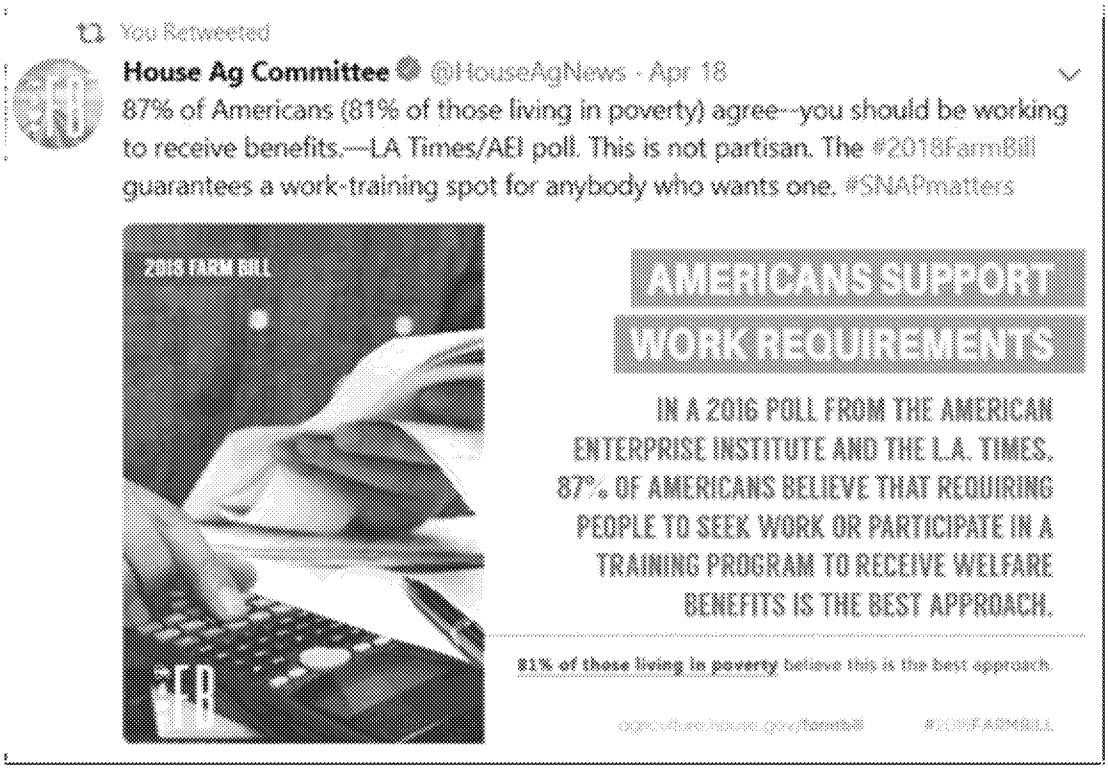
From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/21/2018 10:22:45 PM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: House Passes Farm Bill with Healthy Crop of Western Caucus Priorities

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: June 21, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

House Passes Farm Bill with Healthy Crop of Western Caucus Priorities



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including House Agriculture Chairman **Mike Conaway (TX-11)**, Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Executive Vice Chairman **Scott Tipton (CO-03)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Members **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large),**

Ron Estes (KS-04), **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and **Bob Gibbs (OH-07)** released statements after the House passed H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill, by a recorded vote of 213-211:

Congressman Conaway stated, "Today's vote was about keeping faith with the men and women of rural America and about the enduring promise of the dignity of a day's work. It was about providing certainty to farmers and ranchers who have been struggling under the weight of a five-year recession and about providing our neighbors in need with more than just a hand out, but a hand up. I'm proud of what this body has accomplished, and now look forward to working with the Senate and the president to deliver a farm bill on time to the American people."

Congressman Gosar said, "I applaud Chairman Conaway for his strong leadership and all the time he put into crafting a thoughtful Farm Bill with meaningful reforms. 87% of Americans support requiring welfare recipients to work in order to receive benefits and that was the main reason I voted for the bill today. If we have a flawed conference process and the Senate waters down or strips out the work requirements, my vote will likely be lost as well. Having said that, I am also extremely proud of the Western Caucus victories secured in this legislation including repealing the Obama Administration's unconstitutional WOTUS Rule, authorizing significant provisions that will improve forest health and allow active management, modernizing the Endangered Species Act and streamlining wireless broadband."

Congressman Tipton stated, "This year's Farm Bill addresses many issues that Coloradans face daily. In addition to maintaining and strengthening critical safety nets that will help farmers and ranchers provide families across the nation with healthy affordable food, this year's Farm Bill includes important provisions that will help bring high-speed broadband to rural communities, restore responsible forest management practices and prevent dangerous wildfires from ravaging the West, and repeal the burdensome WOTUS rule. I was glad to vote for legislation that will help Coloradans prosper, and I now urge my colleagues in the Senate to follow our lead on the 2018 Farm Bill."

Congressman Westerman said, "Today in the House of Representatives, we passed the 2018 Farm Bill. This bill included many important items for farmers across the Fourth Congressional District. Three amendments I introduced were passed and added to the farm bill to focus on forest health. One of the most notable changes in this farm bill is adding a work requirement for able-bodied, working age adults without young children at home who receive SNAP benefits. There is no better anti-poverty program than a job. That is why we introduced this important language that requires work, technical education, or even volunteer service to receive these benefits. As I travel throughout Arkansas, I see a growing economy with record low unemployment and employers eager to hire. For these reasons, I was proud to cast my support for the 2018 Farm Bill."

"After three years of listening to the concerns and ideas of farmers not just in the North State, but across the entire country, I'm certain this Farm Bill will be good for American Agriculture. This legislation will impact nearly every American in some manner. We've included meaningful forestry reforms to help properly manage our public lands and curtail the spread of wildfires. We've included resources to boost economic growth and development in rural areas, streamlined the application process for broadband deployment on federal land, and we're finally treating biomass as a higher priority source for renewable energy. Congress improved the SNAP program to make it run more efficiently. SNAP will still provide a helping hand for those in need, but it'll also assist able-bodied adults with transitioning back into the workplace. This is exactly what the program was intended for in the first place - helping people become self-sufficient. This bill is the

culmination of years of listening and learning. I'm pleased with the results," said **Congressman LaMalfa**.

Congressman Cramer stated, "Today's success is a significant step towards long term certainty for producers across America. The House Farm Bill repeals the onerous Waters of the U.S. Rule, reforms work requirements for work-capable adults in the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), enhances rainfall collection accuracy for the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage program, fixes the ARC program, and reforms swampbuster. This legislation is a direct result of listening to our constituents and creating a bill that works for them – exactly what the framers had in mind when they formed the People's House."

Congressman Estes said, "The farm bill provides needed certainty for Kansas farmers and ranchers by protecting crop insurance and repealing burdensome Obama-era regulations like the Waters of the U.S. rule," said Rep. Ron Estes. "I also support investments in rural broadband and common-sense reforms to SNAP that will help those in need while encouraging Americans to get back to work. Passage of this bill is good news for Kansans and our country."

"Today's passage of the 2018 Farm Bill is a considerable step to provide relief and certainty for our farmers and ranchers in Minnesota and across the nation. I am proud to see the House pass this critical package, which contains major improvements for farmers and ranchers such as better dairy risk management tools for smaller operations, a strong crop insurance program, improved farm safety net programs like Agricultural Risk Coverage, and efforts to better respond to emerging diseases that devastate livestock producers throughout Minnesota," said **Congressman Emmer.**

Congressman Gibbs concluded, "The 2018 Farm Bill includes the kind of commonsense reforms to our social safety net program that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents can agree to. By implementing reasonable and flexible work requirements, SNAP recipients who have the physical and mental capacity to work are provided every opportunity to improve their lives as they receive assistance. At the same time, we must ensure Americans who truly need long-term, even permanent nutrition assistance are not left to fall through the cracks. We have more than six million job openings in the United States and not enough skilled workers to fill them. The Farm Bill prioritizes and increases support for SNAP Education and Training programs, partnering with local and regional education institutions to deliver the necessary training and skills for a dynamic and thriving economy. Additionally, the Farm Bill fully repeals the 2015 WOTUS rule, strengthens rural broadband programs, and prevents farmers from being required to obtain a duplicative, costly, and unnecessary NPDES permit for pesticides already approved and regulated under federal law. We are taking a step forward in reforming the way our government regulates, administers important social programs, and ensures our citizens have a reliable, affordable, and safe American-grown food supply."

Background:

Today, June 21, 2018, the House passed H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill, by a recorded vote of 213-211.

The bill included a plethora of Western Caucus victories as detailed below.

H.R. 2 makes significant reforms to the farm and nutrition assistance programs and reauthorizes the farm bill for five years.

The bill is good for farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

The 2014 Farm Bill was initially estimated to save $23 billion over 10 years but has greatly surpassed that estimate and is now expected to save more than $100 billion.

H.R. 2 includes over 35 improvements to SNAP including establishing substantive work requirements for all work capable adults

The bill has one of the strongest forestry titles of any farm bill and was made even stronger by the Western Caucus passed amendments. Specifically, the base bills includes 10 categorical exclusions and reauthorizes the Landscape Scale Restoration Program in order to allow for active management of our nation's forests and critical response.

This legislation includes common sense reforms to the onerous and conflicting Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process.

- The National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Public Lands Council letter HERE.
- Previous release from the Western Caucus when the bill was introduced HERE.
- Summary courtesy of the House Agriculture Committee HERE.
- For more information on the bill, visit agriculture.house.gov/farmbill.

Western Caucus Floor Amendment Highlights:

- Includes the **Jim Banks (IN-03)** Amendment that repeals WOTUS. More HERE.
- Includes the **Don Young (AK-At Large)** Amendment that exempts Alaska from the 2001 Roadless Rule. More HERE.
- Includes the **Mike Johnson (LA-04)** Amendment that modernizes Endangered Species Act habitat requirements. More HERE.
- Includes the **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** wireless broadband streamlining Amendment More HERE.
- Includes the **Liz Cheney (WY-At Large)** grazing leases Amendment. More HERE.
- Includes the **Greg Gianforte (MT-At Large)** wildfire salvage operations Amendment.
- Includes the **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** Balance of Harms & Action/No Action Amendment which requires that the costs of inaction be weighed and also provides injunctive relief.
- Includes the **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)** Good Neighbor Authority for Counties Amendment. More HERE.

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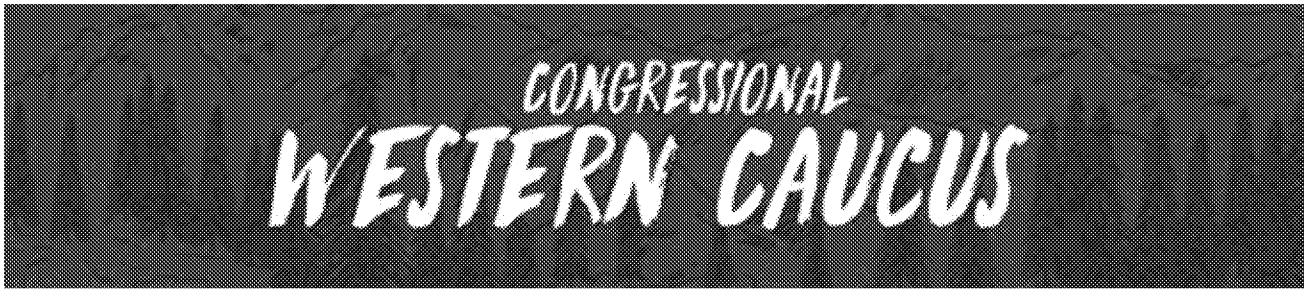
Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/21/2018 9:42:33 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Trump: 'I will be CANCELLING the Superior National Forest Mineral Withdrawal'



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: June 21, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Trump: 'I will be CANCELLING the Superior National Forest Mineral Withdrawal'

Caucus: 'You're the best'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Members **Tom Emmer (MN-06)** and **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)** released statements after President Trump announced at a rally last night in Duluth, Minnesota that he

would be cancelling the Obama Administration's political mineral withdrawal in the Superior National Forest:

Congressman Emmer stated, "The President's announcement last night is great news for Minnesota. My MINER Act demonstrated strong bipartisan support for unleashing our state's mining potential and now, by reversing the politically motivated and short-sighted actions from the Obama administration on their way out the door, President Trump is stepping in to restore local control of Minnesota's mineral rights. I am hopeful that the steps needed to ensure a full reversal of the former administration's harmful actions are taken soon, specifically ending the withdrawal proposal that has now dragged on for 18 months, to dramatically revitalize local communities and their economies."

Congressman Gosar said, "When the Minnesota mineral withdrawal was first announced in the twilight hours of the last Administration, we in the Western Caucus knew it would be an uphill battle to bring enough attention to it to get something done. So, we banded together, amplified the issue and worked to avert the terrible precedent and economic turmoil that would ensue if the withdrawal was left in place. Ultimately, piece by piece, these efforts have prevailed, with word of the problem making its way to President Trump just yesterday. When the President heard the numbers - 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for the economy - he recognized that the obviously right thing to do was to reverse the action. And, it just so happens that policy created with a pen can be wiped away by one, too - thanks, Obama. We appreciate President Trump for immediately seeing that the right thing for Minnesota workers and families is to strike this withdrawal from the books, and I look forward to seeing the region's economy and education flourish as a consequence."

Congressman Westerman stated, "Unnecessary rules handed down by unelected Washington, D.C., bureaucrats that violate agreements going back to the 1950s threatened the future of mining and economic development in Minnesota. I visited the operation and met with the Minnesotans affected by this political move, where I got to feel the impact that decision had on both our country and our economy. I thank President Trump for reversing heavy-handed rules handed down by the Obama Administration, allowing Americans to continue investing in jobs, economic development, and education."

Congressman Cramer concluded, "I commend President Trump for rolling back this misguided Obama-era land grab which took away our Minnesota neighbor's ability to develop minerals in the state. I've been working with my colleagues in Congress, including Members from both parties in the Minnesota delegation, since President Obama proposed putting these hundreds of thousands of acres off limits. President Trump's action will allow for jobs, increased wages, and reignite economic development in the Iron Range."

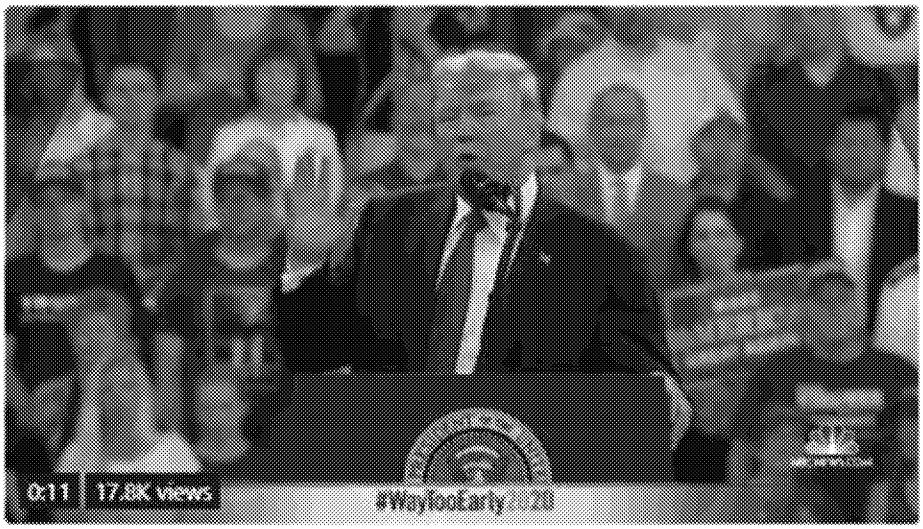
Background:

Last night at a campaign rally in Minnesota, President Donald Trump announced that his Administration will be rescinding a mineral withdrawal initiated by the Obama Administration affecting the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota. Click here or on the tweet by NBC below to watch:

NBC News
@NBCNews

Following

President Trump says he will rescind a federal mineral withdrawal of National Forest System lands in Superior National Forest, put in place by the Obama administration, and restore mineral exploration.



9:32 PM · 20 Jun 2018

On January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous Administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register to restrict for a 20-year moratorium lands within the Superior National Forest in northeast Minnesota.

It is being reported that, upon being briefed on the situation, the President immediately saw the importance to Minnesota workers and families of rescinding the massive withdrawal.

The Western Caucus - led by members Tom Emmer and Bruce Westerman as well as Chairman Gosar - has advocated for this outcome since the withdrawal was first put in place.

On June 30th, 2017, 26 bipartisan Members of Congress sent a letter asking for the Administration to cancel this political land grab. The robust Member turnout for this regional issue demonstrated the extent to which Members who had no immediate interest in the policy saw clearly the unfairness, unjustified damage to the regional economy and harm to education funding streams the withdrawal would impose.

Legislative solutions to the withdrawal offered by Congressman Emmer were proposed and accepted by the full House of Representatives with the backing and support of the Western Caucus. The House passed H.R. 3905 to cancel the Obama mineral withdrawal and reinstate the

two leases that were arbitrarily denied (the leases have since been reinstated). A press release can be found here. The House also passed an amendment to cancel the political land grab to the Interior Appropriations bill. A story about the amendment passing can be found here.

The total withdrawal application boundary spans approximately 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands. 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for the economy were at risk if the mineral withdrawal was allowed to stand.

The withdrawal also contradicted established legislative intent of Congress. In 1978, Congress passed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act (BWCAW), a historic compromise between interested parties that prohibited mining within the Boundary Waters Area but explicitly permitted mining to occur in the Superior National Forest. Unfortunately, debate surrounding mining in the Superior National Forest has often conflated the buffer of the Boundary Waters - in which mining will not be taking place under any proposed plan - with authorized mining in designated areas of the Forest. The President's announcement indicates he and his Administration were not mislead by those distortions.

The area comprises the largest copper-nickel deposit in the world. There are billions of pounds of copper, nickel, and cobalt and millions of ounces of platinum, palladium, gold and silver. The market value of these resources is estimated to be $500 billion.

###

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Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/20/2018 9:25:44 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: White House Targets NEPA Implementation Regs for Revision

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: June 20, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

White House Takes Up NEPA Implementation Rules

Caucus: 'Revisions should remove bureaucratic hurdles'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Vice Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer **Bruce Westerman (AR-04)** and Congressman **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** released statements after the White House's Council on Environmental Quality published an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking indicating its intent to consider revising regulations governing implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):

Congressman Gosar said, "Issued in 1978 and amended in 1986, the Executive's NEPA regulations governing the law's implementation have barely been touched since they were first put in place. Given how much we have learned about how the law plays out in practice since then - and how impactful these regulations are - this fact borders on outrageous. Accordingly, we look forward to working with the White House's Council on Environmental Quality and other relevant federal entities to ensure that NEPA is implemented in a maximally efficient way. This restrictive law has been made far more onerous by executive decisions to bureaucratize rather than streamline its implementation, and it bodes well for our great companies and economy to see the President taking action here."

Congressman Rob Bishop stated, "NEPA's arbitrary and burdensome mandates are slowing infrastructure progress in the United States while doing little to actually improve environmental outcomes. I'm thankful CEQ and the Trump administration are serious about bringing our federal environmental review process into the 21st century, and today's action is critical step forward. My Committee will be working closely with CEQ and agency leadership to create a more logical NEPA enforcement process based on timely, transparent decision-making that yields better results for the economy and environment."

Congressman Don Young said, "NEPA is an important tool; however, in recent years it has become a method to delay and stall development projects. The current process can take a decade or more to complete thanks to litigious environmental groups. These delays are not necessary for producing accurate environmental assessments. I am pleased that this administration has prioritized fixing the NEPA process so that proposals can be streamlined and receive a decision in a reasonable timeframe."

Congressman Westerman stated, "While the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) at its core is a vital piece of America's environmental policy, over the past four decades, the law has morphed into a bureaucratic nightmare, harming both our lands and our economy with layers and layers of costly regulation. It now takes our government over five years to complete an environmental impact statement, while other modern countries like Germany and Australia can complete similar studies in no more than two years. It is high time that CEQ reviews this policy, and a major revision will be essential to ensure America's future success."

Congressman LaMalfa concluded, "NEPA's review processes are severely outdated, and as a result, it often takes years – even decades – for important infrastructure projects to be approved. We've witnessed this problem countless times in Northern California, and I'm glad the Trump Administration and CEQ have recognized the issue and taken steps to modernize the environmental review process. This is about scaling back unnecessary bureaucracy and increasing efficiency between agencies so that we can actually build important new infrastructure in a timely manner. I look forward to reviewing the proposed changes after conclusion of the comment period."

Background:

Today, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register announcing it is considering updating its implementing regulations for the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). According to CEQ, "Over the past four decades, CEQ has issued numerous guidance documents but has amended its regulations substantively only once."

In the notice, CEQ poses 20 individual questions concerning various aspects of the NEPA process

and regulation that public commenters have 30 days to respond to. The questions are divided into sections, including those on the current NEPA process, the scope of NEPA reviews and the general NEPA process. More specific questions, including those pertaining to public input into NEPA, proper inter-agency procedures and others are included therein.

The Administration is likely to take further action at the conclusion of this 30-day public comment period by releasing draft changes to NEPA regulations, which will also be subject to public comment.

The extent to which NEPA has managed to sidestep improvements through substantial reform has not gone unnoticed in Congress, and many Members of the Western Caucus have led the charge in approaching reform at the statutory level. In a House Committee on Natural Resources hearing on May 28, 2014, the Committee noted that "...Germany, Canada, and Australia are all able to approve most major infrastructure projects within two years. By contrast, a major infrastructure or energy project in the United States can undergo a decade of environmental review with no guarantee that the project will ever be approved."

With the advent of the Trump Administration and its emphasis on bureaucratic and regulatory streamlining, the issue of NEPA reform is now gaining significant traction across the government and industry. Western Caucus members anticipate important revisions to NEPA statute and implementation during the Trump Administration, including streamlining the inter-agency process, consolidation of reviews and decisions at the federal, state, tribal and local government levels across time, improving timing efficiencies and reducing the overall quantity of provisions, mandates and documents which comprise a NEPA analysis.

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WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE

Message

From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/14/2018 9:28:04 PM
To: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Members Lead Charge on Oil and Gas Permitting Reform in the House

CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: June 14, 2018
Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov

Western Caucus Members Lead Charge on Oil and Gas Permitting Reform in the House

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)** and Reps. **John Curtis (UT-03)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-At Large)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)** and **Bill Johnson (OH-06)** released statements following the introduction of bills by Pearce, Curtis and Cheney which would institute efficiency and streamlining reforms to oil and gas permitting:

Congressman Gosar said "This is a dynamic slate of important legislation that each share the ultimate goal of fulfilling the President's call for renewed American energy dominance. They

remove duplicative bureaucratic mismatches, empower states to better manage their own resources and provide a handful of other commonsense, overdue reforms. Thank you to Reps. Cheney, Curtis and Pearce for your careful work on these extremely relevant legislative fixes, and I look forward to seeing these bills advance."

Congressman Rob Bishop stated, "Too often, the federal government gets in the way of progress. Our country is on the verge of a major energy expansion, but stubborn obstructionism poses a real threat to the jobs, prosperity and freedom this expansion would allow. I'm thankful for the leadership of the Members in the Western Caucus who spearheaded this effort. These bills cut red tape and streamline the processes that are holding us back from energy independence and greater American prosperity."

Congressman Pearce said, "The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) inability to timely permit energy activities is costing New Mexico thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. These two bills will ensure New Mexico can continue to play a leading role in America's energy revolution. When it takes BLM 250 days to process a permit, the State loses out on needed revenues that support over 30% of the State's budget, funding schools, police departments, road redevelopment, and community hospitals. I have greatly appreciated Chairman Gosar's willingness to discuss my ideas, and I look forward to working with the Committee to introduce these bills to ensure that New Mexico receives what it deserves."

Congresswoman Cheney stated, "The energy industry, the lifeblood of our economy in Wyoming, has been severely burdened by lengthy and often frivolous protests on energy projects. The Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act will help relieve this burden by requiring a small fee in order to file a protest. My bill levels the playing field by charging a nominal fee for protests of oil and gas lease sales, applications for permit to drill, and right of way applications. The Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act brings much needed and long overdue relief to Wyoming oil and gas operators."

Congressman Curtis said, "This bill will help streamline a burdensome federal process, create new economic development opportunities in rural communities across the district, and keep our country on the path of energy independence."

Congressman LaMalfa said, "These four bills help streamline and cut back on the bureaucratic nonsense that hinders American energy production on or near federal lands. There are far too many situations where burdensome permitting requirements unnecessarily delay drilling operations, even though they've already been determined to have minimal impact on the environment, wildlife, or historic sites. America cannot truly achieve energy independence without maximizing our resources and cutting back on misguided permitting regulations."

Congressman Cramer stated, "In North Dakota, our state regulators are effective and efficient at their job. The Ending Duplicative Permitting Act in particular can go a long way to not only stop the burden of duplicative permitting in the state on industry, but relieve workload for federal officials as well."

Congressman Bill Johnson concluded, "These common sense bills will help encourage a responsible and efficient federal permitting process for onshore energy and mineral development. I am proud to support these efforts, and hope to see them considered by the full House of Representatives in short order."

Background:

This week, Reps. Steve Pearce, Liz Cheney and John Curtis introduced four bills to provide substantial reform and streamlining to various aspects of oil and gas permitting regulation and law.

Chairman Gosar led a hearing investigating all four of these bills on June 6, 2018. Hearing memos, witness testimony and video playback of the hearing can be viewed here.

These bills are written to maximize necessary environmental protections for oil and gas permitting while ensuring agency, regulatory and statutory processes are as streamlined as possible.

The net effect of such reforms would be to bring our nation's overly-bureaucratized permitting processes closer in line with the President's vision for a United States that is freed from adversarial foreign influences into our energy policy and economically dominant at the global level.

Bill-specific descriptions:

Rep. Pearce's *Ending Duplicative Permitting Act* clarifies that oil and gas drilling on non-federal land would not require an Application for Permit to Drill (APD) from the BLM if the well impacts less than 50% federal minerals. Right now, the BLM requires an APD from a producer for non-federal wells even if the well touches 1% federal mineral estate. This bill will help the BLM by reducing the significant APD backlogs in a number of BLM field offices across the country. The bill would not weaken environmental reviews in any way as these lands are already permitted and surveyed by the states. Lastly, this bill will not impact royalties paid to states. See bill text here and hearing memo here.

Rep. Curtis' H.R. 6088, the *Streamlining Permitting Efficiencies in Energy Development (SPEED) Act* aims to streamline the process of permitting less controversial drilling operations on federal lands. The bill creates an alternative to the Application of Permit to Drill, referred to as a Notifications for Permit to Drill, that an operator can utilize if specific criteria are met. This includes certain operations within a developed field. It would also include locations where an environmental review concluded the NPD would pose no significant effects to the environment, species, or cultural/historic resources. See bill text here and hearing memo here.

Rep. Cheney's H.R. 6087, the *Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act* authorizes the DOI to assess an administrative fee to recover the cost of processing protests filed on oil and gas lease sales and permits. The legislation requires protestors to submit a $150 filing fee for each protest submission under 10 pages in length and an additional $5 for each page over 10 pages. This bill does not weaken or discourage protests, but ensures that the current protest process isn't abused by excessive or frivolous protests meant only to delay operations. See bill text here and hearing memo here.

Rep. Pearce's *Common Sense Permitting Act* clarifies and expands existing categorical exclusions for oil and gas activity on federal lands. Section 593 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 grants categorical exclusions for oil and gas activity that occurred in areas where previous activity occurred. Unfortunately, these categorical exclusions are not always used as bureaucrats can choose when to use them or not. This bill will clarify that these categorical exclusions must be used when available while also expanding them to streamline the APD and NEPA process. This

will expedite the federal permitting process, which can take anywhere from 6 months to over a year thus allowing states with federal lands to compete with states without federal lands whose permitting process takes 1-2 weeks. Additionally, this bill will reduce flaring of natural gas on federal lands and reduce bottlenecks by expediting the approval process for much needed energy infrastructure. See bill text here and hearing memo here.

###

WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE

Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/12/2018 3:11:21 PM
To: Ringel, Aaron [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1654bdc951284a6d899a418a89fb0abf-Ringel, Aar]; Palich, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=330ad62e158d43af93fcbbece930d21a-Palich, Chr]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]; Rodrick, Christian [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6515dbe46dae466da53c8a3aa3be8cc2-Rodrick, Ch]; Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Graham, Amy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=26722dfde5b34925b0ad9a8dd4aff308-Graham, Amy]; Gunasekara, Mandy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=53d1a3caa8bb4ebab8a2d28ca59b6f45-Gunasekara,]
Subject: RE: Upcoming Colorado Energy Trip
Attachments: 6.28 and 6.29 Denver Energy Forum.pdf

By now you should have received the attached invitation for the Western Caucus Foundation's June Colorado Western Energy Forum trip.

Know your rules are slightly different but below is what I sent to House staff.

We'd love to have representation from the agency at the Colorado Energy Forum if possible.

Let Darrel Henry from the Foundation or me know if you have questions. Appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

From: Small, Jeff
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 10:39 AM
To: Small, Jeff
Cc: Hanson, Tanner
Subject: Upcoming Colorado Energy Trip

By now you should have received the attached invitation for the Western Caucus Foundation's Colorado Western Energy Forum trip.

Western Caucus Foundation June Colorado Trip | Evening of Thursday, June 28th – Friday, June 29th

- Featuring a tour of a natural gas drilling site and an energy forum with Chairmen Daines and Gosar as well as Reps. Tipton, Coffman and Buck as well as local energy reps and stakeholders.
- Click here to register and RSVP.
- Members and staff are encouraged to attend.

- Please book flights to Denver and a hotel at the Doubletree in the Denver Tech Center ASAP. Ask for the Western Caucus hotel rate @$159 (Call Darrell of Amy if you have issues.)
- You can use your office MRA for the hotel and flights. Other allowable expense will be covered by the Foundation.
- For questions, email the Foundation's Darrell Henry (info@westerncaucusfuondation.org or 202-220-1331) or Amy Bradley (amyfordbradley@comcast.net or 703-549-5090) or the Caucus' Jeff Small (Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov).

This is one of our shorter trips but will still be educational, good networking and fun.

Please let us know if you have questions. We hope someone from your team can join us in Colorado.

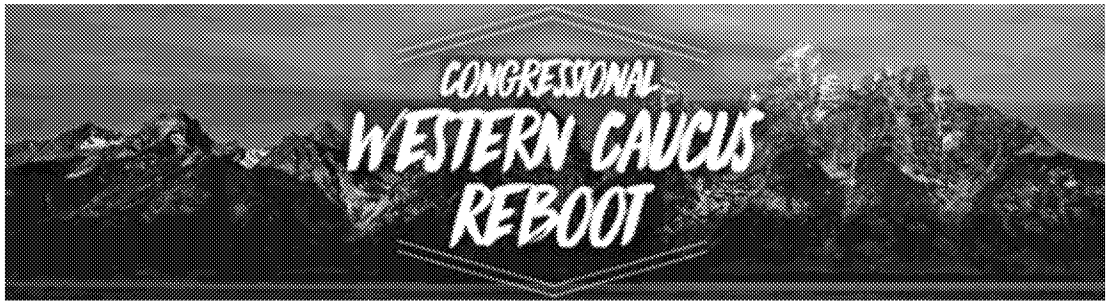
*Note: The Foundation is in the process of moving and rescheduling the 3-day August Montana Trip. More info soon. (The dates had to be moved as a result of Leader McConnell's announcement pertaining to the Senate August schedule).

Sincerely,

Jeff Small
Executive Director | Congressional Western Caucus
Senior Advisor | Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
2057 Rayburn HOB | Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2315 main
jeff.small@mail.house.gov

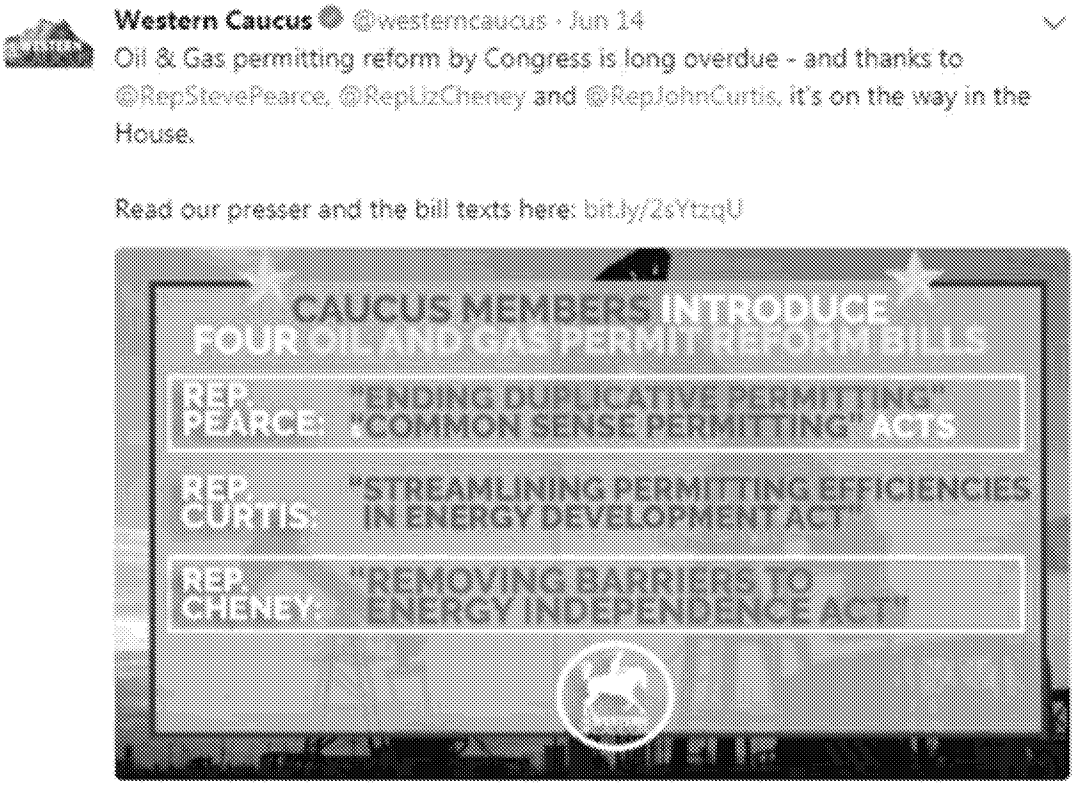
Message

From: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 6/18/2018 1:25:50 AM
To: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
CC: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Subject: Western Caucus Reboot 06.17.18



Week of 06.17.2018

Western Caucus Members Lead Charge on Oil and Gas Permitting Reform



This week, Western Caucus Members' **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-At Large)** and **John Curtis (UT-03)** introduced four important bills to reform and streamline various aspects of oil and gas permitting regulation and law.

Congressman Pearce said, "The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) inability to timely permit energy activities is costing New Mexico thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. These two bills will ensure New Mexico can continue to play a leading role in America's energy revolution. When it takes BLM 250 days to process a permit, the State loses out on needed revenues that support over 30% of the State's budget, funding schools, police departments, road redevelopment, and community hospitals. I have greatly appreciated Chairman Gosar's willingness to discuss my ideas, and I look forward to working with the Committee to introduce these bills to ensure that New Mexico receives what it deserves."

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Congressman Curtis said, "This bill will help streamline a burdensome federal process, create new economic development opportunities in rural communities across the district, and keep our country on the path of energy independence."

To see our full press release click here.

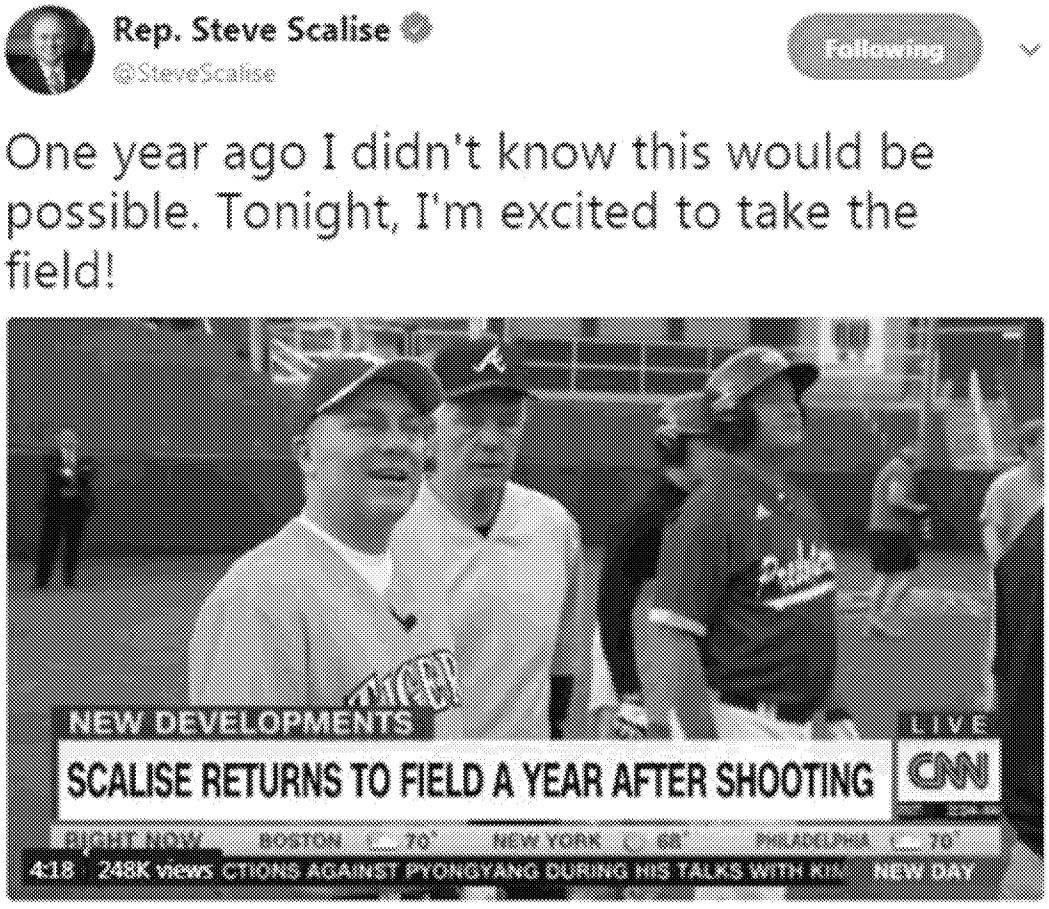
EPA Sends New Waters of the United States Definition to the White House

On Friday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army (Army) sent a proposed rule that would redefine "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) to the White House for interagency review.

"Farmers, ranchers, landowners, and other stakeholders are counting on EPA to listen to their input when it comes to defining 'waters of the United States,'" **said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.** "Today, we are taking an important step toward issuing a new WOTUS definition and answering President Trump's call to ensure that our waters are kept free from pollution, while promoting economic growth, minimizing regulatory uncertainty, and showing due regard for the roles of the federal government and the states under the statutory framework of the Clean Water Act."

To see the full press release click here.

Play Ball!



On Thursday, Members of Congress played in the 57th Congressional Baseball Game for charity at Nationals Park. It was an emotional return for Western Caucus Member **Steve Scalise (LA-01).** Scalise was shot during a team practice last year in Virginia and suffered life threatening injuries. His courageous return to the field gave us all something to cheer cheer about.

For more information click here.

Happy Birthday Mr. President!

On Thursday, several of our Members wished President Trump a happy birthday! The President turned 72 years young and is one of the most high energy and outgoing presidents in our nation's history.

Committee Passes Tribal Recognition Act

Wednesday, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed Chairman **Rob Bishop's (UT-01)** Tribal Recognition Act.

As the Committee notes, "the current process for Federal acknowledgement of Indian tribes was created within the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs without congressional authorization. As documented

in previous Committee hearings, the BIA process is fraught with delays, lacks public transparency and is susceptible to political manipulation by unelected officials, as proven in prior Inspector General reports. Under H.R. 3744, the BIA retains its role of studying documented petitions to establish if they meet minimum criteria, but Congress will make the final decision – a decision informed by BIA's comprehensive analysis, one that can no longer be subject to the whims of unelected officials."

See the full press release here.

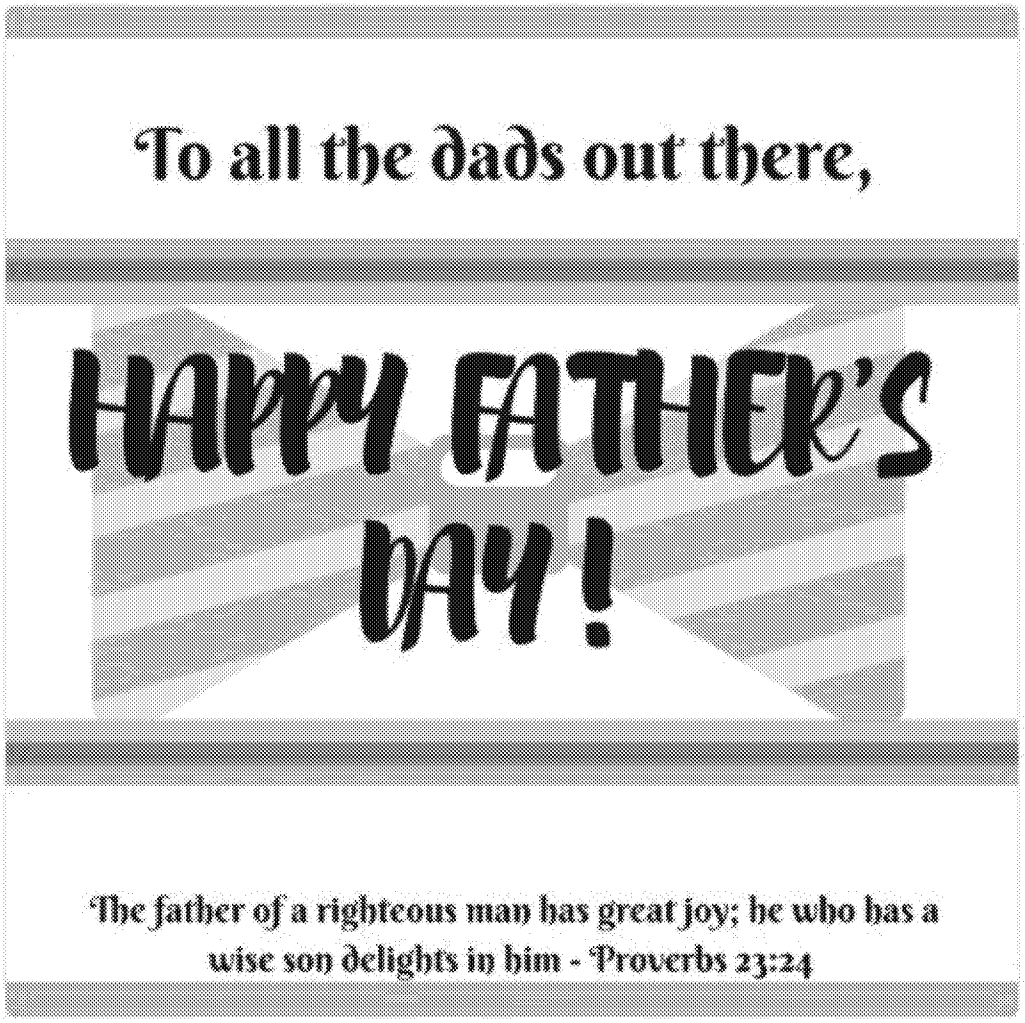
Flag Day

On Thursday, numerous Western Caucus Members celebrated Flag Day and the 241st anniversary of our nation's flag.

POST OF THE WEEK...

Rep. Alex Mooney @RepAlexMooney · 7h

To be a father is one of the greatest gifts God can give us.



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