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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SPENDING AND THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET PROPOSAL

OVERSIGHT HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

Wednesday, April 3, 2014

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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SPENDING AND THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Wednesday, April 3, 2014
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Doc Hastings [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Hastings, Young, Gohmert, Bishop, Lamborn, Broun, Fleming, McClintock, Lummis, Duncan, Tipton, Gosar, Labrador, Flores, Smith, McAllister, DeFazio, Napolitano, Holt, Grijalva, Costa, Sablan, Tsongas, Pierluisi, Huffman, Lowenthal, Garcia, and Cartwright.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. We are very pleased today to have the Secretary of the Interior, The Honorable Sally Jewell, as our witness today, talking about the Interior Department's budget request and, I am sure, other matters that will come up.

I do want to say that the Secretary has agreed to be here until noon today. We will not go by that clock, however. That clock is 55 minutes or an hour slow. So that would give her an extra hour, and we will not do that to her. We don't have special time here in this—and so, I would ask all Members, if they can, to keep their remarks within the 5-minute window, so that all Members will have an opportunity to ask whatever questions they have.

At this time, I will recognize myself for my opening statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. DOC HASTINGS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

The CHAIRMAN. I believe all of us here today understand and recognize the importance of natural resources to our lives and to our economy. Our natural resources support millions of American jobs throughout the country. They provide energy and power to our homes and our businesses. They deliver water to communities, and they enable the manufacturing of products that we enjoy. And they provide opportunities for recreation and for much more. Yet there is not always agreement on how best to manage and harness these natural resources. These differences and the priorities of both sides are perhaps most evident every year when examining this President's budget proposals.

The United States debt is currently $17 trillion. This places our economy and our livelihood for future generations at risk. For years, Republicans have stressed the need to do more with less. Given this budget crisis, we need to cut wasteful spending, make

tough choices, and prioritize. That should be the goal of the Interior Department and every other Federal department and agency. Unfortunately, with a budget proposal as—higher than last year's enacted levels, I am afraid the Interior Department's budget misses the mark, and doesn't do enough to prioritize and reduce spending.

There is no better example of misplaced priorities than with the proposed funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Once again, the Department's budget emphasizes Federal land acquisition over the proper maintenance and care of land it already owns. The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are facing billion-dollar maintenance backlogs. This is where the Department, in my view, should be focusing resources.

Of course, prioritizing spending is not part of the solution. The Department should also actively look for ways to generate new revenue to grow our economy. Unfortunately, many of the policies outlined in this budget will have the opposite outcome. This budget relies on new taxes, fees, and red tape that will have the effect of slowing economic growth.

American energy production bears the fruit—or bears the brunt of this regulatory assault. U.S. energy production is the second-highest source of revenue to the U.S. Treasury, and that is the reason the administration is able to say that this budget would bring in more revenue than it spends. But that misses the point. The Obama administration, in this budget, is forfeiting billions of dollars in new revenue by continuing to stifle energy production on our Federal lands.

Under this administration, total Federal oil production has declined 7.8 percent, and total Federal natural gas production has declined 21 percent. President Obama's offshore leasing plan for 2012–2017 offered the lowest number of lease sales in history, and keeps over 85 percent of offshore acreages offshore—off limits.

Onshore, the administration has had the lowest years of Federal acres leased for energy production, going back to the 1980s. This is the Obama administration's legacy, when it comes to Federal energy production. Now, I will acknowledge that the world has changed immensely over the last few years. The United States is becoming a global leader in energy production. But this is happening in spite of the administration's best efforts to keep our energy resources under tight lock and key. The administration doesn't seek to encourage new production in this budget. Instead, they seek to impose new taxes and fees that will have the opposite effect.

Other policies being carried out by the Department will also negatively hurt jobs, including efforts to impose duplicative hydraulic fracturing regulations, the reckless and disaster rewrite of the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone Rule, and new ESA listings resulting from the closed-door settlement agreement in 2011. I am sure all of these topics, among others, will be raised during the course of today's hearing.

And, finally, I want to remind the Secretary that this committee has and will continue to be ready to stand to work in a bipartisan fashion to responsibly manage our Federal lands. From issues like helium to Secure Rural Schools to more than 50 non-controversial bills awaiting action in the Senate, I believe that reasonable people

can disagree but, in the end, can reach reasonable conclusions. However, if the President continues to take a go-at-it-alone approach like he has been doing, our ability to collaborate and work with the Department, I think, will be sorely tested.

So, once again, I want to thank Secretary Jewell for being here. And now I will recognize the distinguished Ranking Member.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hastings follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. DOC HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

I believe all of us here today understand and recognize the importance of natural resources to our lives and economy. Our natural resources support millions of American jobs throughout the country, they provide energy to power our homes and businesses, they deliver water to communities, they enable the manufacturing of products, and they provide opportunities for recreation and much more.

Yet there is not always agreement on how to best manage and harness these natural resources. These differences, and the priorities of both sides, are perhaps most evident every year when examining this President's budget proposals.

The United States' debt is currently over $17 trillion. This places our economy and livelihood of future generations at risk. For years Republicans have stressed the need to do more with less. Given this budget crisis, we need to cut wasteful spending, make tough choices, and prioritize. That should be the goal of the Interior Department and every other Federal department and agency. Unfortunately, with a budget proposal that is higher than last year's enacted levels, I'm afraid the Interior Department's budget misses the mark and doesn't do enough to prioritize and reduce spending.

There is no better example of misplaced priorities than with the proposed full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Once again, the Department's budget emphasizes Federal land acquisition over the proper maintenance and care of the land it already owns. The National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are facing billion dollar maintenance backlogs; this is where the Department should be focusing resources.

Of course, prioritizing spending is just part of the solution. The Department should also actively look for ways to generate new revenue and grow the economy. Unfortunately, many of the policies outlined in this budget will have the opposite outcome. This budget relies on new taxes, fees, and red-tape that will have the effect of slowing economic growth.

American energy production bears the brunt of this regulatory assault. U.S. energy production, is the second highest source of revenue to the U.S. treasury—and that's the reason the administration is able to say that this budget would bring in more revenue than it spends. But that misses the point. The Obama administration in this budget is forfeiting billions of dollars in new revenue by continuing to stifle energy production on our Federal lands.

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I will acknowledge that the world has changed immensely over the last few years. The United States is becoming a global leader in energy production, but this is happening in spite of the administration's best efforts to keep our energy resources under tight lock and key. The administration doesn't seek to encourage new production in this budget, instead they seek to impose new taxes and fees that will have the opposite effect.

Other policies being carried out by the Department will also negatively hurt jobs—including efforts to impose duplicative, hydraulic fracturing regulations, the reckless and disastrous rewrite of the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone Rule, and new ESA listing decisions resulting from close-door settlement agreements. I'm sure all of these topics, among others, will be raised during the course of today's hearing.

Finally, I want to remind the Secretary that this committee has and will continue to stand ready to work in a bipartisan fashion to responsibly manage our Federal lands. From issues like helium and Secure Rural Schools, to the more than 50 noncontroversial bills currently awaiting action in the Senate, I believe that reasonable

people can disagree, but in the end can reach reasonable conclusions. However, if the President continues to take a go-at-it-alone approach, our ability to collaborate and work with the Department will be sorely tested.

I'd like to thank Secretary Jewell for being here today and look forward to hearing from her.

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER A. DEFAZIO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Chairman. I would agree with the end of the Chairman's remarks about there are many challenges before us where we should be able to put aside differences and work on a bipartisan basis. Dealing with fuel reduction, the President has a proposal. It has also been introduced in the House, so that both the Interior Department and the Forest Service won't be forced, on an annual basis, to divert money from fuel reduction and other critical needs to fight current fires. And I would hope that the committee would take up that bill.

The Chairman mentioned revenues. Of course we are the only Nation on earth, the only land owner on earth, that gives away its mineral resources for free. I am talking about the 1872 Ulysses S. Grant Mining Law. If we were really interested in revenues, we ought to act like a business, and like the States, and like the Tribes, and like the private land owners, and begin to assess a reasonable royalty, and then use that income to deal with some of these unmet needs.

I do find it odd, the discussion about energy production. Actually, we have increased—the onshore oil production, you know, is up on Federal lands from a little over 100 million barrels the year President Obama was elected to over 134 million barrels now. So the war on fossil fuels, the war on coal, and all the other, you know, phantoms that this committee has spent endless hours pursuing are not real. And I would hope that we can turn more to common concerns.

I share a concern about the deterioration of park infrastructure. I just brought up with the Secretary before the meeting from a recent visit to Grand Canyon, their water system, the most visited park in America, 4.4 million people a year, is failing frequently, is at the point of total failure. It needs to be replaced. They have a plan, but they don't have the money. And that is repeated in park after park after park.

The Chairman referenced Land Water Conservation Fund, as though that money could be spent on other purposes. Well, under current law it can't, except for the fact that it is being underspent, and a massive amount of it is being diverted by the Appropriations Committee to who knows where or what. We don't know. It just—the money—we are assessing this on offshore drilling, it is a tax, it is supposed to be used for conservation purposes, and a small fraction of it, given the resistance of the Republican Majority to purchase inholdings and other things, is being used in small part, but the greatest part of that revenue is being diverted to other parts of the government.

And that Land Water Conservation Fund is up for reauthorization next year. And if the Majority would like to engage in a mean-

ingful discussion about reauthorization and whether or not some of those funds could be dedicated to our deteriorated park infrastructure, that is a discussion that I would be happy to engage in.

So, in the interest of time, I will suspend at that point, and would love to hear from the Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I do want to welcome the distinguished Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, who at times resided in my State, so I am very, very proud of that.

You have a full statement that you have submitted. And I think the Members have that. If you could keep your oral remarks within 5 minutes, that would very good, but I understand, you know, if you have more to say, you can take part of the Ranking Member's time. He didn't take all of his time, so we will allow that to happen.

So, with that, Madam Secretary, you are recognized. And welcome to the committee.

STATEMENT OF HON. SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ACCOMPANIED BY MICHAEL L. CONNOR, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you very much—thanks very much, Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio. I have a couple of other fellow Northwesterners in the audience. My sister and brother-in-law back here from Portland, Oregon, came to see democracy at work. So they have been enjoying my new home——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we very much want to welcome you to the committee, and thank you very much for being here.

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you. Also want to recognize my brand new Deputy Secretary, after a laborious process of getting through the Senate, Mike Connor, and a budget team behind me with lots and lots of numbers, in the event we need help.

The big picture on this budget, it is solid, it is responsible, it makes smart investments in Interior's missions, and it is within the budget caps as agreed to in the Bipartisan Budget Act. Total of $11.9 billion. That is a $275 million increase, of which $240 million is specifically to address the top 1 percent of catastrophic wildfires, putting those within the Federal Emergency Management Disaster Relief Program, so that we can focus our firefighting budget on things like hazardous fuel removal and post-fire remediation, so we can bring rationality to how we manage wildfires, which are becoming hotter, drier, and more intense.

I want to say that one of the most important areas of our budget is Indian programs, and there is a robust program for reimbursing Tribes for contract support costs. We also have a pilot program called the Tiwahe Initiative for $11.6 million. It addresses the inter-related problems of poverty, housing, violence, and substance abuse that are faced by many Indian communities.

This is complemented by a proposal for education and economic development in Indian Country, as part of the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative.

On the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we seek to fulfill the intent of Congress of 49 years ago to take revenues from offshore

oil and gas production to put into mitigating the impacts of that through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The President's budget has $350 million in appropriated funds, and also seeks legislation that will bring the balance of $900 million to provide funding as intended for things like expanded access for hunting and fishing through conservation easements, through creating ball fields and other places for children to play and learn, to acquire land to reduce fragmentation and facilitate efficient land management, and to support things like protecting Civil War battlefields.

The proposal also includes a full $900 million funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 2016.

In 2016 we celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service. There is a centennial initiative in this budget, a $40 million increase in current appropriations, of which 10 million is specifically a match for private philanthropy to the parks. And we know that there is a lot of interest in that.

In addition, we are proposing $1.2 billion of permanent funding over 3 years to support high-priority projects, enhance the visitor experience, and stimulate private donations. And there are additional funds proposed in the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative.

Next up, for the health of our economy and our public lands, it is critical we work now to establish meaningful and deep connections between young people from every background to nature and the outdoors, to bring the kind of experience needed to manage our landscapes in the future. That is another area of focus in our budget.

On the energy front, contrary a bit to what you were suggesting, Chairman Hastings, we have a robust budget for energy programs: $753 million, a $41 million increase from last year. That is for conventional and renewable energy development. It is basic science and applied research to understand and better manage the impacts of development on water habitat, wildlife, and other natural resources. And we are taking a landscape level approach to development, working with industry, working with States and land managers to bring a really thoughtful approach that minimizes conflict.

Next up is science. In our home State of Washington, Chairman Hastings, the U.S. Geological Survey has been working closely with the State on this horrific landslide, understanding what happened, learning from those experiences. Investments like that in science, like the $60 million increase proposed in the budget, will enable us to address those kinds of threats to the landscape, to understand things like the impacts of climate change or hydraulic fracturing or invasive species, like the Asian carp.

Our climate science centers are developing regional drought impact scenarios, evaluating coastal flooding, and they are studying the impacts on our Nation's wildlife, habitat, and the economy to inform land management decisions.

And last up I want to talk about something I know is very important to many Members in this room, and that is around water. We recognize the challenges of water supplies, especially during this time of extended drought in the West. I can't think of a better

Deputy Secretary than Mike Connor, who is deeply engaged in these issues, to have as my right arm as we work through these in the coming years.

We have added in the 2015 budget an additional $9.5 million for a WaterSMART program, which helps local communities respond to droughts, and create resilient infrastructures, and conserve water. The Bureau of Reclamation, along with many partners, is working on long-term solutions to address future water supply needs.

The President also announced a $1 billion Climate Resilience Fund, which would support research on the projected impacts of climate change, helping communities become more resilient, and funding break-through technologies.

So, in closing, I look forward to working with you to accomplish our Department's mission, and would be delighted to answer your questions at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jewell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am pleased to present the 2015 President's Budget for the Department of the Interior.

This budget is balanced and responsible and supports Interior's pivotal role as a driver of jobs and economic activity in communities across the country. It enables us to carry out core mission responsibilities and commitments. This budget allows Interior to uphold trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives, provides a new approach for responsibly budgeting for wildland fire suppression needs, invests in climate resilience, continues smart and balanced all-of-the-above energy development on and offshore, and bolsters our national parks and public lands in advance of the National Park Service's 100th anniversary in 2016.

Interior's programs and activities serve as economic engines in communities across the Nation, contributing an estimated $371 billion to the economy in 2012 and supporting an estimated 2.3 million American jobs. Of this total, energy and mineral development on Interior-managed lands and offshore areas generated more than $255 billion of this economic activity and supported 1.3 million jobs. Recreation and tourism on Interior lands contributed $45 billion to the economies of local communities and supported nearly 372,000 jobs. Water supply, forage and timber activities, primarily on public lands in the West, contributed more than $50 billion and supported 365,000 jobs.

The President's 2015 budget for the Department of the Interior totals $11.9 billion, an increase of 2.4 percent from 2014, which includes a cap exemption for fire emergencies. Without this exemption, Interior's budget totals $11.7 billion, a 0.3 percent increase, or nearly level with this year's funding.

This budget features three key legislative proposals: a new framework to fund wildland fire suppression requirements; additional investment in the infrastructure and visitor experience at our National Parks and public lands; and full and permanent funding for the Land and Wildlife Conservation Fund. Each of these proposals will significantly enhance our ability to conserve and manage the Nation's public lands.

The budget proposes to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to provide stable funding for fire suppression, while minimizing the adverse impacts of fire transfers on other Interior programs, and allowing Interior to reduce fire risk, manage landscapes more comprehensively, and increase the resiliency of public lands and the communities that border them. In this proposed new framework, $268.6 million, or 70 percent of the 10-year average for suppression response is funded within the discretionary spending limits and $240.4 million is available as an adjustment above those limits, if needed based on a challenging fire season. In addition, it does not increase overall discretionary spending, as it would reduce the ceiling for the existing disaster relief cap adjustment by an equivalent amount as is provided for wildfire suppression operations.

In advance of the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016, the 2015 budget proposes a comprehensive Centennial Initiative investment in the parks and public lands. The funding would provide targeted increases for a multi-year effort to recommit to the preservation of these special places, to invest wisely

in the park system's most important assets, to use parks to enhance informal learning, engage volunteers, provide training opportunities to youth, and enhance the National Park Service's ability to leverage partnerships to accomplish its mission.

Finally, the President's budget continues to support full, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, one of the Nation's most effective tools for expanding access for hunting and fishing, creating ball fields and other places for children to play and learn, protecting traditional uses such as working ranches and farms, acquiring inholdings to manage contiguous landscapes, and protecting Civil War battlefields. The 2015 budget proposes total funding of $900.0 million for LWCF in Interior and the U.S. Forest Service. Within this total, $350.0 million is requested as current funding and $550.0 million as part of a permanent funding proposal. Starting in 2016, the proposal would provide $900.0 million annually in permanent funding.

Complementing the 2015 budget request is $346.0 million identified for Interior programs as part of the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative to spur economic progress and promote opportunity. If approved, these investments will enable significant progress to address long-term needs in the areas of national parks and other public lands, research and development, infrastructure and permitting support, climate resiliency, and education and economic development in Indian Country.

The drought in California and other Western States underscores the importance of improving the resilience of communities to the effects of climate change. The President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative includes a $1 billion governmentwide Climate Resilience Fund to invest in developing more resilient communities, and finding solutions to climate challenges through technology development and applied research. This Fund includes about $240 million for Interior programs that invest in research and development, assist Tribes and local communities in planning and preparing for extreme weather conditions and events, and support public land managers in landscape and watershed planning to increase resiliency and reduce risks.

The 2015 request sustains support for essential requirements and allows for targeted increases above the 2014 enacted level. Within the overall increase for 2015, $54.4 million covers fixed cost increases for such things as Federal pay and rent. Reflecting the need to prioritize budget resources, this request includes $413.3 million in proposed program reductions to offset other programmatic requirements.

Interior programs continue to generate more revenue for the American people than the Department's annual current appropriation. In 2015, Interior will generate estimated receipts of nearly $14.9 billion, a portion of which is shared with State and local governments to meet a variety of needs, including school funding, infrastructure improvements, and water-conservation projects. Also included with this request are revenue and savings legislative proposals estimated to generate more than $2.6 billion over the next decade.

Putting this budget in context, Interior's complex mission affects the lives of all Americans. Nearly every American lives within an hour's drive of lands or waters managed by the Interior Department. In 2012, there were 417 million visits to Interior-managed lands. The Department oversees the responsible development of over 20 percent of U.S. energy supplies, is the largest supplier and manager of water in the 17 Western States, maintains relationships with 566 federally recognized Tribes, and provides services to more than two million American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

CELEBRATING AND ENHANCING AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

Throughout American history, the great outdoors have shaped the Nation's character and strengthened its economy. The 2015 budget requests the resources and authorities to care for our public lands and prepare for the future. The budget invests in efforts to upgrade and restore national parks and other public-lands areas, while engaging thousands of Americans, including youth, and veterans. The budget strengthens the President's commitment to the America's Great Outdoors initiative with a request of $5.1 billion in current funding for programs, including the operation of public land management units in BLM, NPS and FWS; the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and grants and technical assistance to States and others. This is an increase of $127.1 million compared to the 2014 enacted level.

Coupled with these efforts is a historic commitment to America's natural and cultural heritage through Land and Water Conservation Fund programs. The budget includes a 2015 combined request of $672.3 million ($246.0 million discretionary and $426.3 million mandatory) for Interior's LWCF programs that conserve lands and support outdoor recreation. In current funding, the request for land acquisition is

$147.9 million, with $39.5 million identified for Collaborative Landscape Planning projects. A total of $98.1 million is requested in current funding for LWCF conservation grants, including $48.1 million for LWCF Stateside grants.

I could not highlight our stewardship efforts without discussing the upcoming centennial of the National Park Service in 2016. Overall, the Centennial Initiative—including mandatory, discretionary, and Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative resources—will allow NPS to ensure that 1,700 (or 20 percent) of the highest priority park assets are restored to good condition. The effort creates thousands of jobs over 3 years, provides over 10,000 work and training opportunities to young people, and engages more than 265,000 volunteers in support of public lands.

The request for the Centennial Initiative proposes a $40 million increase in current appropriations in 2015, plus an additional $400 million in permanent funding each year for 3 years. That funding includes $100 million for a Centennial Challenge to match private philanthropy, $200 million for National Park Service facilities improvements, and $100 million for a Centennial Land Management Investment Fund to competitively allocate funds to meet land conservation and deferred maintenance needs among Interior's land-management agencies and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service. The President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative identifies investments of $100 million for National Park Service deferred maintenance and an additional $100 million for the Centennial Land Management Investment Fund.

STRENGTHENING TRIBAL NATIONS

Sustaining the President's commitment to tribal sovereignty and self-determination and honoring Interior's trust responsibilities to the 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and more than 2 million people served by these programs, the 2015 budget for Indian Affairs is $2.6 billion, an increase of $33.6 million above the 2014 enacted level. The budget invests in: advancing nation-to-nation relationships and tribal self-determination, supporting and protecting Indian families and communities, sustainable stewardship of energy and natural resources, and improving education in Indian Country.

Recognizing this commitment to tribal self-governance and self-determination, the budget fully funds contract support costs Tribes incur as managers of the programs serving Native Americans. The budget requests $251 million, a $4.0 million increase over the 2014 enacted level, to fully fund estimated contract support needs in 2015.

Supporting families and communities, the 2015 budget launches the Tiwahe Initiative, with an increase of $11.6 million in social services and job training programs to address the interrelated problems of child and family welfare, poverty, violence and substance abuse in tribal communities. Tiwahe is the Lakota word for "family." Through this initiative, social services and job training programs will be integrated and expanded to provide culturally appropriate programs to assist and empower families and individuals through economic opportunity, health promotion, family stability, and strengthened communities.

Promoting public safety and tribal community resilience, the 2015 budget request includes resources to build on BIA Law Enforcement's recent successes in reducing violent crime. A pilot program will be implemented to lower repeat incarceration rates in tribally operated jails on three reservations—Red Lake in Minnesota, Ute Mountain in Colorado, and Duck Valley in Nevada—with a goal to materially lower repeat incarcerations. Through an Alternatives to Incarceration Strategy, this pilot will seek to address underlying causes of repeat offenses, such as substance abuse and lack of adequate access to social service support, through intergovernmental and interagency partnerships.

The 2015 budget request is complemented by a proposal in the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative to further invest in economic development and education to promote strong, resilient tribal economies and improve educational opportunities in Indian Country.

POWERING OUR FUTURE

As part of the President's all-of-the-above energy strategy to expand safe and responsible domestic energy production, the 2015 budget provides $753.2 million for conventional and renewable energy programs, an increase of $40.7 million above the 2014 enacted level. The budget includes measures to encourage responsible, diligent development and a fair return for American taxpayers.

Funding for conventional energy and compliance activities totals $658.4 million, an increase of $37.5 million over the 2014 level. Spending from fees and permanent funding related to onshore oil and gas activities increase $49.1 million from the 2014 level, primarily reflecting a proposal to expand onshore oil and gas inspection

activities and to offset the Bureau of Land Management's inspection program costs to the taxpayer with fees from industry, similar to what the offshore industry now pays.

The budget includes $169.8 million for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and $204.6 million for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement to support domestic energy production, including new leasing, strong safety oversight of offshore operations, enhanced environmental enforcement functions, and expanded training and electronic inspection capabilities.

The 2015 budget includes $94.8 million for renewable energy activities, a $3.2 million increase over the 2014 level. This funding maintains the Department's emphasis on strategic investments to advance clean energy and meet the President's goal to approve 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public lands by 2020 (relative to 2009 levels).

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

The 2015 budget supports a vision to inspire millions of young people to play, learn, serve and work outdoors by expanding volunteer and work opportunities for youth and veterans. The budget proposes $50.6 million for Interior youth programs, a $13.6 million or 37 percent increase from 2014.

A key component of the Department's efforts will be partnering with youth organizations through the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps. The proposed funding includes an increase of $8.0 million to expand opportunities for youth education and employment across the National Park Service; an additional $2.5 million for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Urban Wildlife Refuges Partnership; and a total of $4.2 million in Indian Affairs for youth programs including $2.5 million to engage youth in natural sciences. Support for the National Park Service Centennial will create thousands of jobs, and engage more than 10,000 youth in service and training opportunities and more than 265,000 volunteers.

ENSURING HEALTHY WATERSHEDS AND SUSTAINABLE, SECURE WATER SUPPLIES

The 2015 budget addresses the Nation's water challenges through investments in water conservation, sustainability, and infrastructure critical to the arid Western United States and its fragile ecosystems.

The budget includes $66.5 million for WaterSMART programs in Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey, nearly a 17 percent increase from 2014, to assist communities in stretching water supplies and improving water management. In addition to $1 billion requested for the Bureau of Reclamation, the budget also requests $210.4 million for the U.S. Geological Survey's water programs to provide scientific monitoring, research, and tools to support water management across the Nation. This funding supports the Department's goal to increase by 840,000 acre-feet, the available water supply for agricultural, municipal, industrial, and environmental uses in the Western United States through water-conservation programs by the end of 2015.

Interior extends this commitment to Indian Country, honoring Indian water settlements with investments totaling $171.9 million in Reclamation and Indian Affairs, for technical and legal support for water settlements. This includes $147.6 million for implementation of authorized settlements to bring reliable and potable water to Indian communities, more than a 9 percent increase from 2014. Among the investments is $81 million for the ongoing Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which, when completed, will have the capacity to deliver clean running water to a potential future population of approximately 250,000 people.

BUILDING A LANDSCAPE LEVEL UNDERSTANDING OF OUR RESOURCES

The 2015 budget fosters the sustainable stewardship of the Nation's lands and resources on a landscape level. Funding includes increases for scientific monitoring, research and tools to advance our understanding and ability to manage natural resources more effectively, while balancing important conservation goals and development objectives. Reflecting the President's ongoing commitment to scientific discovery and innovation to support decisionmaking for critical societal needs and a robust economy, the budget proposes $888.7 million for research and development activities across the Department, an increase of $60.4 million over 2014. This funding will increase understanding of natural resources and the factors impacting water availability, ecosystem and species resiliency, sustainable energy and mineral development, climate resilience, and natural hazard mitigation, among others.

Complementing this budget request are two components of the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative: an investment of $140 million for Interior research and development as part of a governmentwide effort to jumpstart growth

spurred by scientific discovery; and investments to address climate resilience to better prepare communities and infrastructure, and enable them to build greater resilience in the face of a changing climate.

In ecosystems across the Nation, Interior will continue to work with local communities to leverage its efforts to improve resiliency and achieve improved environmental and economic outcomes.

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE 2015 REQUEST

Bureau of Land Management—The 2015 request is $1.1 billion, a decrease of $5.6 million from the 2014 enacted level. The 2015 request assumes the use of $54.5 million in proposed offsetting fees, which when included provides an effective increase of $48.9 million above 2014. The 2015 request includes $954.1 million for the Management of Lands and Resources account, and $25.0 million in current appropriations for Land Acquisition, including $2.0 million to improve access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation. The budget proposes $104.0 million for Oregon and California Grant Lands, which includes a $4.2 million decrease in Western Oregon Resource Management Planning, reflecting expected completion of six revised plans in June 2015.

To advance America's Great Outdoors, the request includes $3.5 million in program increases for recreation, cultural resources, and the National Landscape Conservation System to address the needs of recently designated units, implement travel management plans, improve visitor services, and address a backlog in cultural resources inventory and stabilization needs. The budget request also includes $4.8 million for youth programs, an increase of $1.3 million from 2014, to put more young Americans to work protecting and restoring public lands and cultural and historical treasures.

The BLM continues to support the President's all-of-the-above energy strategy on the public lands including an initiative to encourage smart renewable energy development. The 2015 budget includes $29.2 million, essentially level with 2014, for renewable energy to continue to aggressively support wind, solar, and geothermal energy development on BLM lands. Complementing this is a $5.0 million increase in the Cadastral, Lands and Realty Management program for identification and designation of energy corridors in low conflict areas to site high voltage transmission lines, substations, and related infrastructure in an environmentally sensitive manner.

The 2015 request for Oil and Gas Management, including both direct and fee-funded appropriations, totals $133.7 million, an increase of $20.3 million in available program funding from 2014. In 2015, the budget proposes to shift the cost of oil and gas inspection and enforcement activity from current appropriations to inspection fees charged to industry. The proposed inspection fees will generate and estimated $48.0 million, providing for a $10.0 million increase in BLM's inspection and enforcement capability and allowing for a net reduction of $38.0 million in requested BLM appropriations. The request for Oil and Gas programs includes increases of $5.2 million for ongoing rulemaking efforts and to strengthen operations at BLM units and $4.6 million for oversight and permitting to better keep pace with industry demand and fully implement leasing reforms.

In 2015, BLM will release six rapid eco-regional assessments, in addition to four planned for 2014. The BLM will conduct training on the use of the data from these assessments and will work with a number of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to begin development of regional conservation strategies. The budget includes an increase of $5.0 million for Resource Management Planning to implement BLM's enterprise geographic information system and address high priority planning. The 2015 budget maintains a $15.0 million increase to implement sage grouse conservation and restoration measures to help avoid the need for a future listing of the species for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Other program increases include $2.8 million in the Wild Horse and Burro program to implement recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences regarding population control; and $2.8 million in Abandoned Mine Lands to implement remediation plan efforts at Red Devil Mine in Alaska. The request includes $19.0 million for the Alaska Conveyance program. Although a decrease of $3.1 million from 2014, this funding coupled with efficiencies from an improved cadastral method, plots a course to complete all surveys and land transfers in 10 years.

A proposed grazing administration fee will enhance BLM's capacity for processing grazing permits. A fee of $1.00 per animal unit month, estimated to provide $6.5 million in 2015, is proposed on a pilot basis. This additional revenue more than offsets a decrease of $4.8 million in appropriated funds in Rangeland Management,

equating to a $1.7 million program increase to help address the grazing permit backlog.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management—The 2015 operating request is $169.8 million, including $72.4 million in current appropriations and $97.3 million in offsetting collections. This is a net increase of $3.4 million in current appropriations above the 2014 enacted level.

The 2015 budget maintains a strong offshore renewable energy program at essentially the 2014 level of $23.1 million for the total program. In 2013, BOEM held the first competitive Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) renewable energy lease sales, issued five other non-competitive commercial offshore wind energy leases, and approved the construction and operations plan for the Cape Wind project offshore Massachusetts.

Offshore conventional energy programs also remain essentially level with 2014, with a total of $49.6 million in 2015. In 2013, BOEM held three sales generating over $1.4 billion in high bids, and three additional lease sales are scheduled during calendar year 2014. The request of $65.7 million for Environmental Programs includes an increase of $2.5 million for work on a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the next 5-Year Program (2017–2022) for oil and gas leasing on the OCS.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement—The 2015 budget request is $204.6 million, including $81.0 million in current appropriations and $123.6 million in offsetting collections, an increase of $2.0 million from 2014. The request for offsetting collections assumes $65.0 million from offshore oil and gas inspection fees. The 2015 request allows BSEE to continue to strengthen regulatory and oversight capability on the OCS and maintain capacity in regulatory, safety management, structural and technical support, and oil spill response prevention.

The budget includes $189.7 million for Offshore Safety and Environmental Enforcement, an increase of $2.4 million. The request includes a program increase of $0.9 million to evaluate and test new technologies and update regulations to reflect improved safety and oversight protocols. Funding for Oil Spill Research is maintained at the 2014 level of $14.9 million.

Office of Surface Mining—The 2015 budget request for the Office of Surface Mining is $144.8 million, a decrease of $5.3 million from the 2014 enacted level. This includes a decrease of $13.4 million in grants to States and Tribes to encourage these regulatory programs to recover a larger portion of their costs from fees charged to the coal industry, and an increase of $4.0 million to provide additional technical support to State and tribal regulatory programs. The budget also includes an increase of $1.9 million for applied science to advance reclamation technologies. This request proposes $116.1 million for Regulation and Technology funding, $28.7 million for Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund activities, and an additional $1.9 million in offsetting collections from recovered costs for services.

U.S. Geological Survey—The USGS budget request is $1.1 billion, $41.3 million above the 2014 enacted level. The President's budget reflects the administration's commitment to investing in research and development to support sound decision-making and sustainable stewardship of natural resources. This includes science, monitoring, and assessment activities critical to understanding and managing the ecological, mineral, energy, and water resources which underlie the prosperity and well-being of the Nation. The budget includes increases for priorities in ecosystem restoration, climate adaptation, invasive species, environmental health, and earth observations. Funding provides increased support to enhance sustainable energy development, address water resource challenges, increase landscape level understanding of the Nation's natural resources, and the Scientists for Tomorrow youth initiative.

To support sustainable management of water resources, the USGS budget includes increases totaling $6.4 million for WaterSMART programs. This includes increases for State water grants, regional water availability models, and the integration and dissemination of data through online science platforms. The budget includes increases of $2.4 million to support implementation of the National Groundwater Monitoring Network and $1.2 million for the National Streamflow Information Program for streamgages to strengthen the Federal backbone at high priority sites sensitive to drought, flooding, and potential climate change effects.

To better understand and adapt to the potential impacts of a changing climate, the USGS budget invests in research, monitoring, and tools to support improved resilience of natural systems. The National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and DOI Climate Science Centers are funded at $35.3 million, an increase of $11.6 million from 2014. This includes an increase of $3.0 million for grants focused on applied science and information needed by resource managers for decision-making at regional levels. An increase of $2.3 million will enhance the leveraging

of these investments with other Federal climate science activities and make the scientific information and products developed through these programs available to the public in a centralized, web-accessed format. Program increases of $2.5 million will support applied science and capacity-building for tribal climate adaptation needs in the CSC regions, and $3.0 million will support additional research in drought impacts and adaptive management.

The USGS budget invests in providing critical data and tools to promote understanding and managing resources on a landscape-scale. Program increases in the National Geospatial Program include $5.0 million for the 3-Dimensional Elevation Program to collect Lidar data to enhance science and emergency response activities, resource and vulnerability assessments, ecosystem based management, and tools to inform policy and management. An increase of $1.9 million is requested for modernization of The National Map, which provides critical data about the Earth, its complex processes, and natural resources. The 2015 budget includes a $2.0 million increase for the Big Earth Data initiative to improve access to and use of data from satellite, airborne, terrestrial, and ocean-based Earth observing systems. These investments will provide benefits in natural resource management and hazard mitigation, by improving access to critical information.

To support the sustainable development of energy resources, the USGS budget includes $40.7 million for conventional and renewable energy programs, $8.1 million above the 2014 enacted level. A program increase of $1.3 million will be used to study geothermal resources and build on ongoing work on wind energy impacts. The request includes $18.6 million, $8.3 million over 2014, to support research and development to better understand potential impacts of energy development involving hydraulic fracturing. Conducted through an interagency collaboration with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency, this work addresses issues such as water quality and quantity, ecosystem, community, and human health impacts, and induced seismicity. Funding for other conventional energy programs, including oil, gas, and coal assessments, totals $15.6 million.

Supporting the sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems, the 2015 budget includes $162.0 million for ecosystems science activities, $9.2 million above the 2014 enacted level. Program increases include $2.0 million for research on new methods to eradicate, control, and manage Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River Basin and prevent entry into the Great Lakes. Increases of $2.5 million are provided for ecosystem restoration work in the Chesapeake Bay, California Bay-Delta, Columbia River, Everglades, and Puget Sound. Another $2.0 million will support the science and integration of ecosystems services frameworks into decision-making and efforts to assess and sustain the Nation's environmental capital. Program increases totaling $1.8 million will address native pollinators, brown treesnakes, and new and emerging invasive species of national concern.

Supporting understanding, preparedness, and mitigation of the impacts of natural hazards, the budget provides $128.3 million for Natural Hazards activities, which is essentially level with 2014. This activity provides scientific information and tools to reduce potential fatalities, injuries, and economic loss from volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides, among others. The 2015 budget includes an increase of $700,000 in Earthquake Hazards for induced seismicity studies related to hydraulic fracturing.

Fish and Wildlife Service—The 2015 Fish and Wildlife Service budget includes $1.5 billion in current appropriations, an increase of $48.8 million above the 2014 level. This includes America's Great Outdoors related increases of $71.7 million in the Resource Management account. Among the increases proposed are: $6.6 million to address increased workload in planning and consultation for energy transmission and other projects, $7.7 million for cooperative efforts to recover imperiled species, $4.0 million to support conservation of the greater sage grouse across 11 Western States, $2.0 million to investigate crimes and enforce laws that govern the Nation's wildlife trade, and $2.5 million to establish an Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership program. This effort will encourage city dwellers to enjoy the outdoors by creating stepping stones of engagement to connect them to the outdoors on refuges and partner lands, through experiences which build on one another.

Funding for FWS grant programs, with the exception of State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, remain level with 2014. In 2015, funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants totals $50 million. The request also includes $55.0 million for Land Acquisition and $15.7 million for Construction. In addition to direct appropriations, an estimated $1.3 billion will be available under permanent appropriations, most of which will be provided directly to States for fish and wildlife restoration and conservation.

The budget proposes $16.7 million, an increase of $2.5 million, for activities associated with energy development. Of this increase, $1.4 million supports scientific research into the impacts of energy transmission and development infrastructure on

wildlife and habitat. The research will identify potential impacts associated with the development of energy infrastructure and strategies to minimize the impacts on habitat and species. An increase of $1.1 million for the Ecological Services Planning and Consultation program supports assessments of renewable energy projects proposed for development.

The budget request for the Resource Management account continues support for key programs with program increases of $65.8 million above 2014. The request provides $252.2 million in Ecological Services to conserve, protect, and enhance listed and at-risk species and their habitat, an increase of $30.3 million. Within this request are increases of $4.0 million to support conservation of the greater sage grouse across 11 Western States and $10.5 million to implement other species recovery actions.

The request includes funding within Law Enforcement and International Affairs to combat wildlife trafficking. The budget provides $66.7 million for the law enforcement program to investigate wildlife crimes, enforce the laws governing the Nation's wildlife trade, and expand technical forensic expertise, with program increases of $2.0 million over 2014.

The budget includes $138.9 million for Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation, a program increase of $8.2 million. Within this request is $48.6 million for operation of the National Fish Hatchery system to address top priorities, an increase of $1.9 million for fish hatchery maintenance, and $4.4 million to prevent the spread of Asian carp in the Missouri, Ohio, upper Mississippi Rivers, and other high priority watersheds.

Funding for Cooperative Landscape Conservation activity is $17.7 million, an increase of $3.2 million, and funding for Science Support is $31.6 million, an increase of $14.4 million. The budget supports applied science directed at high impact questions to mitigate threats to fish and wildlife resources, including $2.5 million to address white nose syndrome in bats, and an increase of $1.0 million to study biological carbon sequestration.

The 2015 budget proposes to eliminate the current funding contribution to the National Wildlife Refuge fund, a reduction of $13.2 million below 2014. An estimated $8.0 million in permanent receipts collected and allocated under the program would remain available to counties. The budget also proposes cancellation of $1.4 million in prior year balances from the Landowner Incentive and Private Stewardship Grant programs, which have not received new budget authority in several years.

National Park Service—The 2015 budget request for NPS of $2.6 billion is $55.1 million above the 2014 enacted level.

In 2015, a total of $2.5 billion is requested for NPS as part of America's Great Outdoors. This includes $2.3 billion for park operations, an increase of $47.1 million over 2014. Within this increase is $30.0 million to support the NPS Centennial Initiative. The Centennial increase includes $16.0 million for repair and rehabilitation projects to improve high priority projects throughout the parks, $8.0 million in competitively managed funds to support enhanced visitor services in the areas of interpretation and education, law enforcement and protection, and facility operations, $4.0 million for 21 CSC youth work opportunities to engage youth in service and conservation projects, and $2.0 million to support expanded volunteer opportunities at the parks. Across these Centennial increases, the budget provides an $8.0 million increase for youth engagement and employment opportunities, and continues the NPS' efforts to attract qualified veteran candidates to fill Federal positions. The request for Park Operations also includes increases of $15.7 million for increased fixed costs and $2.0 million to support new park units.

Also in preparation for the Centennial anniversary of the parks, the 2015 request includes $10.0 million in a separate account for Centennial Challenge projects. This funding will provide a Federal match to leverage partner donations for signature projects and programs at the parks. This program will be instrumental in garnering partner support to prepare park sites across the country for the centennial and through the second century of the NPS.

The 2015 request for the Historic Preservation Fund is $56.4 million, level with 2014. Of this total, $46.9 million is requested for grants-in-aid to States and Territories, $9.0 million for grants-in-aid to Tribes, and $500,000 to be awarded competitively to address communities currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places.

The budget includes $52.0 million within the National Recreation and Preservation account, which includes $10.0 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, essentially level with 2014, and $1.2 million for American Battlefield Protection Program assistance grants, also level with 2014. The request

includes a program reduction of $9.1 million from Heritage Partnership programs to encourage self-sufficiency for these non-Federal organizations.

Programs funded out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund are a key component of America's Great Outdoors. The budget requests $104.0 million for the Land Acquisition and State Assistance account, an increase of $5.9 million. This includes $48.1 million for the State Conservation Grants program, level with 2014, and $55.9 million for NPS Federal land acquisition, a programmatic increase of $5.8 million. Of this amount, $13.2 million supports Collaborative Landscape projects in the California Southwest Desert and areas within the National Trails System.

Funding for Construction totals $138.3 million, essentially level with 2014. Of this amount, the budget includes $61.7 million for line-item construction projects, a $1.1 million program increase compared to 2014. The request includes $6.7 million to reconstruct the historic cave tour trails in Mammoth Cave National Park and $3.9 million to stabilize and repair exterior walls of the historic Alcatraz prison cell house at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Indian Affairs—The 2015 budget includes $2.6 billion for Indian Affairs programs, an increase of $33.6 million from the 2014 enacted level. This includes an increase of $33.8 million for Operation of Indian Programs; and level funding of $35.7 million for Indian Land and Water Claim Settlements, $109.9 for Construction, and $6.7 million for the Indian Guaranteed Loan program.

Within the Operation of Indian Programs, the budget includes full funding of $251.0 million for Contract Support Costs and the Indian Self-Determination Fund, an increase of $4.0 million from 2014. Consistent with the 2014 Operating Plan, the 2015 request provides full funding based on the most current estimated need. The availability of contract support cost funding is a key factor in tribal decisions to assume responsibility for operating Federal programs important to the furtherance of self-governance and self-determination. To further facilitate Tribal 638 Contracting, the budget includes an additional $1.2 million to increase services from the Department's Office of Indirect Cost Negotiations which negotiates indirect cost rates with non-Federal entities, including tribal governments. Consistent with Appropriations Committee direction and in collaboration with the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Department held its first formal consultation on March 11, 2014 with tribes to discuss long-term solutions to Contract Support Cost issues. The Department remains committed to working with IHS, tribes, and Congress to develop a long-term strategy for addressing this important issue.

The 2015 budget for Indian Affairs includes an increase of $11.6 million for the Tiwahe or "family" Initiative. The initiative takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the inter-related problems of poverty, violence, and substance abuse in Indian communities. The initiative builds on and expands social service, Indian child and family welfare, and job training programs. In recognition that adequate housing is essential to building stronger families, the budget maintains the 2014 level for the Housing Improvement Program. The goal of the Tiwahe Initiative is to empower American Indian individuals and families in health promotion and family stability, and to strengthen tribal communities as a whole. To better target funding and evaluate outcomes in meeting social service needs in Indian Country, the budget includes $1.0 million as part of the initiative.

The budget provides strong support for the sustainable stewardship of land and resources in Indian Country, sustaining funding for trust land management and real estate services at 2014 levels and proposing program increases of $3.6 million for the stewardship of natural resources. Funding supports the development of natural resource science, information, and tools for application in the development and management of energy and minerals, water, forestry, oceans, climate resilience, and endangered and invasive species. Demonstrating the administration's commitment to resolving tribal water rights and ensuring that tribes have access to meet their water needs, $171.9 million is provided across the Department for implementation of, and technical and legal support for, Indian water rights settlements, an increase of $13.8 million over 2014. A program increase of $1.0 million is also provided in Indian Affairs for deferred maintenance on Indian irrigation projects to help address drought issues in Indian Country.

The budget supports improving educational outcomes in Indian Country, providing $794.4 million for the Bureau of Indian Education, an increase of $5.6 million from 2014. The request includes an increase of $500,000 for Johnson O'Malley Education Assistance Grants to support a new student count in 2015 and funding to address the projected increase in the number of eligible students. The budget includes $1.0 million to support ongoing evaluation of the BIE school system to improve educational outcomes. Within education construction, an increase of $2.3 million supports site development at the Beatrice Rafferty School for which design funding was provided in 2014. The budget also includes $2.3 million in increases

for BIE funded post-secondary programs including $1.7 million for post-graduate opportunities in science fields, and $250,000 for summer pre-law preparatory scholarships.

Departmental Offices and Department-wide Programs—The 2015 request for the Office of the Secretary is $265.3 million, an increase of $1.3 million from the 2014 enacted level. Of this, $122.9 million is for the Office of Natural Resources Revenue programs, an increase of $3.5 million, reflecting increases to strengthen production verification and meter inspections activities, including implementing an onshore production verification pilot and funding related data integration. Other changes include the proposed transfer of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board from the Office of the Secretary to the Bureau of Indian Affairs of $1.3 million, a decrease of $865,000 reflecting a shift from direct appropriations to fee for service for Indirect Cost Negotiations, and a program decrease of $266,000 in Valuation Services.

The budget request for the Office of Insular Affairs is $92.2 million, a decrease of $10.2 million from the 2014 enacted level. The budget includes an increase of $3.0 million to address urgent, immediate needs in the insular areas, and $1.8 million to improve safety conditions in insular school facilities. A decrease of $500,000 reflects completion of an aerial bait system for brown treesnake control. Compact Impact is funded at $1.3 million, a decrease of $1.7 million from 2014, and is supplemented by $30.0 million annually in permanent Compact Impact funding. Funding of $13.1 million for the Palau Compact Extension is not requested for 2015 as it is expected the Compact will be authorized and funded from permanent appropriations in 2014.

The Office of Inspector General request is $50.0 million, a decrease of $784,000 from 2014. The budget includes a decrease of $2.0 million reflecting completion of an effort to reduce OIG's physical footprint. Increases of $423,000 and $355,000 are included to support the council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency and provide additional FTE for information security audits, respectively. The Office of the Solicitor request is $65.8 million, equal to the 2014 enacted level.

The Office of the Special Trustee request is $139.0 million, $648,000 below the 2014 enacted level. The 2015 budget decreases Business Management funding by $1.6 million reflecting $922,000 in efficiencies from the transfer of some mailing and printing services to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, a reduction of $500,000 in litigation support, and a decrease of $200,000 in funding for the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

The 2015 request for the Department-wide Wildland Fire Management program is $794.0 million without the proposed fire cap adjustment, and $1.0 billion including the adjustment. The request includes $268.6 million for Suppression within the current budget cap, which is 70 percent of the 10-year suppression average spending. This base level funding ensures the cap adjustment of $240.4 million would only be used for the most severe fires, since it is one percent of the fires that cause 30 percent of the costs. The new budget framework for Wildland Fire Management eliminates the need for additional funds through the FLAME Act. The 2015 budget includes a program increase of $34.1 million for Preparedness activities to enhance readiness capabilities. The budget includes $146.3 million for Fuels Management activities, formerly known as Hazardous Fuels Management. This is equal to the 2014 enacted level with an increase of $1.3 million for fixed costs. Complementing this request is $30.0 million for Resilient Landscapes, a new component of the Wildland Fire Management program, to support treatments that improve the integrity and resilience of forests and rangelands. Resilient landscape projects will be leveraged with bureau efforts to reduce fire risk and improve overall resiliency. The budget request also includes a $2.0 million increase for the Burned Area Rehabilitation program to address greater post-fire rehabilitation needs caused by the 2012 and 2013 fire seasons.

The 2015 request for the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund is $7.8 million, a program increase of $1.5 million. The increase includes $1.0 million for a Department-wide onshore Oil Spill Preparedness Program, and additional resources for Restoration support. The budget includes $10.0 million for the Central Hazardous Materials Fund, an increase of $412,000 from 2014 to support additional cleanup work.

The Department's 2015 request for the Working Capital Fund appropriation is $64.3 million, an increase of $7.3 million from the 2014 enacted level. Within this request is $53.9 million for the operation and maintenance of the Financial and Business Management System, an increase of $1.0 million to continue support of the Department's Cultural and Scientific Collections Management initiative, a decrease of $1.0 million from the Department's Service First initiative, and an increase of $8.4 million to support Interior's Office Consolidation strategy in the DC metropolitan area.

MANDATORY PROPOSALS

The 2015 budget includes 15 legislative proposals affecting spending, revenue and available budget authority, which require action by the Congressional Authorizing Committees. Revenue and savings proposals will generate more than $2.6 billion over the next decade. The 2015 budget includes four spending proposals with an estimated $9.9 billion in outlays over the next decade.

Land and Water Conservation Fund—The 2015 budget proposes $900.0 million in current and permanent funding in 2015, and proposes permanent authorization of $900.0 million in mandatory funding for LWCF programs in the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture beginning in 2016. During a transition to permanent funding in 2015, the budget proposes $900.0 million in total LWCF programs funding, comprised of $550.0 million permanent and $350.0 million current funding, shared by Interior and Agriculture.

Centennial Initiative—The Centennial Initiative includes a legislative proposal to authorize $1.2 billion in permanent funding over 3 years beginning in 2015 in the following areas: $300.0 million ($100.0 million a year for 3 years) for a National Park Service Centennial Challenge fund to leverage private donations; $600.0 million ($200.0 million a year for 3 years) for NPS deferred maintenance; and $300.0 million ($100.0 million a year for 3 years) for a multiagency Centennial Land Management Investment Fund to competitively award grants to Interior land management agencies and the U.S. Forest Service for deferred maintenance and conservation projects.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes—The Agricultural Act of 2014 included a 1-year extension of permanent PILT funding through 2014. The 2015 budget proposes to extend authorization of the program an additional year through 2015, while a sustainable long-term funding solution is developed for the PILT Program. The PILT payments help local governments carry out vital services, such as firefighting and police protection, construction of public schools and roads, and search and rescue operations. The cost of a 1-year extension is estimated to be $442.0 million in 2015. The 2015 budget for the USDA Forest Service includes a proposal to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools Program for a 5-year period, covering lands managed by the BLM.

Palau Compact—On September 3, 2010, the United States and the Republic of Palau successfully concluded the review of the Compact of Free Association and signed a 15-year agreement that includes a package of assistance through 2024. The 2015 budget assumes authorization of permanent funding for the Compact occurs in 2014. The cost for this proposal is estimated at $178.3 million for 2015 through 2024.

Federal Oil and Gas Reforms—The budget includes a package of legislative reforms to bolster and backstop administrative actions being taken to reform the management of Interior's onshore and offshore oil and gas programs, with a key focus on improving the return to taxpayers from the sale of these Federal resources. Proposed statutory and administrative changes fall into three general categories: (1) advancing royalty reforms, (2) encouraging diligent development of oil and gas leases, and (3) improving revenue collection processes. Collectively, these reforms will generate roughly $2.5 billion in net revenue to the Treasury over 10 years, of which about $1.7 billion would result from statutory changes. Many States will also benefit from higher Federal revenue sharing payments.

Return Coal Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Fees to Historic Levels—The budget proposes legislation to modify the 2006 amendments to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, which lowered the per-ton coal fee companies pay into the AML Fund. The proposal would return the fee to 35 cents a ton, the same level companies paid prior to the 2006 fee reduction. The additional revenue, estimated at $362 million over 10 years, will be used to reclaim high priority abandoned coal mines and reduce a portion of the estimated $3.9 billion needed to address remaining dangerous coal AML sites nationwide.

Discontinue AML Payments to Certified States—The budget proposes to discontinue unrestricted payments to States and Tribes certified for completing their coal reclamation work. This proposal terminates all such payments, with estimated savings of approximately $295 million over the next 10 years.

Reclamation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines—To address the legacy of abandoned hardrock mines across the United States and hold the hardrock mining industry accountable for past mining practices, the Department will propose legislation to create a parallel Abandoned Mine Lands Program for abandoned hardrock sites. A new AML fee on hardrock production on both public and private lands would generate an estimated $1.8 billion to reclaim the highest priority hardrock abandoned sites on Federal, State, tribal, and private lands.

Reform Hardrock Mining on Federal Lands—Interior will submit a legislative proposal to provide a fair return to the taxpayer from hardrock production on Federal lands. The legislative proposal will institute a leasing program under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 for certain hardrock minerals including gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, uranium, and molybdenum, currently covered by the General Mining Law of 1872. The proposal is projected to generate net revenues to the U.S. Treasury of $80 million over 10 years, with larger revenues estimated in following years.

Geothermal Energy Receipts—The Department proposes to repeal Section 224(b) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The repeal of Section 224(b) will permanently discontinue payments to counties and restore the disposition of Federal geothermal leasing revenues to the historical formula of 50 percent to the States and 50 percent to the Treasury. This results in estimated savings of $4 million in 2015 and $42 million over 10 years.

Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act—The Department proposes to reauthorize this Act to allow Federal lands identified as suitable for disposal in recent land use plans to be sold using this authority. The sales revenues would continue to fund the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and administrative costs associated with conducting the sales.

Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps—Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, or Duck Stamps, are the annual Federal license required for hunting migratory waterfowl. The receipts generated from the sale of these $15.00 stamps are used to acquire important migratory bird areas for migration, breeding, and wintering. The Department proposes legislation to increase these fees which have not increased since 1991, to $25.00 per stamp per year beginning in 2015. This increase will add an estimated $14 million for migratory bird conservation annually.

Bureau of Land Management Foundation—The budget proposes legislation to establish a congressionally chartered National BLM Foundation. This Foundation will provide an opportunity to leverage private funding to support public lands, achieve shared outcomes, and focus public support on the BLM mission.

Recreation Fee Program—The Department of the Interior proposes to permanently authorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which will expire in December 2015. The Department currently collects over $200 million in recreation fees annually under this authority and uses them to enhance the visitor experience at Interior facilities.

FIRE SUPPRESSION AND THE DISCRETIONARY BUDGET CAP

The 2015 budget proposes to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, to establish a new framework for funding Fire Suppression Operations to provide stable funding for fire suppression while minimizing the adverse impacts of fire transfers on the budgets of other programs, as well as reduce fire risk, manage landscapes more comprehensively, and increase the resiliency of public lands and the communities that border them. Under this new framework, the 2015 budget request covers 70 percent of the 10-year suppression average within the domestic discretionary caps and a portion is funded in a budget cap adjustment. Extreme fires requiring emergency response, fires threatening urban areas, or requirements of an abnormally high fire season, would be permitted to be funded through the adjustment to discretionary spending limits. The cap adjustment does not increase overall current spending, as it reduces the ceiling for the existing disaster relief cap adjustment.

OFFSETTING COLLECTIONS AND FEES

The budget includes the following proposals to collect or increase various fees, so industry shares some of the cost of Federal permitting and regulatory oversight.

New Fee for Onshore Oil and Gas Inspections—Through appropriations language, the Department proposes to implement an inspection fee in 2015 for onshore oil and gas activities subject to inspection by BLM. The proposed fee is expected to generate $48.0 million in 2015, $10.0 million more than the corresponding $38.0 million reduction in requested appropriations, thereby expanding the capacity of BLM's oil and gas inspection program. The fee is similar to one already in place for offshore operations and will support Federal efforts to increase production accountability, human safety, and environmental protection.

Grazing Administrative Fee—The 2015 budget proposes a new grazing administrative fee of $1 per animal unit month. The BLM proposes to implement this fee through appropriations language on a 3-year pilot basis. The provision will generate an estimated $6.5 million in 2015 to assist BLM in processing grazing permits.

National Wildlife Refuge Damage Cost Recovery—The budget proposes appropriations language to authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service to pursue and retain recoveries from responsible parties, to be used to restore or replace damaged National Wildlife Refuge resources.

Cost Recovery for Nontoxic Shot Approvals—The budget proposes appropriations language to allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to retain and use fees collected for the review of nontoxic shot products. Nontoxic shot is a substitute for lead shot, banned for waterfowl hunting since 1991.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the President's 2015 budget request for the Department of the Interior. This budget is responsible, and proposes to maintain core capabilities with targeted investments to advance the stewardship of lands and resources, renewable energy, oil and gas development and reforms, water conservation, youth employment and engagement, and improvements in the quality of life in Indian communities. Thank for your continued interest in the Department's budget. I look forward to answering questions about this budget. This concludes my written statement.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Questions Submitted by Chairman Hastings

Question. What actions has the Department of Interior taken to address the "on the ground" problem of mussel-encrusted boats leaving federally managed infested water bodies?

Answer. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service co-chairs the intergovernmental Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF), which leads efforts to prevent the westward spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic nuisance species in North America, and has developed guidelines on approaches to minimize the potential risks of mussel-encrusted recreational boats that the States and other partners use.

Through the 100th Meridian Initiative, the FWS and partners focus on containing the spread of invasive mussels and other aquatic nuisance species throughout the West through the Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters, watercraft inspection training and certification, prevention planning, and prohibition of interstate transport via its injurious wildlife listing of zebra mussels. The ANSTF and its partners manage the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!" campaign, a national outreach campaign. The campaign empowers recreational users with simple steps to help stop aquatic invasive species transport and spread.

The FWS provided funding in 2012 for mandatory inspections and decontaminations and improvements to inspection and decontamination procedures in areas where the National Park Service has established mandatory inspection and cleaning of boats in marina at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, which includes Lakes Mead and Mohave.

The Agency's aquatic invasive species control and management funding for zebra and quagga mussels is $2 million as a line item, of which $1 million is used to fund 42 existing State/Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans which encompass a wide variety of invasive species activities, with much of the western work being focused on zebra and quagga mussels and both voluntary and mandatory boat inspections by the States. The other $1 million is used to collaboratively work with the States, in order to increase effectiveness of control activities. The FWS provided funds to assist the NPS and State partners with their mandatory inspections and decontaminations, including improvements to their inspection and decontamination procedures.

Question. How can the National Park System authorize boats to leave Lake Mead without mandatory inspection and decontamination when Executive Order 13112 expressly prohibits a Federal agency from authorizing any activities that spread invasive species?

Answer. With nearly 6.5 million annual visitors and, in fiscal year 2013, nearly 40,000 vessel passes sold, inspecting every boat that leaves Lake Mead National Recreation Area is impracticable and cost prohibitive, and, even if possible, it would not guarantee that no mussel infested boats would leave Lake Mead. In fact, on busy summer weekends, visitation can reach 200,000–300,000, and there are dozens

of lake access points for Lakes Mead and Mohave, many of which do not have entrance stations or are unmanned.

Lake Mead NRA is actively working to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. Current efforts include controlling and monitoring populations of quagga mussels and promoting public education. The quagga program is focused mainly on slipped and moored boats, which are the highest risk vector for transporting mussels from Lake Mead. The program provides that 72 hours prior to pulling a boat out of the water to leave the park, boat owners with slipped or moored boats must notify NRA personnel to schedule an inspection and hot-water wash to remove all visible quagga mussels. Boat wash facilities are located at all seven marinas within the park. Day use boaters are required to clean, drain and dry their vessels before leaving the area.

While the NPS does not have the authority to stop vessels with quagga mussels that are departing Federal lands at Lake Mead NRA, all of the western States do have laws in place regarding the transport of invasive species, including quagga mussels. Lake Mead NRA has coordinated with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Arizona Game and Fish Department to provide boat wash information to the other western States. The NPS continues to work with the concessioners, the States, boat owners, haulers, repossession companies, and contractors to ensure protocols are being followed and boats are being inspected and washed properly.

Question. As you know, in fiscal year 2012, House Report 112–3 31 included appropriations of $1 million for "the implementation of *mandatory operational inspection and decontamination stations* at federally-managed or interjurisdictional water bodies considered to be of highest risk." However, I understand that this funding was not applied to inspection and decontamination stations as required by the House Report language. Why wasn't it, and when do you expect this requirement to be fulfilled?

Answer. Zebra and quagga mussel spread in the West is a complex issue involving interjurisdictional waters where both State and Federal laws and policies apply. Many fouled vessels being intercepted in western States come from interjurisdictional and federally managed waters in the lower Colorado River. The NPS has established mandatory inspection and cleaning of moored boats at Lake Mead NRA, which includes Lakes Mead and Mohave.

In 2012, in response to increasing pressure to make the program more effective, FWS, working collaboratively with the States, used these funds for mandatory inspections and decontaminations, and improvements to inspection and decontamination procedures. Discussions with Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Quagga/Zebra Mussel Action Plan Coordination Committee, and the Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force indicated support for this approach, in particular at the Lake Mead National Recreational Area. FWS also briefed Appropriations Committee staff about using FY 2012 funds to implement the priorities identified by the Task Force.

Question. It has come to my attention that the Idaho State Department of Agriculture has been refused requests to the National Park Service (NPS) for copies of relevant departing boat notifications to the Idaho Invasive Species Program as they are filed throughout the year; copies of all 2007–2009 departure records of Idaho-registered boats and boats that listed "Idaho" as the destination. Why was this information refused, and under what authority?

Answer. The National Park Service has worked with park concessioners to have them provide information on departing boats directly to the States of Arizona and Nevada. The State agencies have agreed to share this information with other western States, including Idaho, and have been providing this boater information for the last 2 years. Some of the data that Idaho has requested is not available as Lake Mead NRA first discovered mussels in 2007 and did not have wash stations at that time.

Question. Your recent letter to Secretary of State Kerry regarding the Columbia River Treaty indicated an interest in studying flood risk standards in the Columbia River Basin. Does the administration support increasing flood risk in the area above current levels?

Answer. The administration's position on the U.S. Entity's regional recommendations concerning the future of the Columbia River Treaty remains under consideration.

Question. Should States and local governments affected by ESA settlements (such as the mega-settlements your Department signed in 2011) be allowed a say regard-

ing the issuance of ESA listing deadlines negotiated and set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with nongovernmental organizations in Federal court?

Answer. The settlement agreements committed the FWS to make the listing determinations required by the ESA for 251 species on a workable and publicly available schedule. The settlements did not commit the FWS to add these species to the list; rather, they committed the FWS to make a determination by a date certain as to whether listing was still warranted and, if so, to publish a proposed rule to initiate the rulemaking process of adding a species to the list.

Question Submitted by Representative Garcia

Question. I'd first like to say how much I've enjoyed working with you over the past year. It's great to see you again. As you know, I represent the Everglades—one of our country's greatest natural treasures. Although the administration's commitment to Everglades restoration has been strong, I worry that some of the larger projects undertaken in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan have been indefinitely delayed, effecting families and businesses that surround them. The farmers in my district have lost entire annual crop yields because of the high water tables and significant flooding that has taken place across the region. Finalizing Contract 8 and completing the C–111 Canal South Dade would protect our growers from facing significant financial risk, personal burden and a strong disadvantage in the international market. Madam Secretary, where are we on C–111 South Dade and how does the Department plan to move it forward?

Answer. On April 30, 2014, Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo Ellen Darcy announced the resolution of issues associated with the C–111 Project so that the project could restart after a hiatus of 2 years. The issues that had delayed the project involved matters associated with the cost share and crediting to the local sponsor, the South Florida Water Management District. Now that the issues are resolved, the Army and the District may execute an amendment to the project cooperation agreement such that important work to complete the project, including Contract 8, may move forward.

Questions Submitted by Representative Sablan

Question. Submerged Lands and Co-Management Agreement—The next step for the administration is to complete the co-management agreement between the Commonwealth government and the Fish and Wildlife Service, so that submerged lands in the Islands Unit of the Marianas Trench National Monument can be handed back to the Northern Marianas. I hope you will put some energy into getting that agreement, because it has been 5 years now since the Monument was created. Secretary Jewell, could you give me a status report on those negotiations between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commonwealth. When can we expect an agreement?

Answer. The Department has committed to early discussions of provisions relating to development of a coordinated-management agreement for the submerged lands within the Marianas Trench National Monument among representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the CNMI Governor. FWS and NOAA regional leaders met with the CNMI Governor and his staff on June 16th and agreed to work together toward this agreement and transfer. Actions to develop an Agreement for Coordinated Management are underway between the agencies and CNMI and continued discussions are scheduled.

Question. ABC Initiative—I would like to know more about the President's budget, which recommends moving $1.7 million from the Compact Impact Discretionary funds the Office of Insular Affairs gets and putting that money into the ABC Initiative. We lose $1.7 million of compact impact money that could go directly into education and instead we get "embedded teams." Can you help me understand what you are trying to do here?

Answer. The Department is making every effort to be more efficient and effective in responding to the needs of U.S. territories. Specifically, the ABCs initiative has assessed the conditions of every school building in the territories, which identified $177.4 million deferred maintenance, $16.7 million of which is considered health and safety risks that must be rectified to provide a safe learning environment. Additional funds for the ABC initiative will be used to begin addressing deferred maintenance items with priority given to health and safety maintenance issues. By conducting the ABCs as regional effort through the Army Corps of Engineers, the territories are realizing economies of scale that could not be obtained by doing it individually for each territory.

Question. Financial Management Software—About 15 years ago OIA provided financial management software to all of the insular areas. This was to improve financial management by the local governments and meant that OIA would be dealing with financial information in the same format from all areas. First, how has this project worked out? Did it achieve its goals? And, second, is that software ready for an update? If so, will OIA be assisting again?

Answer. Prior to its dissolution, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) government maintained a centralized accounting system in Saipan for the governments of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (and its states), Palau, and the Marshall Islands. In approximately 1986, as the TTPI wound down its activities, it decentralized accounting and created computer centers and accounting systems in each of the islands. The accounting software was the same for each government and met government accountability standards to create financial reports that could be audited. The accounting system and associated software was effective in ensuring each government owned and was responsible for maintaining and upgrading its own accounting system. As noted in the question, technical assistance funding was requested and awarded to the FSM and RMI in the early 2000s to upgrade their accounting systems. This was accomplished under the auspices of the "Insular Management Controls" program, which was subsequently discontinued. Since that time, the office has not undertaken a general hardware and software upgrade on the scale of that previous effort.

OIA also continues to provide financial management related support to the insular areas though the TAP Graduate School Contract. Each year, the insular areas identify financial management capacity building needs that they have and the Graduate School, funded through TAP, provides training and assistance. OIA has also supported financial management improvements in each area by working on providing support for Single Audits through OIA staff and the Graduate School Contract.

Question. Palau Compact—When you were here last year, I asked you about the agreement to extend the financial terms of the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Republic of Palau. I had hoped that with your assistance and support, we could figure out a way to secure passage of the agreement by Congress. Unfortunately, there has been little progress. The two committees of jurisdiction in the House and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in the Senate have simply been unable to come up with a suitable offset. We are going to have to work harder. But we are also going to need more leadership and some sense of urgency from the administration. So, can you update us, Madam Secretary, on any administration efforts to secure passage of the Palau agreement?

Answer. Approving the results of the Agreement is of critical importance to the national security of the United States, to our bilateral relationship with Palau, and to our broader strategic interests in the Asia Pacific region. As such, the administration transmitted legislation to Congress that would approve the Agreement and has worked with the committee to try to identify appropriate offsets for funding the Agreement. The administration stands ready to continue to work with Congress to approve this critically important piece of legislation.

Question. ESA—We often hear from our Republican members that the Fish and Wildlife Service should concentrate more on recovering threatened and endangered species and less on listing them. However, complying with the majority's endless document requests and subpoenas has cost your department $1.5 million and tied up 19,000 hours of staff time. Do you believe these resources would be better utilized to help reach species recovery goals?

Answer. With limited resources it is critically important that FWS focus on species recovery.

Question. Coastal Barrier Resources System—The Department's budget shows a great deal of concern over the effects of climate change. I share those concerns. However, the budget does not dedicate any additional resources to remapping the Coastal Barrier Resources System, a project that is long overdue. Given that coastal storms and sea level rise are an imminent threat to private property, public infrastructure, and the environment, doesn't it make sense to include updating CBRS maps as part of your climate adaptation agenda?

Answer. Through appropriated funding to the FWS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, along with funding provided under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, the FWS is well positioned to provide modernized maps for the Coastal Barrier Resources System. The FWS, through an interagency partnership with FEMA, is conducting a digital conversion of the CBRS maps that is antici-

pated to be completed by 2016. Funding through the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 provided $5 million to comprehensively modernize maps for eight northeastern States by 2017, which will correct errors affecting property owners and facilitate increased awareness of and compliance with CBRA among Federal partners and other stakeholders.

Question. Law Enforcement—The Department is requesting only very modest increases to its law enforcement and international affairs budgets at a time when global wildlife poaching and trafficking is at an all-time high. Is this lack of dedication consistent with the recommendations in the recently released National Strategy for Combating Wildlife trafficking?

Answer. The Department has requested funding at a level that will allow FWS to make a significant contribution to the fight against wildlife trafficking. The Department's efforts represent the continuation and enhancement of work that has been underway for years. The request is also consistent with the National Strategy, which calls for marshaling and strategically using existing resources across executive branch agencies and departments and working in partnership with other nations, the nonprofit community, and the private sector.

Question Submitted by Representative Duncan

Question. You mentioned during the hearing that there were cases where chemicals used in fracking were found in ground water. Were you referring to proven cases where ground water was contaminated because of fracking, or were you referring to an instance where chemicals used in tracking happened to be found in water, with no clear correlation between the two? Do you have evidence you can share regarding what you have found?

Answer. As indicated at the hearing, the Department is not aware of any studies that have suggested a direct link between hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination, but there have been links with groundwater contamination from injected fluids and documented cases of fluid spills on the surface contaminating groundwater. These types of incidents are generally reported to States or the Environmental Protection Agency, and news of them are often reported in the press. With regard to hydraulic fracturing, however, of paramount importance to the process is the integrity of the well bore, the well bore casing, and the concrete seal, which play key roles in ensuring groundwater is protected and fluids going into the well do not escape. Additionally, it is important that companies have a water management plan in place for fluids that flow back to the surface.

Questions Submitted by Representative Robert Wittman

Atlantic Seismic PEIS

Question. Do you believe that the Atlantic Seismic PEIS balances environmental protection, including mitigating marine mammal impact while promoting a better understanding of the available resources in the study area?

Answer. Yes. The PEIS establishes multiple mitigation measures designed to protect the environment and minimize the impacts to marine life while setting a path forward for survey activities that will update nearly four-decade-old data on offshore energy resources in the region.

Question. What date do you expect the Department to issue the Record of Decision (ROD) for Atlantic Seismic?

Answer. Input from the public is an essential part of this process and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has experienced a high level of interest in the PEIS. Requests were received from several stakeholders, including Members of Congress, to extend the comment period on this document. Based on these requests, BOEM extended the comment period until May 7, 2014. BOEM issued its Record of Decision on July 18, 2014.

5-Year Plan

Question. As the Department of Interior begins the process to establish the 2017–2022 5-Year Plan, will you commit to taking into consideration the broad bipartisan support for offshore energy production offshore Virginia?

Answer. As a part of the 5-Year Program planning process, BOEM will consider all 26 OCS planning areas, including offshore Virginia. Beginning this summer, BOEM will initiate the planning process for developing the next 5-Year Program for 2017–2022. It is a detailed, carefully executed, and public process that is based on sound scientific analysis. A key part of safe and responsible development of our off-

shore oil and gas resources is tailoring consideration of leasing to specific regions and environments, engaging with States and local communities as well as industry, NGOs and other stakeholders, and addressing potential conflicts.

National Fish Hatchery System

Question. The Fish & Wildlife Service report release in 2013 valued its fisheries program at $3.6 billion and supporting 68,000 jobs. Do you view the fisheries program as an important component of the Presidents Great Outdoors Program?

Answer. Yes, the FWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program is an important component of the President's America's Great Outdoor Initiative, which has a goal to achieve lasting conservation of the outdoor spaces that power our Nation's economy, shape our culture, and build our outdoor traditions. In FY 2012, National Fish Hatchery System facilities distributed or held in refugia 113 species of fish. Many species that are produced to meet goals for the recovery of threatened and endangered species or for the restoration of imperiled species also have recreational value.

In addition to culturing aquatic species, many of our hatcheries provide outdoor education programs and other opportunities such as recreational fishing, nature trails, bird watching, and camping.

Consistent with the intent of the Initiative, volunteers are critical to the success of the hatchery system. Whether they are giving back to their communities, being good stewards of the land, setting examples for future generations, or sharing their wealth of knowledge, volunteers are critical to the operation of national fish hatcheries across the country. In FY 2013, National Fish Hatchery System facilities recorded 98,265 hours by adult volunteers valued at $2,215,876. The National Fish Hatchery System also recorded 12,618 hours by youth volunteers.

Question. Has Interior considered the overall economic impacts that closing hatcheries would have on the recreational fishing community, small businesses and localities?

Answer. In the fall of 2012, the FWS launched a comprehensive review of the 70 fish and aquatic species propagation hatcheries to ensure the NFHS will be positioned to address high priority aquatic resource needs now and into the future while working within its budget limitations. The *National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report* is the product of that comprehensive review. Although economic impacts were not among the criteria used to evaluate the propagation programs, FWS understands the potential impact of reductions in fish production programs on local communities. The FWS announced in November 2013 that it does not intend to close any hatcheries in the current fiscal year. Operations throughout the Service's National Fish Hatchery System have been greatly impacted by budget reductions including sequestration, as well as increasing operations costs.

The Report is intended to inform the discussion on the future of the NFHS to chart a course for the system that is financially sustainable, addresses today's most pressing conservation challenges, and continues to serve the public interest.

Question. Do you believe Interior is complying with the mitigation hatchery responsibilities established by Congress and will you be requesting the full amount of funding from the water resource agencies for mitigation hatcheries?

Answer. Over the past decade, FWS has been working to intensify efforts to obtain reimbursement for fish mitigation production from responsible parties. Mitigation for Federal water projects is still an important goal of the NFHS and the fish supplied by these hatcheries provide important economic opportunities to the States and the recreational community in general. We support the continuation of mitigation work on a reimbursable basis.

Questions Submitted by Representative Napolitano

Question. Water Challenges (water shortages and water use conflicts) is one of the Department's initiatives. How will the proposed spending for basic data gathering (USGS streamgaging and ground water monitoring specifically) impact DOI ability's to fulfill its statutory mandates, affect decision support, and impact States and other non-Federal partners?

Answer. The FY 2015 budget request reflects a careful prioritization of science investments to support streamgages through the National Streamflow Information Program and enhance groundwater monitoring among other activities under the USGS Water Resources Mission Area. On the heels of the 125th anniversary of the installation of the first streamgage in Embudo, New Mexico, the Department recognizes that streamgages are critical to forecast floods and droughts, manage flood

flows, deliver water supplies, establish water rights, protect threatened aquatic habitats, and for recreation. More than 247 million daily observations from 26,000 streamgages are currently available through the USGS National Water Information System. The USGS operates 4,461 stations with more than 30 years of record, and 8,024 gages comprise the U.S. streamgage network today.

Groundwater monitoring is similarly important. Groundwater is a critical component of our Nation's drinking water, agriculture, industry, and aquatic ecosystems, yet as a Nation we have a poor handle on the quantity, quality, and location of groundwater. Funding in the FY 2015 budget request supports USGS activities associated with the SECURE Water Act (P.L. 111–11), which will allow USGS to continue the path forward to achieving a national water availability and use assessment and to advancing USGS efforts on groundwater availability, initiating a gradual implementation of the National Groundwater Monitoring Network, and advancing the national assessment of brackish aquifers. The budget also proposes $2.0 million for a State water-use grant program. The grant program would provide the necessary framework, resources and incentives for States to provide water supply and use information in a consistent manner, which is essential for eventually providing a uniform, trustworthy national assessment of water availability and use.

Question. Part of Reclamation's core mission is to provide for sustainability and recycling. WaterSMART and Title XVI funding continues to fall short to be ahead of the backlog of authorized projects.

a. Can you describe the constraints and reasoning why the $21.5 million budget does not meet the $350 million need when these projects have been successful? And produced thousands of AF of water.

Answer. The Department recognizes that water reuse is an essential tool in stretching the limited water supplies in the West. The Department's FY 2015 budget request for this program reflects the need to prioritize limited budget resources while enabling the significant non-Federal cost share that continues to make the Title XVI program successful. Water reuse projects continue to be a valuable tool to address current and future water resource challenges posed by drought and the competing demand for scarce water resources.

Question. What is being done to address the costs of not having any water vs. water delivery with quagga mussels? How are you managing the research funding on invasive species? Who is leading the R/D?

Answer. We recognize the threat posed by invasive mussels in the West, with impacts at Reclamation dams, powerplants, and facilities of other water providers, as well as at recreational sites. Operations and maintenance costs at facilities have reflected these impacts, but to date mussels have not prevented the delivery of Reclamation water or power. The FY 2015 budget request, under the Bureau of Reclamation's Science and Technology program, prioritizes research and development aimed at mitigating the impacts of invasive zebra and quagga mussels on water and hydropower facilities. The S&T Program will continue to help develop and test technologies to manage zebra and quagga mussels with testing of pulse-pressure technologies, UV lamps and high-capacity filters, and coatings materials that will resist mussel colonization.

Reclamation's collaboration with industry recently led to the commercialization of a natural molluscicide that can eradicate mussel colonies within piped systems in dams and powerplants. The S&T Program will continue developing and testing new technologies in collaboration with other agencies, and partner with U.S. industry representatives by utilizing technology transfer authorities. Field tests of multiple promising technologies are underway.

Question. The White House Council on Native American Affairs is advancing five priorities including "economic development, justice systems, education, natural resources and healthcare including health disparity." Substance abuse is included but mental health is not defined in "social services." There is a lack of services for adequate mental health care and suicide prevention. How is this being accounted for through the Council and the Department? Specifically, how are you addressing the serious mental health issues? Can you speak to the specifics of the program?

Answer. At the Department, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' programs assist tribal communities in developing their natural and socio-economic infrastructures. The FY 2015 Budget Request proposes the Tiwahe Initiative, which will expand BIA's capacity in current programs that address Indian children and family issues and job training needs. It will provide culturally-appropriate services with a goal toward empowering individuals and families through health promotion, family stability, and strengthening tribal communities.

American Indian and Alaska Native youth suicide is a serious problem in Indian Country, and child abuse and neglect, persistent problems among Indian populations in the United States, has had devastating impacts. Children living in poverty are more likely to be exposed to violence and psychological trauma, and Indian communities are plagued by high rates of poverty, substance abuse, suicide, and violent crime.

The Bureau of Indian Education provides the Department's most direct action on youth suicide by providing technical assistance and monitoring though BIE regional School Safety Specialists to ensure schools are compliant with intervention strategies and reporting protocols to further ensure student safety. BIE also partners with other Federal agencies, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, enabling it to address the unique needs of its students in the areas of behavioral health and suicide prevention.

The BIE has in place a Suicide Prevention, Early Intervention, and Postvention Services Policy that promotes suicide prevention and early intervention in BIE schools. The policy applies to all BIE-operated elementary and secondary schools and residential facilities, and it mandates specific actions in all schools, dormitories and the two post-secondary institutions; and encourages tribally operated schools to develop similar policies. These actions create a safety net for students who are at risk of suicide, and promote proactive involvement of school personnel and communities in intervention, prevention and postvention activities. In addition, the Office of Justice Services (OJS) in BIA has partnered with a number of health and social service programs to assist in educating and presenting at schools, seminars, workshops, and community events on suicide prevention.

Question. Reclamation's budget for authorized Native American water settlements in 2015 is $112 million, an increase of $12.3 million over 2014 enacted. What is the status and number of current pending water settlements? And how is the President's Opportunity and Security Initiative investing in finding solutions to climate challenges through technology development and R/D?

Answer. As the Department has indicated, negotiating settlements of Indian water rights claims has been and remains a high priority for this administration. Such settlements help ensure that Indian people have safe, reliable water supplies and are also in keeping with the United States' trust responsibility to tribes. The Department currently has 38 Federal Teams in the field working on Indian water settlements in 11 western States with 21 teams involved in implementation of enacted settlements and the remainder involved in negotiations or assessments of possible settlements. Of these, three settlements have Federal legislation pending at various stages in the legislative process, with several more expected in the next few years.

The President's Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative supports investing in research and unlocking data and information to better understand the projected impacts of climate change and how to better prepare our communities and infrastructure; helping communities plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change and encouraging local measures to reduce future risk; and funding breakthrough technologies that will make us more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Question. In 2009, not one commercial solar energy project was in development on Federal land. In the past 5 years, the Department has authorized 50 renewable energy projects in solar, wind and geothermal. Fully developed, these projects will provide nearly 14,000 megawatts of power—enough to power over 4.8 million homes and support over 20,000 construction and operations jobs. Can you discuss the development goals for 2015 on Federal land and Native American land?

Answer. The BLM in 2015 will be well on its way toward achieving the President's goal of authorizing 20 gigawatts (20,000 megawatts) of renewable energy from public lands by 2020.

Question. On Employment and Training—Would like to thank the Secretary for supporting public-private partnerships with $1 million toward a goal of $20 million for education and employment for youth and veterans. It is a start but not enough and I would stress how important it is to continue to educate our youth including our university students in water technology, Ag. Can you discuss some of the training for employment?

Answer. Engaging the American public, particularly young people, is a key priority. In 2009, the Department established a comprehensive youth program with strong performance goals to engage, educate and employ youth. Since then it has become one of the largest national youth programs in the country, providing employ-

ment opportunities for over 93,000 young people and veterans through direct hires and partnerships on public lands. Secretary Jewell challenged the Department to expand these efforts in new ways including new applications and other technological tools, an emphasis on urban centers, and incorporating youth activities into the core operations of the Department's bureaus. By September 30, 2015, the Department will provide 40,000 work and training opportunities over fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to young people (ages 15–25) to support the Department's mission.

The Department has also been active in establishing long-term relationships with Federal agencies, schools, veteran's organizations and military organizations that allow us to attract and retain our Nation's veterans. The Department was the first Federal agency to sign an agreement with the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, that focused on connecting reserve service members to employment opportunities; connecting military youth and families to America's great outdoors, history and culture; and expanding recreational opportunities for community-based wounded warrior programs.

Question. Energy projects could be impacted by the permitting processes. As the debate on energy development and climate change continues, how would you weigh greater industrial safety, permitting, and proper oversight of environmental risks and potential irreversible long-term effects to our ecosystems?

Answer. Facilitating efficient, responsible development of energy resources while reducing carbon pollution are integral parts of the administration's broad energy strategy.

Renewable energy development is an important component of that strategy. The President's Climate Action Plan set an ambitious target of doubling renewable electricity generation by 2020. In support of that goal, since 2009, the BLM has approved 52 renewable energy projects on public lands including 29 utility-scale solar facilities, 11 wind farms, and 12 geothermal plants. If built as approved, these projects could provide more than 14,000 megawatts in energy capacity to power 4.8 million homes.

Development of conventional energy resources from public lands also continues to play a role in meeting our Nation's growing energy needs, and the BLM is working to achieve a responsible balance between energy production and environmental protection. For example, the BLM has begun outreach with tribal and State governments to determine if additional regulations could be developed that would establish standards to further limit the waste of vented and flared gas. The Department also implements the President's Climate Action Plan goals to reduce the Nation's carbon footprint, and is taking actions such as exploring ways to reduce methane emissions from mining operations on public lands. The Department will continue working to ensure efficient and responsible development.

Question. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is leading the Nation with active solar, wind and geothermal energy programs on BLM public lands. What challenges is the Department facing when implementing these programs? How many jobs have been produced in renewables? And how is enforcement of proper assessments and permitting in continuous land operations important to prevent irreversible deterioration?

Answer. As part of its efforts to increase the production of renewable energy on public lands, the administration has been effective in managing development challenges by working closely with project applicants to ensure projects are designed to give proper consideration to resource and environmental concerns. This authorizing process also places a significant emphasis on early coordination among stakeholders. The administration's consideration of each proposed project is informed by public participation and environmental analyses required under the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable Federal and State environmental laws.

This inclusive and efficient authorization process has played an important role in developing renewable energy projects that help support thousands of jobs in local communities across the West. In fiscal year 2012, we estimate that geothermal, wind, and solar energy activities on BLM-managed public lands supported more than 11,000 jobs.

The BLM participates in the interagency Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT), which is led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The RRTT works to improve transmission siting, permitting, and review processes, and is currently developing a pre-application process for high-voltage transmission line applications in order to improve interagency and intergovernmental coordination with a focus on helping project proponents and Federal agencies identify and avoid potential siting challenges and issues. BLM remains focused on approving critical

renewable energy projects, as well as transmission projects, on public lands in an accelerated and environmentally responsible manner.

Questions Submitted by Representative Lowenthal

Question. Last year I asked the Interior Department a question for the record about how the BLM would ensure that FracFocus fixed its data search, sort, and aggregation tools. Interior replied that "FracFocus has evolved into a standardized, easily accessible repository of public information." Nothing could be further from the truth.

Madam Secretary, Executive Order 13642 requires that "the default state of new and modernized Government information resources shall be open and machine readable" and that the Federal Government is "to ensure that data are released to the public in ways that make the data easy to find, accessible, and usable." FracFocus contains error-prone data that can only be downloaded tediously, one well at a time, in PDF format. Not in aggregate or machine-readable format as the Executive Order calls for.

Madam Secretary, do you agree that FracFocus currently does not comply with the Open Data Executive Order?

Answer. The Bureau of Land Management is considering in its revised proposed regulation the use of FracFocus for disclosure of the additives in hydraulic fracturing fluids. The Ground Water Protection Council, which is responsible for the development of FracFocus, has had a successful track record developing a similar risk-based data management system that is relied on by other regulatory agencies, including the Department of Energy, and others. BLM will be maintaining its own well records and will be working to comply with all statutes and executive orders concerning its records.

Notably, the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board Task Force recently issued its Report on FracFocus 2.0, which contains recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the disclosure of chemical additives and improve transparency for regulators, operating companies, and the public. The BLM is continuing its dialog with the GWPC and expects further progress to ensure the site meets key elements addressed by the Task Force report, which will enhance the transparency of chemical disclosure data.

Question. Is the BLM working on an agreement with the Ground Water Protection Council to ensure that future versions of FracFocus are an appropriate regulatory tool for the BLM?

Answer. As noted in response to the previous question, as the BLM moves forward with finalizing its revised proposed hydraulic fracturing rule it is continuing dialog with the GWPC and expects site improvements that will further enhance the transparency and use of hydraulic fracturing chemical disclosure data.

Question. Last year I asked Interior the following question for the record: How will BLM guarantee that all data submitted to FracFocus will exist in perpetuity if it is not a Federal Web site, and is partly funded by the oil and gas industry? Your answer was that in addition to data being housed in the FracFocus database, "BLM would also maintain permanent possession of a set of this data."

Madam Secretary, can you confirm to us that BLM will keep a *separate database* of all the information that is submitted to FracFocus, so that the public will not have to worry about the loss of this information?

Answer. While BLM continues to work out the details of the process, data submitted to FracFocus will be periodically transmitted to the BLM for archival purposes and potential hosting if it became necessary.

Questions Submitted by Representative Daines

Thank you for testifying before the House Natural Resources Committee on April 3, 2014. After sitting in the hearing for a significant period of time, I am disappointed I did not get the opportunity to ask you a question as I was detained voting during consideration of a piece of legislation in the House Homeland Security Committee. I would appreciate a timely response to this issue as it is a very important issue to Montana.

As you are aware, three school districts in Montana (Gardiner and West Yellowstone) near Yellowstone National Park were recently notified by the Department of the Interior that they are required to repay millions of dollars in Federal payments due to an oversight by current and past administrations. Now that this error has been discovered, the Department is attempting to have these three school districts repay all of the funds received since 1977, amounting to an estimated $8–10 million.

This hardly seems fair given that it took the Department 37 years to determine that these overpayments had occurred.

Now, it goes without saying that accountability and oversight are lacking in the Federal Government—especially when it comes to managing our Nation's budget. But what's equally disconcerting, and more outrageous to the people of Montana, is that you have asked small rural school districts to pay for the Federal Government's mistakes. Asking them to come up with millions of dollars that the Department of Interior has failed to account for is not only unfair, it demonstrates once again that the Federal Government is unwilling to take accountability for its mistakes.

Question. Can you shed some light on the current state of play between the Department and the school districts?

Answer. While the payments were made in error, Federal debt collection law requires the Federal Government to seek recovery of the overpayments from the school districts. As the Department has indicated to the delegation, we are committed to working with the school districts to bring about a reasonable resolution to this issue. Currently, the Department is reviewing its options for potential resolution of the matter, and the NPS is in the process of validating the repayment figure to ensure the accuracy of the final dollar amount, which is estimated at approximately $9 million.

Question. It is my understanding that this debt could be waived. Additionally, there may be a legislative solution. If so, why is the Department of the Interior pursuing the debt repayment in the first place instead of working to find a solution?

Answer. As noted in response to the previous question, Federal law requires that the Government seek recovery of these overpayments from the school districts. However, the Department is currently reviewing options which might be pursued to resolve this issue. The Department is committed to bringing about a resolution of this issue.

Question. Do you have a precise number for the overpayment amount? Our school districts need some certainty. Can you provide those details to my office within the next 7 days?

Answer. Because the Department is currently validating the repayment figure, there is not yet a final repayment amount. We expect to have more information available in the near future, but as indicated in a previous response the total amount is estimated at $9 million.

Questions Submitted by Representative Mullin

Question. As you know last Thursday your Fish and Wildlife Service decided to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken as a threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act.

This decision was roundly met with enormous disappointment among the five State wildlife directors and the great number of entities in the private sector that joined together to create an unprecedented Range Wide Plan to conserve the Lesser Prairie Chicken and avoid such a listing.

Indeed, the Range Wide Plan—when added to the several other Federal, State and private conservation programs—would have protected around 13 million acres of Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat throughout the five States, and amassed over $21 million in funding from the private sector to pay for conservation activities for the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

But instead of embracing the Range Wide Plan as the new and effective way to administer the Endangered Species Act in this era where the Service lacks the financial resources and the personnel to conduct any conservation for these species, the Fish and Wildlife Service effectively booted away that opportunity to do something bold and creative, and instead sent the signal to all who might listen that the Service will not recognize and reward such new thinking.

I cannot imagine that anyone will invest the time and effort to craft a multi-State Range Wide conservation program now that they clearly see that FWS does not properly credit them by not listing the species while the conservation program is given a fair opportunity to demonstrate the positive conservation it can achieve.

Secretary Jewell, do you have money in your current Fish and Wildlife Service budget to dedicate *to* conservation activities for the Lesser Prairie Chicken?

a. Do you have Service personnel available to do the massive on the ground conservation activities that the State wildlife agencies and their private sector partners are prepared to dedicate themselves to in conserving this species?

Answer. While State conservation agencies have taken a primary role in implementing conservation actions for the lesser prairie-chicken, as discussed below several private conservation organizations and Federal agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, have played important roles in this effort. FWS has provided both technical and financial assistance through its programs and activities, such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and through Habitat Conservation Planning and Candidate Conservation Agreements. FWS also works very closely with its partners and, in recognition of the significant and ongoing efforts of States and landowners to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken, the use of a special 4(d) rule will allow the five range States to continue to manage conservation efforts for the species and avoid further regulation of activities such as oil and gas development and utility line maintenance that are covered under the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (WAFWA) range-wide conservation plan.

The FWS decision to list the lesser prairie-chicken as a threatened species was accompanied by a creative and unprecedented use of the authority conferred by Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act to ensure that the States would be able to continue to implement their range-wide plan even after a Federal listing. As a result, more land has been enrolled in the range-wide plan in the short period since the Federal listing than had been enrolled prior to the Federal listing. Earlier this summer the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies indicated that its focus is now to continue implementing the plan, recover the species, and facilitate the bird's removal from the list of threatened species; FWS has that same focus and will continue to work with the States toward that objective.

b. Since you have little to offer beyond what the States and others have already contributed, why didn't you decide not to list this species while those unprecedented efforts of others had the chance to work?

Answer. Threats to the lesser-prairie chicken, including drought and habitat fragmentation, continue to impact the species and are expected to continue into the future. Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, after reviewing the best available science and the on-the-ground conservation efforts, the Service determined that the lesser prairie-chicken is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future and should therefore be listed as a threatened species.

Over the last decade, a number of significant, on-the-ground conservation programs have been implemented across the birds' five-State range (Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado) to conserve and restore its habitat and improve the status of the lesser prairie-chicken. Key programs such as the WAFWA range-wide plan, USDA's NRCS LPCI, USDA's FSA Conservation Reserve Program, the Bureau of Land Management's New Mexico Candidate Conservation Agreement, the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances in Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, are engaging State and Federal agencies, landowners and industry in efforts to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken and restore its habitat. Collectively, these various efforts are quite similar to a recovery plan, something that the Service normally prepares years after a species' listing. This early identification of a strategy to recover the lesser prairie-chicken is likely to speed its eventual delisting. This special rule encourages managers and operators to implement protective practices on their land and recognizes landowners' work to protect the species.

Question. Secretary, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) provides that once a State develops procedures that are as effective as the Feds, the Interior Department may grant "primacy" to that State. This includes my State of Oklahoma. Once a State achieves primacy, it has exclusive jurisdiction to regulate coal mining.

In 2010, the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) unilaterally countermanded Secretarial policy and regulation with a bureau-level policy, providing no analysis, rationale or basis for the change whatsoever.

The new policy directs enforcement against a mine operator whenever OSM disagrees with a permitting decision made by a State, essentially rendering a State issued permit meaningless.

Can you provide any rationale for OSM to issue a violation against an operator simply because it believes the State violated the law? Can you provide any legal or equitable basis for such a policy?

Answer. SMCRA's Federal regulations on inspection and monitoring and enforcement apply to all types of SMCRA violations, including violations of performance standards or permit conditions and violations of permitting requirements.

SMCRA authorizes OSMRE to cite violations in a primacy State whenever the bureau finds a condition that presents an imminent danger to the health and safety

of the public or to the environment. SMCRA also authorizes OSMRE to cite non-imminent harm conditions if, after being notified of the existence of a violation, a State regulatory authority fails to take appropriate action to cause the violation to be abated and fails to give good cause for taking no abatement action.

OSMRE does not take enforcement action against an operator unless the operator has violated a performance standard, permit condition, or permitting requirement under SMCRA.

Question. To compound the problems, OSM is now applying this new policy retroactively. In my State of Oklahoma, there have been three separate violations recently issued on three permits, with a promise of more to come.

These permits were issued years ago. They have been mined and reclaimed according to the approved plans in the permits. OSM now believes that the reclamation does not confirm to OSM's "emerging" views of what constitutes land reclamation to approximate original contours, and is asking the operator to spend tens of millions of dollars to completely redo the reclamation. Madame Secretary as a former business owner, I'm sure you understand the critical importance of any business being able to rely on the terms and conditions of a permit once issued.

How can you explain why this action is being applied retroactively to permits in Oklahoma that are already substantially reclaimed?

Answer. Both SMCRA and its equivalent in Oklahoma law require that all land affected by surface coal mining operations be returned to its Approximate Original Contour (AOC) as it existed prior to mining. OSMRE cited an operator for 3 consecutive years, beginning in 2011, for violating Oklahoma's performance standards under SMCRA pertaining to backfilling and grading. OSMRE cited this same mining operator for similar violations in 1994, which was upheld on appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. OSMRE's position on AOC has not changed since the initial 1994 violations.

Questions Submitted by Representative Grijalva

Wild Horse/Burro

Question. Secretary Jewell, in your statement you mentioned that BLM is expected to receive more fees and revenues from oil and gas extraction as well as grazing permits. This means not just more expansion, but also exploitation on public lands. What role have you taken in balancing the impact those activities may have on public lands, particularly on endangered species and wild horses?

Answer. Balancing multiple uses, including statutory obligations to protect specific resources, is at the core of the land use planning process, and ensuring balance was a central premise of the leasing reforms the Department implemented in 2010 to establish orderly, open, and consistent environmental processes for oil and gas resource development on public lands. The oil and gas leasing reforms ensure needed balance with up-front natural resource analysis added to the development process. Potential lease sales are fully coordinated both internally and externally via public participation, and analyzed by incorporating an interdisciplinary review of available information and onsite visits as appropriate to supplement or validate existing data.

Question. Secretary Jewell, thank you very much for your leadership and your support for enhancing our country's sustainable great outdoor activities by finding a balance between greater public access to our parks and recreations, while also ensuring that those parks are not overused and managed in a sustainable way. Can you perhaps touch upon the idea of how the Department could foster eco-tourism while at the same time manages the impact on endangered species and wild horse herds?

Answer. In 2012, President Obama signed Executive Order 13597 and announced a number of initiatives to significantly increase travel and tourism in the United States. This Executive Order charged the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior with co-leading an interagency task force to develop recommendations for a National Travel and Tourism Strategy to promote domestic and international travel opportunities throughout the United States. The strategy, finalized later that year, focuses on promoting regional tourism collaborations in "key strategic destination markets," especially those with a combination of natural and cultural attractions, The Department recently joined with other Federal agencies and States to sign a Memorandum of Understanding intended to formalize an agreement through which the Western States Tourism Policy Council, a consortium of 13 western State tourism offices, and 6 Federal agencies will continue to work together to advance tourism on our public lands.

A departmental interagency tourism team, working in concert with local community tourism partners and the National Geographic Society, is facilitating Geotourism projects which present authentic natural and cultural experiences to a growing ecotourism audience. Among other things, marketing communications for these projects often feature stories that capture travel travelers' interest in protected species.

Additionally, the National Park Service's policies on tourism aim to support and promote appropriate visitor use through cooperation and coordination with the tourism industry. As part of this effort, the NPS collaborates with industry professionals to promote sustainable and informed tourism that incorporates socioeconomic and ecological concerns and supports long-term preservation of park resources and quality visitor experiences, and uses this collaboration as an opportunity to encourage and showcase environmental leadership by the NPS and by the tourism industry, including park concessioners.

Wilderness/50th Anniversary

Question. Secretary Jewel, while you are preparing for the centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, September 3, 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, a historic environmental law that protects some of the wildest places in our country, including significant portions of national parks like Yosemite, Grand Teton and Olympic. What is the Department doing in the 50th anniversary year to reaffirm its commitment to steward our wilderness areas for current and future generations?

Answer. The 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act provides an important opportunity to celebrate the importance of its continued preservation of wilderness areas for future generations. Surveys indicate that 12 million Americans take between 16 and 35 million trips to wilderness each year, either on their own or with a guide. Parks, monuments, and wilderness areas are the infrastructure for the outdoor industry, which generates $646 billion annually to the economy, supports 6.1 million jobs and generates nearly $80 billion in Federal, State and local taxes.

Regarding the anniversary, the three Interior agencies that manage wilderness, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NPS, are participating in Wilderness50, a diverse and growing national coalition of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions that have come together to plan and conduct 50th Anniversary celebration events and activities. A wide variety of commemoration events are being planned throughout the country to raise public awareness of this historic year and the benefits of wilderness. One of our key goals is to engage youth and underserved communities; and foster wilderness stewardship by better connecting the broad wilderness network.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Question. Secretary Jewell, I am concerned that the Land and Water Conservation Fund authorizing legislation is expiring in September of 2015. So many important conservation projects in my State/district have been funded through LWCF over the years, and I know it has been an essential tool for your agency to purchase inholdings and conserve exceptional places not fit for development. From your perspective, what do we need to do to ensure that sufficient LWCF funding continues to be available?

Answer. The President's budget continues to support full, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The 2015 Budget proposes $900 million in combined discretionary ($350m) and mandatory ($550m) funds for 2015—the 50th anniversary of the LWCF Act—and to permanently authorize $900 million in annual mandatory funding for DOI and USDA programs. We look forward to working with the committee and Congress in this effort.

Oil and Gas

Question. Secretary Jewell, you are probably aware of the recently reported oil spill on the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument that lay undiscovered for years, can you comment on the need for the proposed increase in the BLM's oil and gas inspection program?

Answer. The Bureau of Land Management Oil and Gas program has no greater priority than ensuring that development is done safely and responsibly. Since 2000, the BLM has permitted nearly 47,000 new wells to be drilled on public and tribal lands. Today, the BLM oversees approximately 100,000 wells across the country—the most ever—and we must meet inspection and enforcement responsibilities on each one. Keeping up with this rising demand is an ongoing challenge.

The current funding system limits the BLM's ability to effectively meet this responsibility and ensure protection of both environmental and economic resources.

Unlike with offshore oil and gas development, the BLM does not have the authority to charge industry fees to support its inspection and enforcement program. The 2015 request for BLM's Oil and Gas Management program would expand onshore oil and gas inspection activities and offset the cost of oil and gas inspection and enforcement activity with fees from industry, similar to what the offshore industry pays. The proposed inspection fees will generate an estimated $48 million, providing a $10 million increase in program capacity while reducing the need for direct appropriations by $38 million. Enacting these fees will help the Bureau respond more quickly to increases in inspection workloads and reduce the cost to taxpayers of operating the program.

The Department and the BLM are taking the spill on the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument very seriously. After an initial on-the-ground inspection the BLM suspects that the vast majority of the spill may be as much as three decades old. A small nearby pipeline appears to have leaked from time to time with perhaps as much as 10 barrels of oil having leaked fairly recently. The pipeline has been repaired and the leak has stopped. The BLM is currently reviewing best options for ensuring safe rehabilitation and restoration of both the recent small leak as well as the older spill. The BLM in Utah, including experts brought in from several of its field offices in the area, is conducting a complete inspection of the entire oil field. The company that operates the Upper Valley oil field has been very cooperative and immediately shut down the well down and is working with the BLM to determine best next steps.

Question. Secretary Jewell, in your statement you mentioned that the budget increase in the Department's oil and gas programs is driven from the expansion of onshore oil and gas activities, I would like to know what steps have you taken as Secretary to assure that oil and gas development on Federal lands is balanced with your obligations as Secretary to assure that our public lands are managed in a manner to protect their natural values for future generations of Americans?

Answer. Balancing multiple uses is at the core of the land use planning process, and ensuring balance was a central premise of the leasing reforms the Department implemented in 2010 to establish orderly, open, and consistent environmental processes for oil and gas resource development on public lands. The oil and gas leasing reforms ensure needed balance with up-front natural resource analysis added to the development process. Potential lease sales are fully coordinated both internally and externally via public participation, and analyzed by incorporating an interdisciplinary review of available information and onsite visits as appropriate to supplement or validate existing data.

Renewable Energy

Question. Secretary Jewell, the expansion of renewable energy in the West will be dependent on transmission and modernization of the grid. This is in line with your Agency and President's goal to approve 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public lands by 2020. I want to know what role is the Department taking to advance infrastructure needed for renewable energy and ensure transmission corridors are properly sighted and what kind of funds are needed in order to make certain we are avoiding areas of high conflict?

Answer. Upgrading the country's electric grid is critical to our efforts to make electricity more reliable, less expensive, and to promote clean energy sources. As renewable energy development grows, the Department is mindful of the need for transmission infrastructure to get the electricity from the places where the sun and wind can best be harnessed to the businesses and homes where the power is needed. The Department is a Participating Agency in the Interagency Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT), which aims to improve the overall quality and timeliness of electric transmission infrastructure permitting, review, and consultation by the Federal Government on both Federal and non-Federal lands. As part of the President's 2015 budget, the BLM is requesting $5 million to support the review of energy corridors established under section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This review is critical to ensuring that these corridors are properly sited and fully coordinated with States, tribes, and other stakeholders.

Climate Change

Question. Thank you, Secretary Jewell, for your Department's attention to the climate crisis. As you know, our public lands are already feeling the impacts of climate change, from wildfires, to droughts, to pine beetle infestations and extreme weather events. The President has proposed a $1 billion Climate Change Resiliency Fund to prepare for the impacts and consequences of climate change. What do you foresee

the Department doing with the funds in order to prepare our lands for climate change and mitigate the after effects of climate change?

Answer. The President's proposed Climate Resilience Fund is a governmentwide investment in developing more resilient communities and finding solutions to climate challenges through technology development and applied research. For the Department, this could include developing landscape level information, geographic information system data, models, and other tools to support resilient and adaptive land management. The Department is also positioned to help communities plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change through assistance to tribes and local governments for planning, protecting wetlands, and improving coastal resiliency during a time of severe weather conditions. The Fund would enable the Department to focus resources on technologies and infrastructure to reduce risks to public lands from drought, fire, and flooding, as well as more resilient approaches to managing water resources infrastructure.

Question. Secretary Jewell, you may be well aware that the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is currently publishing its fifth assessment of climate change science, particularly focusing on the impacts of climate change—ranging from the effects on endangered species to changes in agriculture. I want to know what the Department is planning to do or has been doing in addressing the impact of climate change, especially in terms of climate adaption and disaster prevention?

Answer. The Department is taking action to prepare for anticipated climate change impacts and build the resilience of the resources it manages. The Department's Climate Change Adaptation Policy was issued in December 2012 in response to the need to prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Policy articulates and formalizes the Departmental approach to climate change adaptation and provides guidance to bureaus and offices for addressing climate change impacts upon the Department's mission, programs, operations, and personnel. The Department is currently finalizing its 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which will describe the Department's overall strategy for addressing climate change adaptation including specific bureau strategies for identifying climate change related vulnerabilities and addressing those vulnerabilities.

The Department is conducting a new Climate Change Adaptation Priority Performance Goal for FY 2014 and FY 2015, to measure bureau performance and achievements toward implementing five priority climate change adaptation strategies, which were established in the 2013 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan. The Priority Goal will be used to target, track, and report progress on a quarterly basis over the next 2 years and will be instrumental in ensuring that the Department meets the requirements of Executive Order 13653.

The Department's approach to climate change is iterative and will be adjusted in the future as our understanding of impacts and vulnerabilities becomes clearer.

Budget

Question. Secretary Jewell, in your budget proposal, the National Park Service operations account would provide parks with additional seasonal staff to enhance visitor experiences during peak visitation. While this benefits the visitors in the short-term, the deteriorating park resources will not benefit substantially. For example, a low percentage of invasive plants and animals are currently being controlled in this year's budget and in the proposed budget. Therefore, what is the Department's long-term plan for dealing with the park operations shortfall to ensure the park resources continue to be enjoyed by park visitors and don't continue to deteriorate? And how can Congress work with you to address these continuing operational needs?

Answer. The NPS anticipates increased attention and visitation leading up to and during the Centennial in 2016, and the FY 2015 request includes an operations increase of $40 million to prepare for this opportunity. This funding would support an expected influx of visitors during the 2016 Centennial celebrations and provide a stronger foundation for visitor services and infrastructure investments in its second century of preserving the parks for on-going usage and the future enjoyment of visitors. The request also includes $15.7 million to fully fund fixed costs in the operations account, without requiring an offsetting reduction to park base operations. Full funding of fixed costs is critical to ensuring the stability of park operations on an annual basis, and in particular as parks prepare to welcome increased attention and visitation around the Centennial. Additionally, the request includes $10 million for Centennial Challenge projects and partnerships, a matching program that would leverage Federal funds with partner donations for signature projects and programs at national parks, which will provide benefits into the future.

Question. Secretary Jewel, I'm encouraged the proposed investments in operations will provide more opportunities for our youth, employ veterans, and provide for better park maintenance. However, I understand that parks have been losing rangers and other staff over the last decade. With the small scope of proposed operational budget increase, will park base budgets actually get an increase over pre-sequester levels and will it improve non-seasonal park staff levels?

Answer. The proposed FY 2015 budget request for NPS operations includes funding for fixed costs and support for new responsibilities, youth employment opportunities, volunteer capacity, deferred maintenance projects, and seasonal staff to enhance the visitor experience in preparation for the 2016 Centennial. All told, the increases requested in the budget would fund operations at $47 million above the enacted FY 2014 level.

The budget restores some of the seasonal employees who provide visitor services during peak periods of visitation that have been lost over recent years due to budget reductions and fixed costs absorptions.

Question. Secretary Jewell, the proposed multi-year investment in the deferred maintenance backlog is reassuring to see given the unsustainable scope of the backlog. How can Congress ensure that the backlog is realistically dealt with over the long-term?

Answer. Reducing the NPS deferred maintenance backlog is primarily dependent on funding levels. As of the end of FY 2013, NPS deferred maintenance needs stood at approximately $11.3 billion; $683 million annually is needed to keep this at a steady state, In FY 2014, the NPS will devote approximately $382 million to deferred maintenance from a variety of fund sources, including repair and rehabilitation, line-item construction, recreation fee revenue, and funding available through the Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration. Nearly half of the deferred maintenance backlog is in roads, bridges, and tunnels.

The NPS will continue to prioritize available funding to target the highest priority assets. This strategy will maintain a large number of important assets; however, deterioration of some assets that support park missions is expected.

Question. Secretary Jewell, given that 90 percent of the FS's Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I) budget would go toward fixed cost such as staff salaries and maintenance, "why did the FS cut its LE&I in FY15 ($126 million) which is below FY14, 13, and 12 ($140 million)? And how would this reduction impact the FS's law enforcement operation?

Answer. This question appears to refer to the U.S. Forest Service's Law Enforcement and Investigations budget and we defer to the USFS for a response to this question.

Question Submitted by Representative Fleming

Question. During your answers to questions, you said, "I believe hydraulic fracturing can be done safely and responsibly. I can't say that I've seen any studies that suggest a direct link between hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination. But there have been links with groundwater contamination on injected fluids, and I think it depends on assuring you've got a good well bore integrity and good practices, and those are the kinds of things we're looking at in our fracking regulations. . . There has been groundwater contamination from injected fluids, whether it's injected wastewater fluids, or other means, so we want to make sure that in our fracking regulations that we have the kind of well bore integrity so the water is going to its intended location and the frack fluid and that's exactly what our regulations are intended to do."

a. Please provide documentation of the aforementioned specific examples of groundwater contamination, including date, operator, how it was reported, and if there was an independent audit.

Answer. As indicated at the hearing, the Department is not aware of any studies that have suggested a direct link between hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination, but there have been links with groundwater contamination from injected fluids and documented cases of fluid spills on the surface contaminating groundwater. These types of incidents are generally reported to States or the Environmental Protection Agency, and news of them are often reported in the press. With regard to hydraulic fracturing, however, of paramount importance to the process is the integrity of the well bore, the well bore casing, and the concrete seal, which play key roles in ensuring groundwater is protected and fluids going into the well do not escape. Additionally, it is important that companies have a water management plan in place for fluids that flow back to the surface.

Question Submitted by Representative Flores

Question. As part of the revision for the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Oklahoma and Texas, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is evaluating opening up public lands along a 116-mile stretch of the Red River to actively manage for recreational purposes that could require significant new budgetary resources. The amount of Federal funds needed may depend on how large of an area the BLM believes is federally owned. As you know, the border between Oklahoma and Texas that would delineate where the BLM lands are located has been disputed for a number of years. On October 10, 2000, H.R. Res. 72 was signed into law that ratifies the Red River Boundary Compact agreed to by Texas and Oklahoma that sets the boundary at the Southern vegetative line.

Does the Department of the Interior have a legal analysis of where it believes the boundary should be located, and what impact does the agency believe the Red River Boundary Compact has on this boundary and the location of federally owned lands? Additionally, is the BLM looking to open up the entire area along the 116-mile stretch or just isolated areas?

Answer. The Bureau of Land Management is not expanding Federal holdings along the Red River. The BLM currently is in the initial stages of developing options for management of public lands and resources in the States of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, an area that includes the Red River. As part of its planning process, BLM is seeking public input as to the best uses of the public lands in question. The Bureau's goal and commitment is to work closely with local and State government officials, congressional delegation members, and the public to determine the best management options for the public lands in these three States for the next many years.

The Department's understanding is that the Red River Boundary Compact did not alter the location of federally managed lands in the Red River area.

Questions Submitted by Representative McClintock

Frogs and Toad

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's draft economic analysis of its proposal to designate 1,831,820 acres of critical habitat in California for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, the northern distinct population segment of the mountain yellow-legged frog, and the Yosemite toad.

The economic impact analysis employed an "incremental" approach that limits the analysis primarily to the costs incurred to the Federal Government as a result of section 7 consultations. This methodology severely deemphasizes *the* most significant costs that accompany critical habitat designations—costs to the public as a result of lost mineral and timber production, tourism, and recreational opportunities.

This "incremental" approach, rather than a thorough study of the cumulative economic impacts, was used because of revisions to 50 CFR Part 424 that became effective on October 30, 2013. However, the draft economic analysis produced for FWS by consultant Industrial Economics, Inc. was dated August 27, 2013.

It appears that the draft economic analysis was complete and made available to the Service prior to the promulgation of the new rule adopting the "incremental" methodology. It also appears that the Service withheld the publication of the draft economic analysis until after the final rule took effect on October 30.

Question. Please explain to the committee as to why the Service solicited an economic analysis from Industrial Economics that employed a narrow methodology that was not yet finalized and why it delayed the release of this analysis for over 2 months.

Question. I would also like to know if the Service plans to employ a broader methodology including baseline impacts and effects on local economies.

Answer. The FWS is required, under section 4(b)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, to evaluate and consider the probable economic and other relevant impacts resulting from a designation of critical habitat. The prevailing methodology used to conduct economic analyses assesses the impacts that are likely to result solely from the designation itself, *i.e.*, the incremental impacts. The FWS has consistently used this approach for economic analyses of critical habitat designations that occur on lands outside of the jurisdiction of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals since 2007. This approach is supported by Executive Order 12866, Office of Management and Budget Circular A–-4 (issued in 2003) and a 2008 Memorandum Opinion from the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior. In October 2013, this approach was codified in the revisions to the ESA implementing regulations and is now applicable nationwide.

The initial draft of the economic analysis was submitted to the FWS by contractors on August 27, 2013. As a result of the internal review and approval process, and coordination with other Federal agencies, it took several months before the draft was released to the public for review and comment. These steps are part of the standard quality control process and are independent of the revision to the ESA implementing regulations for impact analyses.

Yosemite

Question. The implementation of the MRP is estimated to cost $210 million, the draft Tuolumne River Plan (TRP) is estimated to cost $64.5 million, and the Mariposa Grove Plan is estimated to cost $36 million. Additionally, the Park has an estimated $500 million in deferred maintenance obligations. We would like to understand how the National Park Service (NPS) intends to prioritize and implement the elements of these plans and address Yosemite deferred maintenance needs in the event that additional congressional appropriations are not provided. Can you explain the National Park Service's funding expectations and schedule to implement the changes proposals?

Answer. Potential funding to implement the plan will be derived from three primary sources, the recreation fee program, including entrance and camping fees; concessions franchise fees; and other Federal sources such as the Federal lands highway program funds.

Both recreation fee revenue and concession franchise fees are annual revenue sources collected by the park. Over the course of the next 20 years, assuming reauthorization of the recreation fee authority, the park anticipates that both of these fund sources (currently the park collects approximately $18 M in fees annually) will be available to implement the changes proposed. Based on projected revenues, the park is confident there will be financial resources to implement a number of projects within the next 15–20 years for all three plans mentioned.

As for priorities, during the first 5–10 years of implementation the focus will be to improve the transportation system to alleviate traffic congestion and to conduct ecological restoration of high-use areas to better accommodate visitor use. Projects include adding and modifying parking, realigning failing intersections and restoring eroded riverbanks. Prerequisites for the most critical changes to the transportation system will require additional funding during the same time period to relocate facilities and increase the supply of parking. Concurrent to the improvements to transportation/parking, the park will direct financial resources toward creating additional camping opportunities and replacing tent cabins with hard-sided lodging.

Question. The new location of some facilities was not identified in some of the Park's proposals, such as the new bike racks, river rafting facilities and maintenance buildings. When and how will the location of the facilities be chosen and how will the public have an opportunity to engage in that process?

Answer. The locations of minor facilities, such as bicycle rental stands and raft rental operations, will be located outside of the quarter-mile river corridor boundary, yet remain within the primary visitor services nodes. The park does not anticipate further environmental review and public involvement for these actions. The minor shift of the location of these facilities outside the corridor is an operational decision that will be determined after the 2016 concessions contract is awarded. The cost is expected to be minimal.

Question. How do you intend to prioritize the needs identified in these plans?

Answer. As noted above, the first priority for plan implementation will be to alleviate traffic congestion and also to restore riverbanks and meadows. Once these steps are accomplished, current levels of visitation can be managed more successfully. Concurrently, other priorities will be implemented to enhance the visitor experience by providing additional campsites and increasing the availability of year-round visitor accommodations.

Priority projects seek to accomplish four major goals:

- Correct identified impacts to river resources to ensure continued protection.
- Alleviate crowding and congestion and provide for easy access to key park facilities and shuttles.
- Enhance camping opportunities and winter lodging.
- Replace temporary non-code compliant employee housing.

Question. Can you explain what the cumulative impact of all these plans is expected to be on the current visitor experience?

Answer. All of the plans address long-standing issues with visitor use and user capacity management in the most heavily visited destinations within the park, most

notably by calling for actions that will improve the efficiency of the transportation system. Key actions such as relocating and retrofitting day-use parking areas, adding campsites, and increasing the amount of year-round lodging in Yosemite Valley, will improve access and the overall quality of the visitor experience. In addition, the wide array of recreational opportunities available throughout the park will be maintained and boating opportunities will be expanded. Once implemented, the plans will provide for a higher-quality visitor experience by improving access to the most popular areas in Yosemite and by providing lasting protection for the natural features within those areas. Overall, the park expects implementation to improve the visitor experience.

Question. The MRP notes that the TOP will reduce the overnight capacity at Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp and eliminate commercial horseback day-rides from the Tuolumne Meadows Stables. Does the NPS anticipate this will produce residual impact on other High Sierra Camps and increase visitation to Yosemite Valley due to the reduction in visitor services in the Tuolumne area?

Answer. The NPS does not anticipate any residual visitation impacts on other High Sierra Camps or Yosemite Valley because of actions proposed in the Tuolumne River Plan; specifically, the elimination of day rides and reduced capacity at Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp. With regard to Glen Aulin, the overnight capacity at Tuolumne is currently 2,892 people at one time. Thus, the 4-bed reduction at Glen Aulin represents only a 0.1 percent of the existing capacity and is an insignificant change,

With regard to day rides at Tuolumne Meadows, current operations serve a maximum of 62 riders per day. At peak periods, Yosemite Valley serves 18,710 people at one time and Tuolumne Meadows serves nearly 5,000. Therefore, an addition or subtraction of 62 people is not a significant change for either area. However, because day rides will continue to be available in Wawona and because other unique attributes of Tuolumne Meadows and Yosemite Valley are the primary attractions to these areas, the NPS does not believe there will be any effect on visitation from the changes made to day-riding opportunities.

California Water

Question. When the Bureau was releasing water from Northern California dams in 2013, did the Agency take in account water reliability, and the fact that those releases would leave our reservoirs empty in 2014?

Answer. Yes, Reclamation accounts for water reliability—along with several other variables—when making releases from reservoirs. Drought—precipitation far below average—is the overwhelming influence on water supplies in California this year. Releases made during 2013 have not left reservoirs empty in 2014; inflows and outflows are managed daily at all Reclamation reservoirs in Northern California, and storage levels, while below average, are adequate for ongoing water deliveries and power generation, albeit at reduced levels.

Question. Many water releases from California reservoirs serve multiple purposes, can you please specify how many acre feet of water releases by the Bureau were solely for environmental purposes in 2013?

Answer. Many of Reclamation's facilities, including the main Central Valley Project reservoirs in California, are specifically authorized for multiple purposes. Water is frequently stored or delivered for dual or simultaneous use for multiple project purposes including, but not limited to, irrigation, municipal, power, recreation, as well as non-ESA fish and wildlife enhancement, so it is very difficult to separate the amount of water that is exclusively dedicated to environmental compliance purposes. It is worth noting, however, that provision of water flow or storage for fish and wildlife purposes can sometimes be re-delivered for additional beneficial uses, and results in greater reliability of the water supply.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. We will start the questioning process. And I am just going to be very brief, but I want to touch on just two issues.

One issue that our committee has been working on, at least from a hearing standpoint, has been the Endangered Species Act. That Act has not been reauthorized since 1989. And, in view of the mega-settlement, I think several questions come up. And I just want to get your thoughts on it.

From the standpoint of data, we have heard in hearings there has been a criticism on lack of data more than probably any—I won't say more than anything else—but that has been a major part of it. And I can speak specifically in my county, Franklin County, regarding the bladderpod. My question to you is just very broad. Do you think that the data in the future, going prospectively in the future on it, whether it is listing or de-listing, should be publicly available before either of those actions, de-listing or listing of a species, just as a concept of a law that is responsive to the people?

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, I know that the ESA requires us to use the best available science. I know that there is data that comes in over time. I believe that when we do issue listing information, we do publish that, and then we ask for public comment before a listing is finalized. And that includes the science that the Fish and Wildlife Service uses to make its determinations.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Well, then let me just speak very briefly on the bladderpod. That simply wasn't the case, at least in Franklin County, with that particular plant. So I will leave it go at that.

The second issue is the Columbia River Treaty. And, as you know, Mr. DeFazio and I have engaged you on the issue of—environmental part of the treaty. The report that was sent to the Department of State now was changed dramatically from the standpoint of environmental emphasis. But after the report was sent, your Department sent a letter that was somewhat contrary to that. And I just want to say that this process is going to go forward, we know that. But I have very, very big concerns about any environmental issues being in the treaty. I think that they should be separate from the treaty, because the treaty was, as a matter of fact, signed prior to any environmental laws like ESA being implemented.

So, if you wouldn't mind, just respond to that observation.

Secretary JEWELL. Well, thanks for the question, and also for our prior conversations on this.

I do know the Department of State is engaged with Canada on re-upping the treaty authorization, and it has many facets. I do believe that over the decade since the treaty has been put in place, we have additional information that helps us understand ecosystems and the impact of our actions on ecosystems. And I think that that is something that whenever we are re-upping or reauthorizing, we should take current information into account.

But the specific details, Mike, do you have more information on that than I do?

We are happy to take that into account, but I do believe we should pay attention to what we have learned over the course of time, and apply those to any reauthorizations.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Connor, if you want to respond?

Mr. CONNOR. A couple of quick additions. We don't know how the State Department is going to proceed now. That is under consideration, obviously, as a result of the dialog from the U.S. entity and the input that has been provided by the Interior Department and others.

I think the structure, though, that was put forth by the U.S. entity focuses on the flood control aspects of it, the power production aspects, and I think, from the Secretary's perspective, we are just

looking to ensure that there are environmental considerations, as we discuss those parameters that have always been part of the treaty. And I think that is the expectation, moving forward.

The CHAIRMAN. I will probably have a follow-up question on that in writing. If you could respond, I would appreciate that.

At this time I would like to recognize Mr. Sablan from the Northern Marianas for 5 minutes.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for holding this hearing. Good morning, Madam Secretary. It is nice to see you again. Thank you very much for your service to our country. And Deputy Secretary, congratulations and thank you. Madam Secretary, thank you very much for signing over the mineral rights to the Northern Marianas government just last month. That was an important step.

And as we proceed, we also would like to—now, the next step for Congress is to include the Northern Marianas and the other U.S. territories in the Outer Continental Shelf Act. Chairman Hastings' bill, H.R. 2231, although we have some issues there, passed and accomplishes that itself.

But the next step would be for the administration to complete the co-management agreement between the commonwealth government and your Fish and Wildlife Services, so that the submerged lands in the island units of the monument can be handed back to the Northern Marianas. I would appreciate that.

I am just going to ask you if you could give me a status report on those negotiations ongoing. I would really like to put a timeframe to it, set a goal. You know, you come from the world of business. Could you, if you can't do it now, get us a status of progress report and a set goal, if I may, please?

Secretary JEWELL. Yes, thank you very much. We have directed the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fishery Service to work together with you. I don't have a specific deadline, but we will ask them about that.

Mr. SABLAN. Next month. They will all jump and get it done.

Secretary JEWELL. I think that is probably unrealistic. But I will say that——

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you.

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. Eileen Sobeck, who was our Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs is now head of the National Marine Fisheries Service. She understands your issues well——

Mr. SABLAN. I understand that. I met her the other day.

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. And will play a critical role in this——

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you. And you know, we could get your assistant secretary on board soon so she would be a stronger advocate for us.

Madam Secretary, on ABC initiatives, you know, this committee—I am also on the Education Committee, and that is why I support your Department's ABC initiative for all the insular areas. The Army Corps of Engineers was tasked with identifying infrastructure needs in older schools in the insular areas. And that was good investment, I think.

But one thing I would like to know a little bit more about is the President's budget recommends moving $1.7 million from compact impact discretionary funds from OIA that OIA gets and putting their money into the ABC initiative. I understand this money would pay for something called embedded maintenance themes, and the themes would help each school system with planning and technical support. But each of the insular areas in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, and U.S. Virgin Islands would be expected to come up with one million for the actual materials for the school improvements. This doesn't sound like a very good tradeoff, as far as I am concerned. We lost $1.7 million of compact impact money that could go directly into education, and instead we get embedded themes.

Could you please have someone either make me understand this or get back to me and make me fully understand this a little bit more? Maybe there is a rationale there that I don't get.

Secretary JEWELL. Well, we are happy to provide a more detailed response. But, overall, we are trying to be more efficient and effective in our response by combining the efforts. The Army Corps is looking at a regional effort.

Mr. SABLAN. I understand that.

Secretary JEWELL. And they believe they can achieve better economies of scale by doing that than doing it piecemeal. So we are happy to get more detailed numbers back to you.

Mr. SABLAN. And I know this is probably unfair to you, but we have until tomorrow, the close of business tomorrow, to get our recommendations to the Appropriations Committee. So I don't know if we can get it this afternoon, but we appreciate that.

Madam Secretary, technical assistance grants are truly important to the insular areas, to the Northern Marianas, in particular. Your office has kept our only hospital open, and please know that we are very grateful for that. Thank you. And the proposed funding for TA money in fiscal year enacted level. I know I may be going back—my staff said I am getting down in the weeds with this, but—oh, shoot, I don't have much time—but 15 years ago your Department invested in financial management softwares for all the insular areas so we could get complete, uniform financial information. That was—don't you think maybe—would you start thinking about maybe doing some upgrades to those softwares? I mean financial information is truly critical to the islands.

And one last thing, Madam Secretary, is the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. I am supporting that, because my grandparents and my parents were interred during the war. And although there were different circumstances, they were not in the Japanese that were interred in the war, I have heard their stories. And we need to keep this in our history so that we don't have to do it any more. I mean it is very important.

And again, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. Recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Gohmert.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Secretary, for being here again.

Under Republican and Democrat administrations, Democrat and Republican majorities, the payment in lieu of taxes has been a struggle. National forests that were originally agreed by local, State, and Federal authorities to produce timber with revenue being shared by the local communities was embraced because the areas knew that that would be OK, the Federal Government would see to the timber being produced. Unlike what many people think, it is a renewable resource when it is used properly.

But now it is such a problem, because timber is not being cut, the areas cannot tax the national parks or national forests, as you know. What work is the Department of the Interior doing to find a long-term solution to this problem? It really penalizes local counties and communities.

Secretary JEWELL. Thanks, Congressman Gohmert. This administration is fully in support of PILT payments and Secure Rural Schools payments. In the President's 2015 budget we do have a 1-year authorization proposed for support of PILT. We would like to work with you on a long-term solution. It is the kind of thing that perhaps we could couple with a long-term solution on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, because they are related, in terms of land. But we agree that a permanent solution is very, very important to those rural counties that depend on that money.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, I hope we can work together to get something done, because there are schools—I know the President talks about schools all the time, but these local schools in areas where there are national forests really get penalized because they are in areas where there are national forests.

But in my district, out of 36 districts in Texas, more natural gas gets produced. In the southern part of my district we have a couple national forests. There is a lot of drilling going on in my district, especially with the new technology. Fracking is producing so much in the way of jobs and better economy in East Texas, and yet the last numbers I had seen, leases on Federal lands were down about 40 percent from where they were under the Bush administration. And the last rig I was on out in my district, they said there were about 65 people that worked on that particular rig. I asked what was the least anybody was making. They said, "Oh, we think one of our guys is only making $80,000–$85,000 a year."

[Laughter.]

Mr. GOHMERT. These are good jobs. And they are producing energy for America that could—if we pursue mutual goals of helping get out liquified natural gas, we can help Eastern Europe get out of the push of Russia, we can help the world, and help ourselves.

So, I am just wondering. Under your leadership, will there be any change to this continued, really, drastic reduction from where the Bush administration was in leasing of Federal lands for energy production?

Secretary JEWELL. Thanks, Congressman Gohmert. Well, just to be clear, we have an all-of-the-above approach to energy production, and we have been moving with——

Mr. GOHMERT. I have read that, but——

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. With full speed ahead. Well, let me give you a handful of facts.

In the Gulf of Mexico we have more rigs operating now than were operating before the Deepwater Horizon spill. Offshore in 2013 the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management offered just under 60 million acres offshore in the Gulf of Mexico for offshore oil and gas production. As Ranking Member DeFazio mentioned, our oil production is up on Federal lands substantially from 2008, and it is up significantly from 2012.

So, we have seen increases. There have been some decreases in natural gas, and that is largely due to the economics of natural gas. Most of the rigs have been put on oil because of the economics. And I am a former petroleum engineer. I worked in Oklahoma. I have been involved in the jobs that you reference, and I have seen nothing to suggest that my Department is doing anything other than continuing to support safe and responsible exploration onshore and offshore——

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, we would sure love to see you get back to the Clinton numbers in leases.

My time is about out, but I am just wondering. You mentioned Deepwater Horizon. When that blew out, the last team to check them had——

The CHAIRMAN. Very quickly, because there are a lot of Members——

Mr. GOHMERT. Right. Father-son team that was unionized. Has there been any clean-up of the safety inspections on rigs like that?

Secretary JEWELL. We have had a tremendous investment in the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. I could get you specific budget numbers. We appreciate that the industry—in this case, offshore—reimburses us for the cost of inspections, which we don't do onshore, but that is part of this budget. It helps us compete with the industry for the kinds of talented individuals we need to do the job right for the American people.

And happy to provide you with more detail, Congressman Gohmert, if that is helpful.

Mr. GOHMERT. I would like more information, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. I want to confine my focus and efforts to the devastating drought that is impacting not only my district, but other San Joaquin Valley Members of Congress, as well as the entire State of California.

Madam Secretary and Deputy Secretary, you can determine how you want to first respond to these following questions.

But I would like to, for the record, read some excerpts from a letter that came this week from the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Fresno, Bishop Ochoa, to President Obama. "Dear Mr. President, the lack of water is impacting everyone: farmers, ranchers, dairymen, their employees, faith communities, the businesses that serve them. The situation is quickly deteriorating into a humanitarian crisis. Businesses are shutting their doors and others are laying off employees. Access for children and families to clean, drinkable water is uncertain. Legislators struggle to craft an equitable public policy ensuring the State's present and future water needs. Lines at food banks and human service agencies have doubled due to this issue and, in fact, our Catholic Charities services went from 87,000

units of service in 2012 to 137,000 units in 2013. These numbers are expected to double this next year, if the water situation does not change. We are reminded in this time of drought of our dependence on the Creator. However, our human dignity relies on access to water."

With unanimous consent, I would like this to be submitted for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it will part of the record.

[The letter submitted by Mr. Costa for the record follows:]

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM THE DIOCESE OF FRESNO TO PRESIDENT OBAMA

DIOCESE OF FRESNO,
PASTORAL CENTER,
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA,
MARCH 31, 2014.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA, *President*,
Washington, DC.

Dear President Obama:

On this day, marking the birthday of Caesar Chavez, as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fresno, I join my brother bishops and other Californians of good will to exercise restraint in the use of water as an expression of solidarity with those whose livelihood and welfare are a risk due to extreme drought conditions. The lack of water is impacting everyone: farmers, ranchers, dairymen, their employees, faith communities and the businesses that serve them, The situation is quickly deteriorating into a humanitarian crisis.

Businesses are shutting their doors and others are laying off employees. Access for children and families to clean, drinkable water is uncertain. Legislators struggle to craft an equitable public policy ensuring the State's present and future water needs. Lines at food banks and human service agencies have doubled due to this issue and, in fact, our Catholic Charities services went from 87,000 units of service in 2012 to 137,000 units in 2013. These numbers will double in the next year if we don't see a change with the water situation.

We are reminded in this time of drought of our dependence on the Creator. Our human dignity relies on access to water, The creation entrusted to us is a common heritage and requires us to work together as responsible stewards for the common good, especially mindful of the vulnerable. As the economic and health impact of the drought grows, those with limited resources will be the first to suffer.

May I respectfully ask that you read the attached letter from Senator Feinstein and our bipartisan Congressional delegations and take action on those recommendations.

Sincerely,

MOST REVEREND ARMANDO X. OCHOA, D.D.,
Bishop, Diocese of Fresno.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Secretary, you indicated that you are using the best science available. But yet, the biological opinions that are being the operational guidelines for the Federal and State projects were formulated in 2007 and 2008. They haven't been updated.

The National Academy of Sciences plan in May of 2012 recommended modifications and changes. They have not been added to the biological opinion. As a matter of fact, the plan that—under your agency for the smelt, which is one of the issues that we are having to address, has not been changed since 1996. How can you tell us that we are using the best science available?

Secretary JEWELL. Now, Congressman, I appreciate the very significant situation of the California drought, and recognize that it doesn't just impact Californians, it impacts all Americans because of the food produced in that State.

Mr. COSTA. Half the Nation's fruits and vegetables, and I could go on and on and on, but I won't.

Secretary JEWELL. I understand. We are very committed to bringing all the resources we can to support the California drought situation, including additional investments in science.

I am going to turn to my colleague, Mike Connor, to give you specifics related to the biological opinions, and so on.

Mr. COSTA. Also, I would like—and Mr. Connor might want to respond—you described providing enough flexibility. What is enough flexibility? Because I think that is a very general description.

Mr. CONNOR. Two things. The biological opinions, as we have discussed, have been litigated over, there have been issues found with them. But the biological opinion, particularly the delta smelt biological opinion, was recently upheld in the——

Mr. COSTA. On technical procedures.

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. By the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. COSTA. On technical procedures.

Mr. CONNOR. But I would agree with your premise. We use the best available science to develop the biological opinions, and then we continue to pursue new data, new information. And that is what we are doing right now, and we are doing it in a much more collaborative manner outside of the courtroom.

With respect to the flexibility, what is enough flexibility is constantly evolving. This year, given the drought conditions, we have responded aggressively with an eye toward the needs of the communities. We absolutely agree with the concerns expressed by the Archbishop. We need to be aggressive, we need to look at water supply. We have adjusted the biological opinions, we have taken six separate actions since the beginning of this year to adjust the biological opinions. That has resulted of making use of precipitation events.

Mr. COSTA. And you are to be commended for that——

Mr. CONNOR. But we also have to be concerned about the fisheries, too, because we are reliant on that——

Mr. COSTA. Yes, but let me just—on that point, excuse me——

Mr. CONNOR. Sure.

Mr. COSTA [continuing]. Mr. Connor. And you have responded, and I want to acknowledge that. I do appreciate that.

My question to you is I think we can still do more. The exports between February 1 and March 31 in the delta were 1.3 million total—1,389,000 acre-feet. The exports were 410,000 acre-feet, which means it has been a 3-to-1 ratio in the last 2 months. I think we can do better, especially when you take into account the other factors you are having to deal with, which is the fish count on those that are being taken. And the fish count are de minimis, I would argue, on all the key indicators, from juvenile salmon to steelhead to issues of—I mean there haven't even been any smelt that have been taken at the pumps.

So you have a de minimis level of take here. You have had 2 months in this devastating drought, where you have had 3-to-1 out-

flows on the delta. And, while we have made progress—I will acknowledge that—we could do much more.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. But real briefly, Mr. Connor.

Mr. CONNOR. Yes. I agree. We need to continue to look at opportunities to do more, given the situation. The take at the pumps has allowed us to adjust some actions. We are doing that in concert with an aggressive monitoring program to ensure that we can provide more water while maintaining protections for the fishery.

The CHAIRMAN. And——

Secretary JEWELL. And we are also working alongside State partners, as required, for salinity levels and the other needs of the deltas.

Mr. COSTA. No, and we understand that. That is appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, the issue of hydraulic fracturing may be on the ballot in Colorado this November. Obviously, the agencies you oversee, and any other Federal agencies, for that matter, would have stepped in long before now to prohibit fracking if it threatened human health by contaminating ground water.

Does fracking, which has been done in nearly a million wells in this country over the last 65 years, and which is done thousands of feet underneath groundwater, contaminate groundwater in a properly drilled well?

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, I may be one of the few Secretaries of the Interior that has actually fracked wells before. I do understand the science behind this. It absolutely can be done safely and responsibly, and has been done safely and responsibly.

I will also say that whether it is safe and responsible depends a lot on factors like wellbore integrity and whether you have a good cement job. If you do, and you can prove that, and the water goes where it is supposed to, it is not a problem.

We have taken 1.3 million comments in on the BLM's proposed fracking regulations. We have worked with the State of Colorado, other States throughout the country, to come up with what we believe is an appropriate upgrade to 30-year-old regulations. But I do believe it can be done safely and responsibly, and has been, in many cases.

Mr. LAMBORN. OK. Well, thank you. So, does fracking present any other health risk, in and of itself, in a properly drilled well, as you just described?

Secretary JEWELL. The key is in a properly drilled well, and making sure that companies are abiding by that, and can demonstrate that. I believe it can be and is being done safely and responsibly by companies.

Mr. LAMBORN. OK, thank you. Now, switching subjects, prior to this hearing I attempted to find BLM's 2013 oil and gas statistics. However, BLM has not yet made them publicly available. Now, the 2012 statistics show a continual decrease in the total number of acres leased, total number of leases in effect, and number of new leases issued. These numbers have been steadily decreasing since 2008. Can you tell us if the 2013 numbers will show another de-

crease in energy activity on Federal lands, and when will they be released to the public?

Secretary JEWELL. I can give you a few facts right now, and am happy to follow up with some others.

In fiscal year 2013, BLM processed 4,892 applications and approved 4,472 of them. In fiscal year 2012 we had 5,861 APDs processed, and 4,256 approved. So we are actually increased in the number of approvals in 2013. In fiscal year 2011 there were 5,200 APDs, and 4,725 approved.

I will say this, Congressman, that the number we are able to process is a function of the number of people we have. Part of our challenge there is budget, and the ability to dedicate resources to that. And we would appreciate your support in this budget for having some fees to industry for onshore oil and gas inspections, which we are also doing out of this budget, taken off budget and funded by industry, so we can put appropriate resources to the table in the BLM to address the demand.

Mr. LAMBORN. Well, and thank you for that point. And also, I would like to point out we have passed legislation here in the House, in a bipartisan way, such as my bill, H.R. 1965, which dedicates some of the money that the Treasury receives from leasing and permitting to the hiring of more people to process these applications and permits faster.

And I am disappointed to hear, like what you have just said, that we have decreased in the number of leases and permits for 2013, even compared to 2012, which wasn't that great of a year, either. So I am sorry to hear that going down, still.

And, changing subjects, I would like to ask you about the Helium Stewardship Act. Can you tell me what your departments are doing to implement that legislation, which was passed in Congress recently?

Secretary JEWELL. I do know that—first, we appreciate very much the bipartisan cooperation, bicameral cooperation, to get that done. We continue to produce helium. It is very, very critical. And, over time, I believe our plan is to work toward getting out of the business of producing helium, and creating support for private industry to do that.

Mike, do you have any more information on that?

Mr. CONNOR. I don't.

Secretary JEWELL. If not, we could provide more for the record, if that is helpful.

Mr. LAMBORN. I would look for that. Thank you so much for being here. And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for yielding back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Massachusetts, Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Jewell, for testifying here today. I commend you for submitting a budget that not only makes critical investments to promote economic growth and job creation, but also reduces our deficit.

As you know, this week the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issues one of their starkest reports yet on the many impacts of climate change. The report outlined the many impacts around the globe that we are already experiencing, and predicted

that the problems will grow significantly worse, unless greenhouse gas emissions are brought under control.

I believe climate change is a critical generational issue that Congress can no longer ignore. But addressing it is also a way to spur economic growth and create new jobs. In the past 2 years, clean energy jobs in my home State of Massachusetts have grown by 24 percent, and are projected to grow another 11 percent in 2014.

So, Secretary Jewell, one of the many proposals included in the President's Climate Action Plan is setting a goal of permitting 20 gigawatts of renewable energy on public lands by 2020. I agree that public lands must responsibly play their part in expanding the availability and use of renewable energy. Can you talk about how this budget helps us meet that goal?

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Tsongas. The President charged us, as you mentioned, with doubling down on renewable energy permitting, and we are well on our way to achieving the goal of 20,000 megawatts by 2020. We are at 14,000 megawatts today. We do have increases in the budget to continue to support that effort. One of the areas I think of greatest interest in the Eastern Seaboard is what the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is doing with the States to deconflict areas to stand up offshore wind energy generation projects. And there is a lot of private industry interest in that, and also putting a transmission backbone to provide reliable, renewable energy offshore.

So, we continue to put increases in the budget to support this effort, modest increases, but we do have greater levels of experience now, thanks to what the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has been able to do over the last year. And we will continue those efforts.

Ms. TSONGAS. Well, I know that Massachusetts was very proud to participate in the Nation's first-ever competitive lease sale for renewable energy in Federal waters, because we know that, if fully developed, production from these areas could power up to one million homes.

I am curious as to whether or not you expect other lease sales to be made available in Massachusetts and along the Eastern Coast.

Secretary JEWELL. We do have one more in Massachusetts, I believe, but up and down the Eastern Seaboard we are staging lease sales. And one of the things that is important to recognize is this landscape-level approach, which we are applying broadly, which is what are the areas of conflict, and what are the areas that are not conflicted, whether it is fishing, shipping, Department of Defense uses, Coast Guard, safety. All of those things are being taken into account, as well as where the wind is, so that we can be thoughtful about targeting leasing to an area that is less likely to be in conflict for the wind energy developer.

Ms. TSONGAS. Well, I agree that that is an important way forward.

Did you want to comment, Mr. Connor?

Mr. CONNOR. Just that we have three more lease sales planned this year. One of them is off the coast of Massachusetts, as well as Maryland and New Jersey.

Ms. TSONGAS. Great. Another issue here. Last month, at a Federal auction in New Orleans, BP won the right to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico. The auction came less than a week after the EPA lifted a ban on the company from bidding on Federal drilling contracts.

Can you talk about—I mean we have great concern as to whether or not we have really addressed the many safety issues around drilling in our waters, and I am wondering if you can talk about how this budget seeks to increase offshore drilling safety, given that we have seen what can happen, the disasters, consequences of a spill, a major spill.

Secretary JEWELL. I am going to ask my colleagues behind me to give me the numbers on BSEE while I talk about this.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement was created after the Deepwater Horizon spill, as was the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, split apart from what was the Minerals Management Service. There were a lot of lessons learned, certainly by industry. Nobody was a winner in that scenario. And certainly, by us—it has enabled us to use fees from offshore oil and gas activities to fund safety and environmental programs. Brian Salerno from the Coast Guard runs that program for us, and is very, very focused, personally, on ensuring the safety of our offshore oil and gas activities. And I think they do a terrific job.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you. I know we in Congress have not received a very good grade. So I am hopeful that all these changes will make a significant difference. But I still have my concerns.

Secretary JEWELL. OK. The BSEE budget, $204.6 million, up about $2 million. And they did actually have a strong budget last year, and so we are continuing to round out a strong and qualified team.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired. Recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. Broun.

Dr. BROUN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, a comment. You spoke incorrectly a few minutes ago to the Chairman's question about listing on the Endangered Species Act. A good example is the polar bear was listed without good scientific data and no public comment or other things, and I think it is absolutely wrong that that was done.

But, Secretary Jewell, we probably see hundreds of bills come through this committee each year which would either designate new land as part of the National Park Service, or which would start the ball rolling in that direction through a feasibility study, or some kind of other investigatory action. At the same time, President Obama has been very active in using the Antiquities Act to add new units to the National Park Service, essentially working around Congress.

I personally don't support any expansion whatsoever of the National Park Service for many reasons. However, when many Members of Congress seem willing to add new land to the Park Service, can you speak as to why the President feels that he still must work around Congress to essentially achieve the same end? Please answer quickly, I have a bunch of questions.

[Laughter.]

Secretary JEWELL. Well, Congressman, the Antiquities Act has been a very, very important tool that Congress provided to presidents. It has been used by 16 presidents, both Republican and Democrat, to set aside very, very important properties like, for example, facility to Harriet Tubman last year, and Cesar Chavez. There are only—Congress can designate——

Dr. BROUN. Ma'am, I appreciate that. Will you just——

Secretary JEWELL. I——

Dr. BROUN. I have a lot of questions. And——

Secretary JEWELL. Well, why don't you ask them all, and I will try to answer them all.

Dr. BROUN. If you could, just give me a written answer to that.

Are his priorities more important than those of Congress?

Secretary JEWELL. The priorities of Congress are important, the priorities of the President are important.

Dr. BROUN. Well, the President seems to not care about the priorities of Congress, and——

Secretary JEWELL. Congress provided the Antiquities Act to the President to make the designations.

Dr. BROUN. Secretary Jewell, given the tremendous backlog of deferred maintenance facing the Park Service, as well as the near-constant addition of new land to the Park Service's already bloated rolls, is the President's desire to add even more land indicative of a lack of prioritization?

Secretary JEWELL. No, sir. There are a tremendous number of private land properties that are—that private land owners would like to put in Federal ownership or provide a conservation easement on which are very, very important to the American people.

I visited ranchers in both the Everglades and in Montana, for example, that want to put conservation easements on their land. That is a great example of a use of Land and Water Conservation Fund that doesn't put any land into Federal Government ownership, but actually enables these ranchers to keep these lands working for their families for years to come, while protecting critical habitat——

Dr. BROUN. And we talk about the Park Service here—ma'am, I apologize again for interrupting you, but we are talking about the Park Service here. Seems to me that the backlog has grown so large that, like the overall Federal debt, this administration has simply chosen to ignore it.

Madam Secretary, this committee has considered legislation in the past which would use timber harvested on Federal lands to pay for other related Federal priorities. What are your thoughts on using these resources to help ease the current maintenance backlog? And what about selling some of this land to the farmers or other willing purchasers?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, the maintenance backlog has about $1.1 billion to address it in the current budget. We also have recreation fees that help support our public lands. And there is money in the Department of Transportation—about $280 million—to address some roads issue. The sale of Federal lands is dictated by laws that we are required to uphold.

There are things being considered right now, for example in Wyoming, to address some opportunities for inholdings within a

national park, as being offset by some BLM land exchanges with the State. We remain very, very interested in working alongside our elected officials and States on things that make the most sense to them, as it relates to the management of Federal lands.

Dr. BROUN. Thank you, Madam Secretary. I am going to ask you to answer some questions for the record that I will present to you, and I have a whole bunch of other questions. And I apologize for being interruptive in your answers, but I have limited time.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that. I will recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Lowenthal.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Madam Secretary, for coming. I would like to ask you a couple of questions regarding hydraulic fracturing and the BLM's current rulemaking.

First, I would like to state for the record that I do not think that hydraulic fracturing is inherently bad. However, that being said, we need to be writing rules to make sure that it is done right. For example, the public needs to be certain that fracking is being performed in a manner that protects health and safety, and the health of our ecosystems. That is why I have been very concerned with the BLM's draft rule, because it does not live up to those standards that we expect from our government.

Contrary to what my friends on the other side of the aisle have said, it strikes me that the rule doesn't do much at all, it simply requires companies to do what they are already doing under State regulations, and to rely on a seriously flawed method of public disclosure.

Last week, on March 25, I and 14 of my colleagues sent a letter to the BLM and to the DOE on this issue of public disclosure. We believe that FracFocus, which the BLM is considering for use as the primary tool for public disclosure on fracturing operations on public lands, is seriously flawed.

Mr. Chair, I would like to add that letter to the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it will be part of the record.

[The letter submitted by Mr. Lowenthal for the record follows:]

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO BLM AND DOE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
WASHINGTON, DC 20515,
MARCH 25, 2014.

Chairman John Deutch,
Task Force on FracFocus 2.0,
The Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB).

Neil Kornze,
Principle Deputy Director,
Bureau of Land Management.

Dear Chairman Deutch, Task Force Members, and Mr. Kornze:

We would like to thank you for your recent draft analysis of the hydraulic fracturing data repository FracFocus (FF).[1] We believe that information about chemicals being injected underground should be as transparent and easily accessible as pos-

[1] Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, draft *Task Force Report on FracFocus 2.0*, U.S. DOE, February 24, 2014.

sible in order to protect public health and safety and allow the American people to know what is going on beneath their feet. We share your conclusion that FF does not meet appropriate transparency, usability, accuracy, or permanence standards. If the States, the Federal Government, and the public hope to provide meaningful oversight and understand the health and safety risks of fracking, we must either require major changes to FF or choose another truly open disclosure tool.

We strongly agree with your recommendations that changes must be made to address the fundamental flaw with FF that much of the uploaded data from hydraulically fractured wells is inaccurate, inaccessible, or Incomplete. Specifically:

Accuracy: We support your recommendation that "FracFocus should improve the quality of the data entered into the system, especially the accuracy and completeness of reported CAS numbers." A FF press release confirms that operator data submissions are not verified in any way, saying ". . . it is true the FracFocus staff does not review the forms for content".[2] Because of the lack of quality control, well records are incomplete, contain numerous errors, and are in inconsistent formats. For example, a recent review of FF chemical disclosure data found that 29 percent of Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) numbers reported from Texas wells in July 2012 were wrong.[3]

Many government reporting programs have been able to establish procedures to review submissions and develop program specific software, with data quality checks built in, to help filers submit information more quickly and with fewer errors. There are many electronic tools that FF could use to streamline and even partially automate such data quality checks.

Accessibility: We support your recommendation that the FracFocus system "include tools for searching and aggregating data by chemical, well, by company, and by geography." FF states it is only a tool, and that the quality of information that it receives is out of its control.[4] But even in that capacity it is severely inadequate, because FF data cannot be accessed for meaningful analysis. FF has refused to make well data publicly available for full download in aggregate spreadsheet format for research and make well data publicly available for full download in aggregate spreadsheet format for research and analysis. Instead, chemical information is only available to the public by downloading data about a single well at a time in pdf format. This fundamental shortcoming has made it nearly impossible to perform any comprehensive data analysis without resorting to difficult and imperfect third-party workarounds.[5]

Completeness: We support your recommendation that industry pursue "complete disclosure rather than protecting trade secrets of uncertain technical merit." FracFocus does not play any role in verifying the trade secret chemical disclosure exemptions claimed by 84 percent of registered wells.[6] Instead, FF points to regulators' responsibility to enforce any trade secret limits; FF allows operators to provide no data and to claim the trade secret exemption on any chemical compound they wish. The result is that 16 percent of all chemicals in the database are not disclosed because of claimed trade secret exemptions.[7]

While State and Federal regulators obviously have an important role to play in evaluating trade secret claims, certain tasks can only be performed by FF, as the central repository of data. For instance, a Harvard Law School report on FF found that in many instances, chemicals claimed to be trade secret in one State had been disclosed elsewhere.[8] FF can and should crosscheck trade secret claims to alert regulators and the public if trade secret claims are inconsistent with disclosures in other jurisdictions.

In addition, FracFocus takes no responsibility for the quality of any of its data.[9] Given this abrogation, regulators should have no confidence that FF will play any

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[2] FracFocus, *FracFocus Responds to Harvard Study*, April 24, 2013.

[3] Scott Anderson, *A Red Flag on Disclosure of Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals*, EDF: Energy Exchange, Dec. 12, 2012.

[4] Ibid. 2.

[5] Corrie Clark, Robert Horner, and Christopher Harto, Argonne National Laboratory, "*Life Cycle Water Consumption for Shale Gas and Conventional Natural Gas*," Environ. Sci. Technol. 2013, 47, 11829–11836. On page 11832, the authors describe the shortcomings of FF, "FracFocus data are not available in an aggregated format. Data for each well are stored separately in a portable document format (PDF). This analysis relied upon a data set made available by Skytruth."

[6] Ibid. 1.

[7] Ibid. 1.

[8] Kate Konschnik, Harvard Law School, "*Legal Fractures in Chemical Disclosure Laws*," April 23, 2013.

[9] FracFocus, *Terms and Conditions of Use*.

role in data quality control. Therefore, the failure of FF to verify the data will force the States, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and any other health and safety officials to be entirely responsible for the accuracy, accessibility, and completeness of fracking operator chemical disclosures. While we are not implying that FF itself should play any direct regulatory role, the data submitted to and housed by FF is in fact what regulators rely on to perform their oversight roles.

In sum, these three fundamental flaws will prevent the public and regulators from providing meaningful oversight and evaluating the health and safety risks associated with hydraulic fracturing.

Finally, the BLM is considering using FracFocus as the data repository for disclosure of hydraulic fracturing operations on public lands. However, given FF's significant limitations on downloading and aggregating data, using FF would violate President Obama's executive order, signed on May 9, 2013, which requires government information be available to the public in open, machine-readable formats.[10] Concurrently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released an Open Data Policy, which establishes that the policy applies "to all new information collection, creation, and system development efforts." [11] The information reporting proposed in the BLM rule clearly qualifies as a "new collection" and therefore must comply with the Open Data Policy.

We believe that the BLM should incorporate the Task Force's applicable recommendations, leveraging all of the work that the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board has already completed. The BLM should require any repository database for public lands well disclosure to achieve the standards and recommendations that the Task Force lays out, and the BLM should not rely on FF until it meets those standards and recommendations.

Furthermore, because FracFocus has made clear that it is not responsible for verifying or challenging trade secret exemption claims,[12] the BLM must take responsibility for ensuring the trade secret exemption is not abused. Unfortunately, BLM's draft rule "does not specify the process by which the BLM would assess or deny the protection, nor a procedure for public challenge of the claim." [13] And therefore, the Task Force recommends "that any trade secret exemptions permitted by BLM in its regulations for hydraulic fracturing on Federal lands include a rigorous process of claiming trade secret exemptions and robust trade secret verification and challenge mechanisms." We strongly concur with that recommendation.

While we support all the recommendations in the draft report, we urge the Task Force to take a stronger look at the potential and feasibility of incorporating prefracking chemical disclosure, water quality data, or other important information into FF. The Task Force notes that adding these features would be challenging when submissions remain largely voluntary, However, with 14 States now requiring the use of FF, and BLM poised to make it a nationwide requirement for public lands, we believe that a more intensive exploration of the possibilities of expanding FF is warranted.

Falling short in meeting the Task Force's standards and recommendations is unacceptable: it will jeopardize the public trust, it will slow responsible operators who are following high standards, and most importantly, it will keep the public health

[10] Executive Order 13642 of May 9, 2013.
[11] OMB Memorandum: *Open Data Policy—Managing Information as an Asset*, May 9, 2013.
[12] Ibid. 9.
[13] Ibid. 1.

and safety officials from performing oversight and preventing harm to our communities when the unexpected does occur.

Sincerely,

ALAN LOWENTHAL,
PETER DEFAZIO,
MATTHEW CARTWRIGHT,
KEITH ELLISON,
RAÚL GRIJALVA,
RUSH HOLT,
MIKE HONDA,
JARED HUFFMAN,
BARBARA LEE,
MARK POCAN,
MIKE QUIGLEY,
CAROL SHEA-PORTER
PAUL TONKO,
NIKI TSONGAS,
TIM RYAN,
Members of Congress.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Our letter supports recent research and recommendations by the Department of Energy's task force that was specifically tasked to review FracFocus. In our letter we document how FracFocus contains data that is inaccurate, inaccessible, and incomplete. In fact, the BLM rule would violate the administration's own open data executive order dated May 9, 2013.

Mr. Chair, I would like to add—put into the record the executive order.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, that will be part of the record.

[The executive order that Mr. Lowenthal submitted for the record follows:]

EXECUTIVE ORDER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release May 09, 2013

Executive Order -- Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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MAKING OPEN AND MACHINE READABLE THE NEW DEFAULT
FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

By the authority vested in me as President by the Cons itu ion and the laws of he United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. General Principles. Openness in government strengthens our democracy, promotes the delivery of efficient and effective services to he public, and contributes to economic growth. As one vital benefit of open government, making informa ion resources easy to find, accessible, and usable can fuel entrepreneurship, innovation, and scientific discovery that improves Americans' lives and contributes significantly to job crea ion.

Decades ago, the U.S. Government made bo h weather data and he Global Positioning System freely available. Since hat ime, American entrepreneurs and innovators have utilized hese resources to create navigation systems, wea her newscasts and warning systems, loca ion-based applica ions, precision farming tools, and much more, improving Americans' lives in countless ways and leading to economic grow h and job crea ion. In recent years, thousands of Government data resources across fields such as heal h and medicine, education, energy, public safety, global development, and finance have been posted in machine-readable form for free public use on Data.gov. Entrepreneurs and innovators have continued to develop a vast range of useful new products and businesses using hese public information resources, creating good jobs in he process.

To promote continued job growth, Government efficiency, and the social good that can be gained from opening Government data to the public, the default state of new and modernized Government informa ion resources shall be open and machine readable. Government information shall be managed as an asset throughout its life cycle to promote interoperability and openness, and, wherever possible and legally permissible, to ensure hat data are released to the public in ways that make he data easy to find, accessible, and usable. In making this he new default state, executive departments and agencies (agencies) shall ensure that they safeguard individual privacy, confidentiality, and national security.

Sec. 2. Open Data Policy. (a) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in consultation with he Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), and Administrator of he Office of Informa ion and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), shall issue an Open Data Policy to advance the management of Government information as an asset, consistent wi h my memorandum of January 21, 2009 (Transparency and Open Government), OMB Memorandum M-10-06 (Open Government Direc ive), OMB and National Archives and Records Administra ion Memorandum M-12-18 (Managing Government Records Directive), he Office of Science and Technology Policy Memorandum of February 22, 2013 (Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scien ific Research), and he CIO's strategy entitled "Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve he American People." The Open Data Policy shall be updated as needed.

(b) Agencies shall implement he requirements of the Open Data Policy and shall adhere to he deadlines for specific actions specified herein. When implementing the Open Data Policy, agencies shall incorporate a full analysis of privacy, confiden iality, and security risks into each stage of he information lifecycle to identify information that should not be released. These review processes should be overseen by he senior agency official for privacy. It is vital that agencies not release information if doing so would violate any law or policy, or jeopardize privacy, confiden iality, or national security.

Sec. 3. Implementa ion of the Open Data Policy. To facilitate effective Government-wide implementation of the

Open Data Policy, I direct the following:

(a) Wi hin 30 days of the issuance of he Open Data Policy, the CIO and CTO shall publish an open online repository of tools and best practices to assist agencies in integrating he Open Data Policy into their opera ions in fur herance of their missions. The CIO and CTO shall regularly update this online repository as needed to ensure it remains a resource to facilitate the adoption of open data practices.

(b) Wi hin 90 days of the issuance of he Open Data Policy, the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management, CIO, and Administrator of OIRA shall work with the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, Chief Financial Officers Council, Chief Informa ion Officers Council, and Federal Records Council to identify and ini iate implementation of measures to support he integration of the Open Data Policy requirements into Federal acquisi ion and grant-making processes. Such efforts may include developing sample requirements language, grant and contract language, and workforce tools for agency acquisition, grant, and informa ion management and technology professionals.

(c) Within 90 days of he date of his order, he Chief Performance Officer (CPO) shall work with he President's Management Council to establish a Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goal to track implementation of the Open Data Policy. The CPO shall work with agencies to set incremental performance goals, ensuring they have metrics and milestones in place to monitor advancement toward the CAP Goal. Progress on these goals shall be analyzed and reviewed by agency leadership, pursuant to the GPRA Moderniza ion Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-352).

(d) Wi hin 180 days of the date of this order, agencies shall report progress on he implementa ion of the CAP Goal to the CPO. Thereafter, agencies shall report progress quarterly, and as appropriate.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) No hing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:
(i) the au hority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of OMB relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substan ive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(d) No hing in this order shall compel or authorize he disclosure of privileged informa ion, law enforcement information, national security information, personal information, or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law.

(e) Independent agencies are requested to adhere to this order.

BARACK OBAMA

WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Are you familiar, Madam Secretary, with the DOE's specific recommendations on FracFocus—the BLM?

Secretary JEWELL. I am aware at a high level. I am not aware on the details. But I will certainly follow up on that.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you. Let me read to you just a few of the DOE's task force recommendations. The task force favors full disclosure of all—all—known constituents added to fracturing fluid with few, if any, exemptions.

Examination—next one, another—examination of a limited sample of records from FracFocus 2.0 indicates a variety of errors. FracFocus should improve the quality of the data entered into the system.

Another recommendation, the task force has learned from FracFocus that 84 percent of the registered wells invoked a trade secret exemption. This data does not suggest the level of transparency and disclosure that is urged by the task force.

And finally, I would like to say the BLM—they say the BLM disclosure regulations do not meet the high disclosure standards that the 2011 subcommittee recommended that BLM adopt. And the task force recommends that any trade secret exemptions permitted by BLM in its regulations for hydraulic fracturing on Federal lands include a rigorous process of claiming trade secret exemptions and robust trade secret verification and challenge mechanisms.

Madam Secretary, I profoundly hope that the BLM take these recommendations seriously. And I would like to add the Department of Energy, the DOE task force report, into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it will be part of the record.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. And then, finally, I would like to just follow up that I asked you the last time you were here, on July 17, and the answers I found were not really totally complete.

For example, I asked how the BLM would ensure that FracFocus fixed its data search, its sort, and aggregation tools. The Interior replied in the letter that "FracFocus has evolved into a standardized, easily accessible repository of public information." Well, Madam Secretary, nothing could be further from the truth. The Executive Order 13642 requires that the default state of government information resources shall be open, machine-readable, and that the Federal Government is there to ensure that data are released to the public in ways that make the data easy to find, accessible, and usable. FracFocus not only contains data that is error-prone, it is tedious to download, it can only be done one well at a time, in a pdf format, not in aggregate or machine-readable format.

Do you agree? I just want to know that FracFocus does not comply with the Executive Order itself, to be open, easily accessible. We have found it very difficult—and so has the task force report—to access.

Secretary JEWELL. Well, Congressman, I appreciate your comments. We are right in the thick of assessing FracFocus's current capabilities of digesting the information that came from the DOE report, and absolutely will take all of that into consideration.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. And, just in conclusion, I would just like to say we are not opposed.

Secretary JEWELL. Understand.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. But this is not acceptable.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Dr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I recognize the gentleman from Louisiana, Dr. Fleming.

Dr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, on February 5, 2014, former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said—I quote—"I believe hydraulic fracking is safe. We know that, from everything we have seen, there is not a single case where hy-

draulic fracturing has created an environmental problem for anyone. We need to make sure that story is told."

My question to you is, do you agree with your predecessor?

Secretary JEWELL. I believe hydraulic fracturing can be done safely and responsibly. You know, I can't say that I have seen any studies that suggest a direct link between hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination, but there have been links with groundwater contamination on injected fluids. And I think it depends on assuring that you have a good wellbore integrity and good practices, and those are the kinds of things we are looking at in our fracking regulation.

Dr. FLEMING. Well, to be sure, so you are saying there has been groundwater contamination from hydraulic fracturing?

Secretary JEWELL. There has been groundwater contamination from injected fluids, whether it is injected wastewater fluids or other means. So we want to make sure that, in our fracking regulations, that we have the kind of wellbore integrity, so that water is going to its intended location, and the frack fluid and—that is exactly what our regulations are intended to do.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that we request the Secretary provide to us the exact examples of that. I am totally unaware of those. Again, we have had many witnesses, none have indicated any problems with groundwater contamination.

But let's go back to wellbore integrity. Now, as you well know—and, as you say, you have actually fracked before—we are talking about 60 years of experience. And, again, I am unaware of a single human that has ever been harmed as a result of hydraulic fracturing. My question is, why do we need regulations for this on the Federal level, when we have been doing a sterling job—again, not one example of harm to humans—along the way? Why do we need Federal regulations at this point?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, we are charged with safe and responsible development on Federal and tribal lands. States, in some cases, are very sophisticated and have regulations in place, and our regulations say that if the State standard exceeds what we have in the Federal Government, the State standard will apply. There are many States that have robust regulations in place. There are other States, especially in some of these new formations, tight gas and so on, where they have not had any regulations, where it has not been a tradition, oil and gas exploration.

Dr. FLEMING. Well, but——

Secretary JEWELL. There, on——

Dr. FLEMING. But again, just——

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. Federal lands, we must provide regulations to cover those.

Dr. FLEMING. Well, I mean, again, if they are doing a fantastic job and we are not—we haven't seen any bad results, isn't this really the classic case of the hammer looking for a nail?

Secretary JEWELL. I don't believe so, sir. I believe that we are working alongside States to learn from their regulations. We are applying the best standards that we can. And our regulations have not been updated for 30 years——

Dr. FLEMING. Well, it just seems—it seems duplicative. You are learning from the States. If they are doing such a great job, and

you are having to learn from them, then why do we need a whole other layer, particularly at a time where we have such cost constraints?

Secretary JEWELL. Our regulations will apply to Federal and tribal lands. We do have regulations now, they just haven't been updated in 30 years, and technology has changed a lot. And it has been more than 30 years since I have been in the oil and gas industry.

Dr. FLEMING. OK——

Secretary JEWELL. And things have changed dramatically.

Dr. FLEMING. All right. In the time I have left, let me ask another question.

When you became Secretary of the Interior, it is my understanding—I have a quote from you here that you said on August 1, 2013, "I hope there are no climate change deniers in the Department of the Interior." Is that a correct quote?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, in context, I said I have been on the lands and waters around the Department of the Interior, and it would be very difficult to see the lands that I have seen and deny that climate change is going on. That is, I believe, what I said.

Dr. FLEMING. So is that a purity test, for someone to work for you in the Department of the Interior, which is a very large Department? That means that, in your opinion, that everyone should agree with you that there is such thing as manmade climate change? You know, there is controversy over that issue and disagreement, even among very excellent scientists.

Secretary JEWELL. Absolutely not. There is no litmus test for people at the Department of the Interior, and I didn't talk about causes of climate change. Every place I have gone on public lands I see droughts, I see wildfires, I see coastal erosion, I see the impact of storms. And that is the reality that we are facing in this country. And my comments simply were to say that, as a large land manager, it is important that we open our eyes to the challenges our lands are facing, and that we address those challenges head on.

Mr. BISHOP [presiding]. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Dr. FLEMING. I yield back.

Mr. BISHOP. The Chair recognizes Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, I had the staff peruse the budget. And we can only find two programs that took significant cuts in your budget. And one was Alaska land conveyance, which I am not an expert on, and the gentleman from Alaska isn't here. But the second was the Oregon California lands.

Oregon California lands are an absolutely unique set of lands in the State of Oregon that have to do with the government taking back lands from a railroad that violated their agreement with the government. They were private lands at one point, and then they were taken back, and a unique law was passed to require the perpetual sustainable management of those lands for timber. And the beneficiaries were the impacted counties.

As you are aware, the Oregon Delegation is working on legislation for the future management of those lands. But I find it odd that this program is taking a 10 percent reduction, and the only other program is in Alaska. There are many challenges on these

lands. One is the fact that they are trying to develop a new land management plan because the Obama administration pulled the plug on the Bush administration plan, the so-called Whopper. The Federal Government recently lost a case in court, and has been ordered to produce more timber on two of the larger districts covered by the O&C lands, the southern part. And this is going to require a substantial amount of work on the part of the O&C.

And we have many, many ongoing challenges. And I just don't see how that staff, and taking that kind of a cut, is going to meet these challenges and help us coordinate a future for these lands. Could you explain why that was singled out for a cut, out of all your programs?

Secretary JEWELL. Yes, and it is complicated, as many of these things are: $4.2 million of a $4.4 million decrease is reflective of the fact that the Western Oregon Resource Management Planning Program will complete six revised resource management plans in June of 2015. So that reflects the completion of those resource management plans——

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Secretary, if I could—and I don't want to be impolite, but I don't have much time—if the past is any predictor of the future, those plans will not be completed by June of next year, you know. And so I think pulling back resources at the beginning of the year, in the anticipation that somehow those plans are magically going to get through the process, very complicated plans, is not good planning.

Second, obviously, we are going to have the same challenges in Oregon that other States have with fires this year. Again, I just—I can't find a way to justify those cuts, and would hope that Congress will see fit to rearrange the budget in those ways.

Let's go to Land Water Conservation Fund for just a minute. We had early discussion by the Chairman. There is $900 million, I believe, that flows in from fees on offshore oil and gas. Is that correct?

Secretary JEWELL. That is correct.

Mr. DEFAZIO. About 900?

Secretary JEWELL. That is correct.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. And how much of that was spent on conservation purposes last year?

Secretary JEWELL. What was the current number for LWCF, Pam? She will be looking that up. Actually, we get way more than $900 million. That was the amount that was allocated for LWCF back in—49 years ago, when the law was enacted. We actually take in a lot more than that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. So you have revenues in excess of $900 million, and only a portion of it is dedicated to the LWCF, and it is authorized to be spent on conservation purposes.

Secretary JEWELL. That is correct; $306 million for LWCF last year, and that was both Interior and the U.S. Forest Service.

Mr. DEFAZIO. So where did the other slightly less than $600 million go that was designated and authorized by law to be spent for conservation purposes?

Secretary JEWELL. It was not appropriated, so it went to other portions of the budget, or other appropriations, or was not spent.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. And yet you—as you said, you have willing sellers who have inholdings who are either looking to convey easements or perhaps convey their land-locked parcel to the Park Service?

Secretary JEWELL. That is correct. Far, far in excess of the money that would be appropriated now and for the future.

Just a quick number, revenue deposits since 1965 of $35 billion, of which $19 billion has not been appropriated.

Mr. DEFAZIO. $19 billion, OK.

Secretary JEWELL. Correct.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, and then the other thing is the backlog in the parks, and we don't have time to get into that now. But we have to find a way to begin to defray that capital backlog. I would love to discuss that at another time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. I thank the gentleman. Recognize the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Secretary Jewell, thank you for being here and being forthright with your answers today. I have enjoyed the testimony.

I want to clear up one thing real quick. Dr. Fleming was asking about hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination and you said that there have been instances with the fracking fluid actually getting in groundwater.

Secretary JEWELL. No, sir. I actually talked about injected fluids.

Mr. DUNCAN. OK. So that was surface water runoff is the issue—the ones that I am aware of, where there has been any groundwater contamination that—have been able to point to, it has been where something, hydraulic fluids, have been stored onsite and maybe had an event where they ran off into a stream, or whatever. Is that what you are talking about, or are you talking about actually down in the earth, getting into the aquifer?

Secretary JEWELL. No, sir. I mean there have been documented cases of fracking fluid on the surface contaminating groundwater, people dumping it illegally, those kinds of things. There has been evidence of groundwater contamination from injected fluids, but not specifically due to fracking.

Mr. DUNCAN. OK, thank you. I look forward to getting that information. So thank you for that.

After 5 years of waiting, I am thankful that we can look at the final PEIS for seismic testing in the Atlantic. However, this week the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management announced that they will extend the comment period for the Atlantic seismic PEIS for another 30 days. This, of course, again, pushes back the data of the expected record of decision, so that we can get permitting for seismic movement in the Atlantic.

Can you explain why this delay was necessary, especially for a process that started 5 years ago?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, sir, we have been involved in it for a number of years. We are fully committed to supporting seismic, geologic, and geophysical examination. We get requests to extend comment periods. A 30-day extension is not unusual for us on things like that. We don't believe it will have a material impact on the interest or the timing of the interested G&G parties in doing seismic work in the Atlantic.

Mr. DUNCAN. OK. You have previously stated that completion of the PEIS will inform future decisions about whether leasing in the Atlantic would be appropriate. And, if so, where such leasing should take place. You have also stated that collection of new seismic data is not prerequisite to developing the next 5-year program.

So, if I take those statements one step further, can you pledge that the Mid- and South-Atlantic planning areas will remain an option for possible leasing in the next 5-year plan?

Secretary JEWELL. We certainly expect that—I mean they certainly will be an option for possible leasing. Our expectation is we will have good data, and we will be looking very seriously at inclusion of the Atlantic based on the information that we know will be occurring over the coming years.

Mr. DUNCAN. OK. Well, let me just ask it a different way, then. In your words, can you pledge that your draft 2017–2022 5-year program will not close off the Atlantic leasing so long as we are still waiting on new seismic data being obtained and interpreted?

Secretary JEWELL. Yes, we have no intention of closing off that area.

Mr. DUNCAN. OK, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I don't have anything further, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding back, and recognize the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Grijalva.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here.

Many of the questions have been explored, Land Water Conservation Fund, and I will submit questions to that, some questions that I have specific to wild horses and burros, and what that process with BLM is going on. But I did want to point out a couple of things that I thought were important to point out in your—in the budget of the Department.

The reform of the 1872 mining law, I think, is significant, to extend for hard rock and mineral extraction. The royalty requirements that we have on other extractions like gas and oil, I think, is an important step as a revenue generator, and as a return to the taxpayers.

Tribal issues, the focus of that, the point of self-determination, looking at health care, infrastructure needs on native land, I think, is overdue and a very needed requirement.

I note with some irony, as we are talking about self-determination, that the Sioux Nation and Dakota is planning to sue the Federal Government over treaty violations, sovereignty issues, sacred sites and graves, Antiquities Law, relative to the siting of the Keystone Pipeline, which I think is going to inject an interesting perspective and a whole other legal battle regarding that particular alignment.

I want to associate myself with the points that Congressman Lowenthal made regarding fracking. I think, as we go forward—and in clarifying the questions that came up from colleagues—that the injection or the use of chemicals in that process is perhaps the contamination source. And for that reason, I think the disclosure point that my colleague made is critical to those rules and regulations. If we still have a protection over a trade secret issue, or anything could be declared proprietary, and, therefore, the public's

right to know is not available, then I would suggest—and I join in the comments he made—that that is a critical point there.

The initial step of dealing with issues of adaptation and disaster prevention on public lands relative climate change, I think, is very important. And it is an initial step. The U.N. is asking the United States for 200 billion as their contribution toward the worldwide attack on—and litigation of climate change. I think that is an important one. And I—should be more money, but I think that the public lands can be a wonderful incubator and example of how we can deal with this very, very important issue. And I want to thank you for not putting your head or the Department's head in the sand relative to this issue that is very real and scientifically verified across the board.

The budget. The increase, the scope of the increase I would consider small on the parks. But given that, do you feel like you are at a point that you are at least to pre-sequestration levels, or moving in that direction? Given maintenance backlog, the need to integrate youth and veterans and others into the park, promotion of ecotourism, just the budget alone, and I will leave you with that question or any other comment you want to make.

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you very much, Congressman Grijalva. The Park Service budget in specific, we have the centennial coming up, we have worked hard to try and put a modest increase in the authorized budget: $40 million for operations and high-priority projects, of which $10 million is for a match with private philanthropy. We will be pursuing legislative action for an additional $1.2 billion over 3 years that will address the most critical maintenance issues in the parks and that visitor experience.

And then, the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative has an additional level of support. All still are not going to address the backlog issues we have in a huge way, but at least a—improve that visitor experience, and some of the things like Congressman DeFazio talked about. So——

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. We are making a step in that direction.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes. And I, for one, am glad that the President provides a check and balance sometimes to the priorities that are set by the majority of the House of Representatives. I am glad for that check and balance, and I hope that when things don't appear to be correct, that it is used. Thank you, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Flores.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary Jewell, for joining us today. I appreciate you following up with your answer regarding hydraulic fracturing to separate the injection of underground fluids versus the operation of hydraulic fracturing itself, which has not given any evidence of any groundwater pollution. So I appreciate you doing that.

In the omnibus that we passed for this year, the omnibus appropriations, each of the CEQ, the EPA, and the Department of the Interior has been directed to submit a report identifying all expenditures in fiscal year 2012 and 2013 for the development, administration, and implementation of the National Ocean Policy, as

set forth in Executive Order 13547, and to clearly identify the funding proposed for the implementation of the National Ocean Policy in future budget submissions.

This report was due 60 days after the enactment of the fiscal year 2014 omnibus, which occurred on January 17, 2014. Now, according to my calendar, the report was due to be submitted on March 18. Can you give me the status of that report?

Secretary JEWELL. I do know we support the goals of the National Ocean Policy, and I am not familiar with the status of the timing of the report.

You guys?

Mr. FLORES. The——

Secretary JEWELL. OK, we are providing input, but I don't have the date. I am sorry.

Mr. FLORES. OK. I would ask you to follow up within 7 days of this hearing on that.

The second part of that is, if it hasn't been submitted—and it sounds like it probably has not—then I would like, within 7 days from this hearing, to know when it will be submitted to Congress, in accordance with the appropriations bill that was enacted on January 17.

The next question has to do with NPS. Do you have any unencumbered funds from prior years' appropriations for land acquisition?

Secretary JEWELL. Yes, we do, and we don't know the number. But I am happy to get that back——

Mr. FLORES. OK. Would you submit that within 7 days, too?

A minute ago I think you said $1.1 billion is your number for budget—on deferred maintenance? But that is probably $1.1 million, isn't it? Is it million or billion?

Secretary JEWELL. OK, it is Department-wide, Park Service, refuges, BLM lands, and so on, not specific to the National Park Service.

Mr. FLORES. OK——

Secretary JEWELL. And that is——

Mr. FLORES [continuing]. Department-wide, but——

Secretary JEWELL.—$1.1 billion, Department-wide, across——

Mr. FLORES. What was the number, again? Billion or million?

Secretary JEWELL. Billion.

Mr. FLORES. OK. And then, what is the total deferred maintenance for land—for all Department of the Interior lands?

Secretary JEWELL. I know that the Park Service is $11 billion. Fish and Wildlife Service, I think, is $4.7. Do you have a number for BLM? OK, she is getting the number for BLM. Do you want to keep going?

Mr. FLORES. Yes, you can get that to me in a minute. In your budget you had proposed $25 million for land acquisition, and $954 million for the management, lands, and resources account. Is there any way that you can use any of the $954 million for land acquisition, or are you keeping that totally separate and it is only for maintenance?

Secretary JEWELL. Only for maintenance.

Mr. FLORES. OK, good. So there will be no reprogramming from those accounts for land acquisition.

Secretary JEWELL. No.

Mr. FLORES. OK, great. Let's see. The next question is, going back to—these are follow-ups to questions—answers you gave to Congressman Lamborn and Congressman Fleming related to hydraulic fracturing of—the BLM rule on hydraulic fracturing.

In response to Lamborn's question you said you consulted with the States. And in response to Congressman Fleming's question you said you worked along—when I say "you," the Department of the Interior was working alongside the States. I have checked with the State of Texas, with the railroad commissioner, railroad commission, commissioners and staff, and they said they have had no direct conversations with the Department of the Interior regarding the BLM rule.

So, if you are working alongside the States, and Texas is the largest energy producer in the country, can you tell me what States you worked—I mean why Texas was left out, since we have a regulation program that shows efficacy?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, I can tell you this, that we are concentrating our efforts predominantly where there are Federal and tribal lands with oil and gas development, so States like Wyoming, Colorado, North Dakota is where a lot of the action is going on. But I can't specifically say why they haven't consulted with Texas, and I will follow up with that.

Mr. FLORES. OK. That would be good. I mean——

Secretary JEWELL. And let me give you the maintenance backlog number, if I may.

Mr. FLORES [continuing]. Sort of two parts of the question. Yes, where are the lands, I agree with that. But second, where are the best practices? And so, as a leading energy-producing State, I would think that we would be consulted with.

Secretary JEWELL. I take that as an offer to consult, and we are happy to follow up.

Mr. FLORES. OK.

Secretary JEWELL. Total deferred maintenance, $13 to $19 billion; BLM, $700 million.

Mr. FLORES. OK.

Secretary JEWELL. Just to answer that earlier question.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you very much. My time has expired. Appreciate your help.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the——

Mr. FLORES. And we will look for the answers within 7 days.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman, and recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Huffman.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And my thanks to the witnesses. Secretary Jewell, it is good to see you again. And I want to start by thanking you for the historic designation of our newest national monument in my district on the Mendocino County coast. I think this committee and this House did good work.

I don't know why we didn't see progress in the Senate, but I am glad that you agreed with me, that the people of Mendocino and people all over that are going to benefit from this shouldn't have to wait. I was on the Mendocino coast just this week, on Monday, and I can tell you that the folks in the Point Arena area are already seeing a tremendous uptick in tourism, and they are pro-

jecting as much, perhaps, as a 25 percent increase in the tourism economy, which is so very important to the people I represent. So thank you, again, for that.

Continuing on this issue of land conservation, I also want to thank you for the President's commitment in the budget to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Like you, I believe that this is a fund that is already paid for, not with tax dollars, but with oil and gas revenues. And it is time to honor the bargain that was made when Congress put that fund into place.

So, I wonder if you could just share your perspective on what makes the Land and Water Conservation Fund so different and worthy of dedicated funding, so that this funding that was essentially part of a bargain through oil and gas industry doesn't continue to languish.

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you so much for the question. And, also, it has been really fun to be out in the Point Arena public lands and see the incredible enthusiasm and dedicated volunteer service on the part of your constituents to really make that special.

Land and Water Conservation Fund has been used in every county across the country to purchase lands or to lay down conservation easements that are important to people in local communities. The stateside program is matched with State monies, and it helps local communities say, "This is an area that is really special that we want to set aside. And will you help us, Federal Government?" And it has been used very, very successfully for almost 50 years.

We have inholdings where we have willing sellers of land, whether it is landlocked area within a national park, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund enables us to satisfy that willing seller and provide a contiguous landscape that is actually cheaper to manage, and not more expensive to manage.

The Everglades Headwaters, the Crown of the Continent area, and many, many other areas where hunters and fishermen want access to their favorite fishing hole are facilitated through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, through conservation easements. And I have been with many ranchers across the country who want their ranches to stay in ranch land, that understand the benefit of how they use the land for conservation, and LWCF helps them maintain that future for their families, while also setting land aside for conservation.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Well, thank you very much. And, Deputy Secretary Connor, congratulations on your confirmation. It is good to see you. I appreciate your earlier answer to the question on the California drought, and I just want to follow up a bit on that. I want to commend you for being thoughtful about this, and recognizing, I trust, that the protections and the biological opinions for salmon and smelt also protect downstream people, farmers, who need good water quality, communities that depend on water that is not too salty to provide as drinking water to their residents, and the salmon economy, which has existed for a long, long time, and which is an important part of our heritage and our economy, especially in the district I represent.

So, those protections are very important to us. And the truth is you have some tough balancing to do in this historic drought. And

Mother Nature has dealt us all quite a challenge. But I think we need to acknowledge that right now you are striking that balance in favor of waiving biological opinion protections and increased pumping and water deliveries in the delta.

You mentioned that you have an aggressive monitoring program underway, and I would like to hear more about that, how your Department intends to make sure that these lifeline protections for the salmon that my residents, my constituents, depend on are not being put in jeopardy, that the species is not on the brink of extinction because of those decisions.

And then, a related point. I represent the people of Humboldt County and the Hoopa Tribe, which has a 50,000 acre-foot statutory and contractual right from the Trinity Unit of the Central Valley Project. We have been asking for years, going back to my predecessor, Mike Thompson, whether the Bureau intends to honor that right. We have been asked to be patient, that answers are forthcoming. I just wanted to let you know that our patience does have limits, and I would like you to tell us where we stand on that, please.

Mr. CONNOR. Yes. So, with respect to the first question, in monitoring of the fish species, early on, because of the nature of the drought—and you are absolutely right, we have a tough balancing act. We are looking at water supply, we are looking at fisheries protection, we are looking at controlling salinity in the delta, which is all important, and we are looking toward next year, if this drought continues. And those are the four areas that we are focused on.

Because of the expectation that we would have to very closely look at the operational criteria with respect to the pumps, State water project, Central Valley project, we instituted—we had a fund transfer of about $120–$140,000 so we could increase monitoring in the delta of delta smelt. That has helped us find some new populations and given some comfort—some of the actions we are taking. Same thing with respect to the salmon species at issue.

Overall, we have done some acoustic tag and particle tracking that has helped us monitor. We have increased that with on-the-ground surveys as we made operational changes early in the year. And we have to simply increase that. That is going to be the key for us understanding the nature of the adjustments that we make this year, and it will add value as we interpret the biological opinions and apply them in future years. So we are trying to continue to improve our data and monitoring, and we need to do more, quite frankly.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. McClintock, is recognized.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, welcome to the committee. I want to follow up on Mr. Costa's line of questioning.

The massive diversions of water away from the Central Valley have caused catastrophic human suffering that has been well documented, all to meet what you call the best available science on delta smelt. And yet, the delta smelt population is the second lowest that has ever been recorded. So, it appears to me your best

available science doesn't work, and yet you persist in pursuing these policies. Why?

Secretary JEWELL. I will give a high-level answer. You know, we are abiding by the laws, and what is required of us to do. The delta smelt is one species. There are salmonids, also, that are impacted. I will say that I have seen tremendous flexibility on the part of the Fish and Wildlife Service in this time of profound drought to do everything it can to pump the water necessary to help address the profound drought situation, while also——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Well, I am not speaking so much of the drought——

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. Dealing with these issues——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I am speaking about before the drought. In fact, a year ago we had nearly record inflows into the Sacramento Delta, and we had nearly record negligible levels of outflow.

Mr. CONNOR. With respect to last year, we had extremely high take early on in the season of delta smelt that was a cause for concern. We had to ratchet back pumping, notwithstanding the outflows as one of the protections involved with the species. We have used the best available science. That science has been challenged, it has been upheld—-

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. But the science is not working. Don't you understand that?

Mr. CONNOR. That science——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Can't you see the—your Fish and Wildlife Service's own numbers on delta smelt population? You had record inflows of water into the delta, the exports were minuscule. Everything else was lost to the ocean. You consider that to be responsible management of our resources?

Mr. CONNOR. With the data that is available—and I would like to go back and provide this for you—when we had—2011, when we had record flows through the delta in the aftermath of that very high precipitation year, we had a spike in the delta smelt populations. And I would like to provide that information for the record.

So, it is a species in crisis, and there are a lot of factors——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. They have the second lowest population——

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. Beyond the pumps that are doing——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK [continuing]. Ever recorded. Your policies are not working. But they are devastating the human population of California.

And I have to tell you I am also supremely frustrated now, moving into the drought year, with the Bureau's management of our water supply in that drought year.

For example, last fall we watched the Sacramento River at full flood, wondering what in the world were you people thinking? In January it was reported that 800,000 acre-feet had been drained out of Shasta, Oroville, and Folsom. Drained Folsom Lake to nearly empty. Released for environmental purposes, and ultimately ended up in Southern California dams. Meanwhile, Northern California, with senior water rights, has many communities that are under water rationing and are looking at near-empty dams.

Despite repeated attempts, we have been unable to get an accounting of this water, who released it, under what authority, how

much was released, and when. And I will put these questions to you. How do you account for those water releases?

Mr. CONNOR. I account for those water releases because the Bureau of Reclamation operates under State permits. And those permits require certain outflows. So, notwithstanding the lack of precipitation, we had outflow requirements which necessitated releases from our reservoirs. We worked with the State board, we have made adjustments in those releases over time, because of the crisis situation. But that is fundamental to the nature——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. So your testimony is——

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. Of those releases——

Mr. MCCLINTOCK [continuing]. It was the State of California that ordered those releases?

Mr. CONNOR. We have an ongoing permit, D16–41, issued by the State Water Resources Control Board of California, which controlled our operations through the end of last summer through last fall.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. And you are not responsible for the release of water from Bureau of Reclamation Dams, specifically Folsom and Shasta.

Mr. CONNOR. Those releases fulfill a dual purpose of protecting the fisheries, but they also ensure that we meet the outflow needs that are required by our permit. So they serve a dual role.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. All right. Just this morning I talked to a representative of Central Valley farmers. They are constantly lectured about the need to carefully stretch every drop of water. They use the latest computer-controlled underground drip irrigation systems. They are actually studied by the Israeli government. And yet, they watch the Department release hundreds of thousands of acre-feet for environmental flows with reckless abandon, with absolutely no attempt to look at what that is actually doing to meet the stated objectives.

Do you understand how frustrating that is, as they look at that? As they stretch and ration every drop of water, while you are releasing hundreds of thousands of acre-feet with abandon?

Mr. CONNOR. I understand their frustration. I think they do a terrific job of conservation, south of the delta. But I would just remind our releases serve a dual purpose of the fishery needs, as well as the water quality standards in the delta. Those water quality standards not only protect fish and wildlife, they protect the interests of other water users who divert from the delta. And that is very important. We have to control the salinity in the delta, and that is one of the purposes of those water quality permit standards.

So, it is water users impacting other water users. But I would concede those folks do a great job south of the delta. We are working with them to get as much water as we can in this drought year.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Holt.

Dr. HOLT. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, Mr. Deputy Secretary, it is great to see you this morning. I appreciate your forthcoming testimony. And I think an outside observer would be astounded at the vast range of the responsibilities and concerns that you have. And I am pleased to see this morning the

command you have of the material, not just the technology of drilling or the Bureau of Reclamation. It is good to see you here.

Let me touch on a number of things that have already been touched on. First of all, with regard to fracking, I certainly would associate myself with the line of comments and questions from Mr. Lowenthal and Mr. Grijalva. We do need full disclosure of procedures and ingredients. I also think that we need to pay much more attention to fugitive release of methane from all drilling operations, and I hope you will see that.

With regard to Mr. Grijalva's comments about the Mining Act of 1872, I would add to that it is as archaic as the name suggests. This is a relic of a different era, when the greater expansion of the West was part of our national destiny. And it was an era of exploitation of lands and minerals which is not where we should be today.

I was pleased to hear your comments about offshore wind. In New Jersey this can be a huge resource. We need your help working with the State, because the State now has been dragging their feet—the State of New Jersey, that is. And, speaking of New Jersey, I invite you back to New Jersey. Again, we have appreciated your visits. The Crossroads of the American Revolution is really a fine Heritage Area that I think deserves further attention, along with the other Park Service sites and wildlife sites in New Jersey.

In your budget, I want to commend you on bumping up the U.S. Geological Survey. We could do even better. We really get our money's worth from their scientific work. And I would encourage you to find every possible way to improve that.

And I wish you every success on the $1.2 billion proposal for the Park Service, as we go into the centennial. We really want to make the most of that.

I would like to quickly turn to one question. You have talked about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I wanted to talk about the Historic Preservation Fund, which has not been discussed this morning, I believe. As you know, this money also—this fund can receive money from the OCS leases. And, as you pointed out, less than half of the $35 billion that has come in from OCS leases has been appropriated.

I would like to know what your plans are for historic preservation, whether we can do better in protecting our natural heritage, our historic heritage, and—in addition to what you have already said about the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Secretary JEWELL. Well, the preservation of historic structures is an important part of our mission, under the auspices of the National Park Service. But it is certainly something that I am in full support of.

One of the things that we are doing across the Department of the Interior is engaging youth and volunteers and veterans in support of public lands, and part of that initiative will include training people to restore historic structures——

Dr. HOLT. And I might add on—you know, from the Preservation Fund there are grants available to the State and tribal historic offices.

Secretary JEWELL. Right.

Dr. HOLT. Which are underfunded, generally, and very much benefit from what comes from the Preservation Fund.

Secretary JEWELL. We have $56.4 million in the budget, which is roughly level with 2014, in the 2015 budget for the State and tribal grants for historic and cultural structures. So it is not an increase, but at least it maintains the commitment that we have.

Dr. HOLT. Thank you.

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you.

Dr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman, recognize the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. Madam Secretary, I feel remiss if I was not here for your public presentation and grilling.

In a couple of weeks you will be visiting a Southeast Utah county which is not in my district, but with whom I have been working very closely. Slightly north of where you will be is a place called Sand Flats. This is a BLM area that did not have the personnel nor the resources to be properly maintained until a near riot broke out one spring vacation. Since that time, BLM has been contracting with the county to maintain it as a recreation area. And it has been a very effective recreation area for thousands of people since that time.

As we go through many of the processes in Utah, I hope I can still count on your ability, willingness, to cooperate with State and local governments to provide and guarantee outdoor recreation opportunities for people in a way that I think in the past we have had somewhat cavalier attitude toward that. And I would appreciate your restatement of that support and moving in those areas.

Secretary JEWELL. Yes, Congressman Bishop, I am fully supportive of working alongside State and local governments on recreation and thoughtful management of public lands.

Mr. BISHOP. I appreciate that. I also would just like to comment that when we rely on precedent to make decisions, we have had gridlock in the past, and will have gridlock in the future. So I also hope I can rely on you to work with us to, and I hate the cliche, but think outside the box to come up with more creative answers to the situations with which we are dealing.

I want to go through a couple of other issues very quickly. When Jethro met his son-in-law Moses, and realized he was working himself into a frazzle, he suggested he divide the camp up into groups of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, which gave the biblical evidence to the cliche that the government which governs best is that which is closest to the people, and you solve problems in local areas.

BLM has an issue that strictly deals with the State of Nevada. Yesterday the Governor of my State sent a letter to Director Kornze—I hope you will work with him—asking him specifically to solve the BLM problem of Nevada in Nevada, and not export it to the State of Utah. I want you to know that I fully support that letter and reason and rationale for the letter, and do not want the situation in Nevada to be exacerbated by moving the adjudication issues over to the State of Utah. I have a copy of that letter, if you need it. I wish you would talk to them and fully—I just want to know that I think I and the rest of the delegation fully support

what the Governor is trying to say on this particular issue that should be satisfied in Nevada.

I am going to give you five quick things. Answer them if you wish to, or ignore me, whatever they come up with.

Number one. We spend very little time talking about invasive species. I still think in your budget we spend too much on administration and not enough getting the money to the ground. I hope to have a bipartisan bill that will come up with some projects we have done specifically in New Mexico that shows how we can better spend the money. We need to look at invasive species, I don't think we spend enough time talking about that particular issue.

Number two. When Mr. Gohmert was talking about the workforce that deals on the energy development offshore, one thing he did not mention is we have an aging workforce, and we do not have enough energy engineers coming through in America, so that the reality is our workforce in that area is becoming increasingly foreign. This is something that does not hit you directly, but it is tangential to our energy policy. And we need to look at that issue significantly. These are high-paying jobs, and we need to get Americans into these kind of jobs in the future.

Number three, I appreciate what you have done with the Northern Marianas, as Mr. Sablan was talking to you, in giving them their mineral rights off the coast, treating them like other States. I would now ask that you also spin that process, and look at those of us who are onshore, and treat us the same way with our mineral rights at the same time. That is rhetorical; you know what I am talking about, you don't need to answer it.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BISHOP. Number four. The States gave a whole lot of money to the Park Service last year for Park purposes, which is now basically an unappropriated slush fund that is there. You do not have a legal responsibility of giving that money back to the States. I think there is a moral responsibility. And before we actually have to deal with legislation either from Mr. Daines or Mr. Gardner or Mr. Stewart, give the money back. I think it is a moral imperative of giving that back to the States.

And, finally, I got on the very last end of Mr. Holt's comments about an antiquated law passed a long time ago which no longer meets the needs. Gosh, I thought he was talking about Antiquities Act, but apparently it was a different antiquated law at the time.

I thank you for being here. If you want to respond to any of those, feel free to. If you want to blow me off, feel free to, as well.

[Laughter.]

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman Bishop, I would never blow you off. Let me—if I may have just a quick time to respond?

The CHAIRMAN. Please do.

Secretary JEWELL. Invasive species are a huge problem across our landscapes. They are exacerbated by some of the dramatic events we have seen: floods, fires, and droughts. So, I agree with you, and am certainly willing to work with you on additional investments there, or more efficient ways to spend the money. I am happy to listen to what you have to say.

Aging workforce, huge problem across the Department of the Interior, huge problem in the Bureau of Reclamation, which Mike

ran until recently. Part of my youth initiative is engaging many, many more American young people in understanding what we need to have, what we have in our public lands, and how to manage them. And every Bureau of the Interior is focused on that next generation of young people.

I'll—I know what you are talking about in mineral rights, and you said don't bother, so I won't.

NPS reimbursement. I can't commit the Federal Treasury—and I did say that to Governor Herbert and everybody else. I am not opposed to reimbursement. It has to take congressional action. If you support reimbursement of the States for national parks, then you can do that. But I have been told by my solicitors it is not something that I can do. But I certainly don't oppose it.

And on the Antiquities Act, we will disagree on that. I think it has been a very, very important right given by Congress to the President. This President has used it very sparingly, with a lot of community input and support. I think it is a good Act, and we will continue to be very thoughtful in how this President exercises——

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, and you have taught me not to yield back before I hear an answer.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. I just wanted to make an announcement. The Secretary has graciously said that she would extend her time beyond noon to about 12:30. Now, the Members on the Minority side, I have four Members here, and then the Members on our side who have not had a chance to ask questions. Plus Mr. Mullin and Byrne, who have been in and out, and potentially Mr. Young. And at that point we will cut it off, and hopefully we can make your timeframe.

With that, I will recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Cartwright.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Thank you, Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio, for your leadership in bringing this hearing before the committee.

The Department of the Interior's mission affects the lives of all Americans. In fact, nearly every American lives within an hour's drive of lands or waters managed by the Interior Department. In 2012, Interior's programs contributed an estimated $371 billion to the U.S. economy, and supported 2.3 million jobs in activities including outdoor recreation and tourism, energy development, grazing, even timber harvesting. Simply put, Interior works every day to protect America's great outdoors and power the future of this country.

Secretary Jewell, thank you for coming here today and spending time with us. I know it is never an easy task, especially testifying on the budget in these particularly challenging fiscal times.

In addition to serving on this committee, I am also a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and I have, at this point, had ample experience with Congress's efforts to investigate the administration, both productively and in a manner that can border on harassment, and waste precious time and resources.

I have a particular concern for the volume of government resources that are devoted to responding to the numerous inquiries and subpoenas from the Majority of this Committee, and the possibility that overzealous actions by the Majority could inhibit effec-

tiveness of the Department. In fact, it is my understanding that the Department of the Interior has spent over 19,000 hours responding to the demands of this committee, alone.

Could you please discuss the overall impact on Interior, as a result of this diversion of resources, and how this has affected Interior's ability to carry out its work and missions, especially its ability to permit and oversee energy production on Federal lands?

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you very much for the question. I recognize and appreciate this committee's legitimate oversight responsibility. And, as I have said to the Chairman on numerous occasions, happy to sit down with him and other members of the committee.

As there are concerns, as you carry out that legitimate responsibility, there have been 16 different document requests, oversight requests, from this committee. They have, in some cases, gone to subpoenas. We have testified, we have—I have asked my team to start keeping track of the amount of pages, the amount of hours: 45,000 pages of documents have been carefully reviewed and provided to this committee. We have $2 million of taxpayer money expended in responding to requests from the committee.

And probably the best and most frustrating example recently has to do with Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the fact that 70 of our little over 200 law enforcement personnel from the Fish and Wildlife Service have been dedicated specifically to this task of producing records, and not dealing with some of the biggest challenges we have, in terms of oversight of our wildlife refuges, international wildlife trafficking, such as elephant ivory and other things, where we really need these folks back on that task.

So, I appreciate this committee's oversight, but there have been—there has been a tremendous impact on my Department in attempting to respond.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Well, thank you for that, Secretary. I would also like to emphasize to you how important it is that you promulgate a stringent rule for fracking on Federal lands. I believe you need to set a high bar that truly protects our environment and requires full disclosure about what is going into the ground, and potentially into our water supply.

I hope that you will pledge to continue to work with Congress and listen to those on the ground, such as the people from where I live in Northeastern Pennsylvania, that have to live every day with the worry about and the consequences of nearby fracking, and know the potential costs of a loosely regulated industry. And I will ask you to comment on that, Secretary.

Secretary JEWELL. Well, I commit to continuing to work with this body, as well as my colleagues at the BLM who are in the process of analyzing the over 1.3 million comments that we have had on the fracking regulations. As they listen to those comments and adapt the regulations, we want to strike the right balance of safe and responsible development, and also economic development, and believe that we can come up with rules that are safe and responsible. But very happy to take your comments and those that have been raised today under consideration. Thank you.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Thank you so much. I yield back——

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Labrador.

Mr. LABRADOR. Good morning, or—Madam Secretary. Still morning. It is great to see you again. And thank you for coming out to Idaho and visiting with us. As you know, in the past—8 of the past 10 years, the Forest Service has exceeded its budget for wildfire suppression, required the agency to borrow from other parts of its budget to cover wildfire suppression costs. And this ultimately undermines the core mission of the Forest Service.

And I am grateful that we are working together, as Republicans and Democrats, as Congress and the administration, to work on these issues. So I would like to start out by congratulating you for what you are trying to do in that regard, and how important that is for the people of Idaho. But I do have other questions that may not be as friendly. But I just wanted to start out by thanking you. I am pleased that the President's budget has included the mechanism that will more effectively manage wildfire suppression funds and help Idaho and allow for better forest management to prevent future wildfires without any spending increases. So thank you for your work on that.

Now, I was intrigued by Mr. Costa a little bit earlier, by some of the questions. Mr. Costa highlighted the man-made drought in California, and how it is affecting the rest of the country's economy, because of an ESA listing. In this case and in many others, it seems like we are willing to prioritize the conservation or an endangered species over the well-being of the people. You and I disagree on the science here. But let's just assume for a second that you are right about the science, that the delta smelt is about to become extinct.

I watched the movie, "Noah," last night. And one of the things in the movie, "Noah," was, you know, inside joke, but they—in the ark there were several species that went extinct. For example, the dodo bird was in the ark. The world didn't change when the dodo bird went extinct. I agree that we need to protect the bald eagle, for example. You know, we have some national interest there, we have some issues that are important. But when you are talking about the delta smelt, you are pitting the people of California against saving one particular species.

We are not even sure that the science is correct. But even assuming that the science is correct, should we be rethinking what the ESA is about and should be—should we be taking into consideration the effect and the impact that it has on the economy, on humans, on the environment, on all those things?

Secretary JEWELL. Thanks for the question. The Endangered Species Act has brought back iconic species like the bald eagle. It has helped us recognize the threats to species like the manatee or the grizzly bear. We think about individual species. But what the Endangered Species Act has really done for us is help us understand how our ecosystems are linked together. So——

Mr. LABRADOR. But where is the science that—we know that other species have gone extinct, and society has continued to thrive. So at what point do we say enough is enough, we are not going to put the people of California in danger, we are not going to endanger the farmers, we are not going to endanger—I think

what Mr. Costa said was that it was half of the produce that are grown in the United States come from that area. And we are doing it for something that I think—that I personally think is shoddy science.

But, second, even if we assume that it is not shoddy science, it is something that we have that is actually affecting all of society, just because of one particular species.

Secretary JEWELL. Well—go ahead, Mike, yes.

Mr. CONNOR. I would like to take a shot. First of all, with respect to California, it is not a man-made drought. Through January, it was the worst year on record. And it is only—maybe it is now the second or third worst year on record because of recent precipitation. But it is not one species, it is an overall——

Mr. LABRADOR. But you have made it worse.

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. Ecosystem——

Mr. LABRADOR. You have made what is clearly an environmental catastrophe, you have made it worse by making it more difficult for the farmers in the community to actually access their water.

Mr. CONNOR. We have taken the——

Mr. LABRADOR. That is the problem that I am having.

Mr. CONNOR. Well, can I answer? We have taken aggressive actions to provide more water than we otherwise would under the biological opinions. But part of this—we are protecting a number of salmon species here. So when you say the Act is impacting people, we are trying—we are also protecting the species that people make their livelihoods on, and also feed this country with. They are important, too. So we are trying to—we are balancing a number of interests here.

We have an obligation to continue—not just use the best science to form the biological opinions, you are exactly right, we need to keep improving the data, improving the analysis, using the tools——

Mr. LABRADOR. But my question is should we improve the ESA.

The CHAIRMAN. Real quickly.

Mr. LABRADOR. Is there something that we should do in Congress here? Because if you look at the opinion of the Ninth Circuit, they relied on the congressional—they said, "The Congress said let's do X, so there is nothing we can do." So, should we change the ESA to make sure that we actually take better care of the issues that are happening on the ground, like in California?

Mr. CONNOR. The ESA allows a lot of tools for flexibility and regulatory certainty, and we need to use all of those tools these days. I am not sure——

Mr. LABRADOR. So your answer is we don't need to change the ESA in any way.

Mr. CONNOR. We——

Mr. LABRADOR. That is your answer?

Mr. CONNOR. My answer is yes——

Mr. LABRADOR. Yes, OK, thank you.

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. I think we have the tools within ESA.

Mr. LABRADOR. And——

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. I want to give every Member an opportunity to ask their questions in the time period we have.

I recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio.

Madam Secretary, first I would like to say how much I have enjoyed working with you over the past year, and it is wonderful to see you again. As you know, I represent the Florida Everglades, one of the Nation's greatest natural treasures. And the administration's commitment to restoration has been strong.

There is one thing that I worry about, or part of the thing that I am worrying about is the larger projects taken for comprehensive Everglades restoration that have been indefinitely delayed, affecting families and businesses nearby. As you may be aware, farmers in my district have lost the entire yield of this year's crops because of high water, and significant flooding that has taken place in the region. Finalizing Contract 8 and completing the C–111 canal south of South Dade would protect the growers facing significant financial risk and personal burden, and a strong disadvantage to them participating in the international market. So, I think it is important.

So, Madam Secretary, where are you on the C–111 South Dade canal, and how does the Department plan to move forward?

Secretary JEWELL. Thanks for the question. It has been very, very helpful to be in Florida a couple of times and meet with the Everglades Coalition. I believe the C–111 is an Army Corps of Engineers project, and so is not in my budget. But we are fully supportive of that project, and we will certainly do whatever we can to help move it forward, as we progress with Everglades restoration. And there are other important things that are in our budget to continue to make progress.

Mr. GARCIA. Absolutely, and I appreciate that. Taking advantage of the fact I have a little bit more time, Chekika is a camping ground to the southeast part of the Everglades, which was, due to sequestration, closed down. It is widely used and, in particular, it is a very good southeast entry point of the Florida Everglades. And while we were able to get out of the sequestration mode, I would like you to see if you can consider reopening that, now that we are not in sequestration. It was closed down. It offers tremendous opportunity for usage, and is used, but is slated to be closed down. And, if you could, I would like you to look at that.

And, finally, I appreciate you being here. And taking modern management tips from the Bible, as well as species management from Noah is always very important, but we hope that science is what you use. Thank you very much for being here. I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman very much for yielding back, Mr. Garcia.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Gosar.

Dr. GOSAR. Well, thank you very much. And I thank the gentleman, Mr. Garcia, for alluding to science. Thank you very, very much for coming out to Prescott last year. It was surely felt. And that is where I want to hit. I differ a little bit with Congressman Labrador.

I have had two fires, two catastrophic fires in my first two terms. The Waldo Fire over on the eastern side of Arizona, the largest fire

in Arizona history, we spent over $200 million putting that single fire out. We lost $2.5 billion worth of assets, and 20 percent of the spotted owl actually was incinerated. That is hardly a success story.

And then, last year what we did is we put firefighters in harm's way with catastrophic amounts of vegetation; 19 died. We have to do something different. And when I look at this budget, I see that we have proposed $146.3 million for hazardous fuel management in fiscal year 2015. The Forest Service has requested almost $1.5 billion for suppression, but only $350 million for hazardous fuel reduction. So almost $3 billion between those two agencies for suppression, but less than $500 million for up-front active management. We need to do something different.

Fighting fires starts at managing the forest. Getting in there and starting to thin the forest makes sense, not only on management of healthy forests, because of blights, cankers, and bark beetle infestations, but also because of water management sub-surfacely. Because each one of those trees has an implication to the whole dynamics of water.

So, when we start looking at Colorado and California and Arizona, these are dynamic. I am tired. My State is absolutely furious and tired of being victims. Not to—even to look at the mitigation costs of sterilized soil. We have it over in the Shultz Pass Fire, we have it over in the Wallow Fire, we have it over in Yarnell. And we can't mitigate that for over 50 years. Something has to be done. And what I am asking for you is we need to start pushing these projects.

4–FRY Initiative. We have—right now in my State we have 30,000 acres on inventory. We need 100,000. We need 100,000 acres by June 1 to make this thing work. This is active management, everybody agrees. The government agrees, the environmental groups agree, and the logging industry agrees. They are doing it in scientific methods. Can I get a validation from you that you will support looking at new types of EISs and NEPAs to try to get this off the ground? Because if we go through another forest fire season like this without changing our course, we are going to become victims once again.

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, thanks for your passion on this topic. And we share a concern. And I think that none of us feel that we have had the budget needed, whether from diversions for suppression or just from appropriations, to do the job that we would like to do, in terms of hazardous fuel removal, effective land management, prevention of invasive species, and so on.

A lot of what you talk about is predominantly in the Forest Service budget.

Dr. GOSAR. I understand.

Secretary JEWELL. And so, the management of the forest specifically I am not as familiar with. There is $30 million in the budget for resilient landscapes. That will complement the hazardous fuels budget. That adds to the $146 million we've got for fuel. So there is a little bit more than appears in the budget, because we can direct that toward long-term management of those landscapes.

But, still, I appreciate that there is a very large issue, and that is going to be very difficult to do, even in the——

Dr. GOSAR. Well, and there is——

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. Confines of what we are proposing.

Dr. GOSAR. And it is not like we haven't come to the table, you know? There are absolutely opportunities to look at some of the unmanned aerials, to look at infrared assertions on EISs and NEPAs. We need to be pushing this issue, and people engaged in this community, putting people back to work in an industry that is begging for it.

So, I hope that you will really provide that push to Chief Tidwell and to the Forest Service. We would love to be that pilot project to show how everybody can work together, based on the science.

The second question I want to go to is the Mine Safety and Health Administration, or MSHA, budget proposes to completely eliminate 8.5 million in funding for State grants under the Mine Safety and Health Act. Meanwhile, it proposes to increase MSHA's budget by 2.8 million and 18 FTEs to expand training, delivery, and oversight. This essentially means less training and more enforcement.

Do you have any suggestions regarding what we might do to avoid the loss of this important funding at reducing injury and death to the miners?

Secretary JEWELL. I am sorry, but it is not part of the Interior's budget. I was just looking at my team back here.

Do you know whose budget that is? Labor, Department of Labor? Sorry.

Dr. GOSAR. Well, we will get to the next one, then. We also have some problems with some fish hatcheries over on the eastern—or the western side of the State, in Mohave County. We would certainly like to have some type of collaboration in regards to the economic empowerment of what fishing does along that Colorado. Some type of collaborative environment with State jurisdiction over that fish hatchery, along with some private partnerships, I think, would be a nice opportunity. But we really would like to see the economic empowerment of what the budget cuts will actually do, particularly on the fish hatcheries on the west side.

Secretary JEWELL. May I take a minute to respond?

The CHAIRMAN. Real quickly, yes.

Secretary JEWELL. OK.

The CHAIRMAN. Real quickly.

Secretary JEWELL. The budget is essentially flat for fish hatcheries between the 2014 and 2015 budgets. We won't be closing any in 2014. We are working alongside States and other stakeholders on finding a long-term solution to funding fish hatcheries. We know they are very important to the sport fishery. They are very important to local communities. But we also know our budgets are constrained. So we are very happy to work alongside you on long-term funding solutions for those. We know how important they are. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentlelady from California, Mrs. Napolitano.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, and I can't tell you how much we appreciate the work that your new

deputy has done in our area. He is very accessible, and we are very thankful for that. Thank you, Mr. Connor.

I have several questions. I will probably submit some of them in writing. However, some of the ones that I am totally concerned with is your budget on WaterSMART and water—Title XVI recycling. I seem like an old song being replayed.

To me, that is $21.5 million and $350 million in backlog of projects. Just recently, in the last episode of water, the last storm that hit Southern California, the Army Corps of Engineers were able to capture 22,000 acre-feet of water worth $22 million. And that is because they waived their ability to capture the water in the dams that are in our area.

We need more of that, because of the fact that, as you well know, the events—call it climate change, call it weather change, whatever—is going to continue, and we are going to need all the water we can get for Northern and Southern California. And we have issues with Northern California and Southern California fighting over the last drop of water, so you understand how we feel and how we need to be able to ensure that Southern California is able to protect itself and protect its water sources.

The other issue—and I will submit some questions for that for the record, because we would like to see that $135 million or $150 million for recycling projects and produce more water to be recharged into the aquifers.

The other issue, of course, is the invasive species. And Quagga mussels have cost some of the water agencies millions upon millions of dollars. And I know there is answer—there is some reference as to being able to determine where the sciences are. Do we have any answers? Can we provide any update on what has been found, what is working, what is not working?

Some of the universities have the ability to have small funding to be able to do research. Are we projecting to them where we need to have them do the research on invasive species and other areas? And what are the results of some of the findings that they may have had in some of those research? That is another of my questions, and I am not asking—it is costing our taxpayers, essentially, millions of dollars, because it goes back to the ratepayers.

And fire suppression is a very interesting subject for Southern California. As of the Colby Fire in February, there had been 400-some-odd fires in California alone. How are we going to be able to help the whole community of firefighters, of cities adjoining the foothills of the hills of the mountains, and being able to have them prepared?

One of the suggestions one of my city councils came up with was purchasing the super scooper that is leased. Had it not been leased from Canada for an extra month, it would not have been able to be as successful in putting that Colby Fire out, and the fact that there was a dam nearby, so they could just scoop in and pick up the water and just dump it a couple miles away. We need to be able to help them be able to help themselves.

And then there is the issue of the water creating mudslides in my area that—the county says, "Well, we are not responsible." The OES says, "Well, you need to be able to secure long term." And then, everybody else has their own opinion. We need to get all our

agencies together to protect the people that live below. It affected an avocado farm, it affected several residences. Others use K railing in other areas, and were very successful in avoiding any major damage to their properties.

So, somehow we need to be able to connect the dots and be able to have the agencies work with each other on being able to address these issues. This is a new area for me, it is 85 percent new. So I am learning and dealing with some of the concerns that some of my elected officials and some of my water agencies have. So, those are the things I will be submitting to you.

And tribal recognition, where are we with that? Are we having more assistance to the Tribes in dealing with mental health issues? Because you address that in your budget. I am the co-chairman of the caucus. How are we working to be able to help them deal with it, and job training in—dealing with alcoholism and dealing with all the things that the Tribes inherently have in their background?

And those are the things that I would love to be able to sit and discuss with you and your staff.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady. The time of the gentlelady has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Wyoming, Mrs. Lummis.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary Jewell, for staying after noon to take our questions. I am going to focus my questions on the sage grouse and on the Endangered Species Act, generally, just to orient you to my questions.

The President's budget includes a request for $4 million in increases to ecological services for sage grouse. They are calling it the Sage Grouse Initiative. It will fund 38.75 full-time employees. My first question is, what will these employees be doing? Will any of them be on the ground to implement on-the-ground conservation plans?

Secretary JEWELL. So you are referring to the Fish and Wildlife Service budget. There is also $15 million in the BLM's budget. And, as a land management agency, they will be doing a lot of work on the ground, working in concert with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the land owners, whether they are the land owner, or cooperatively with others, on the on-the-ground stuff for conservation of sage grouse habitat.

Mrs. LUMMIS. So the on-the-ground work will be done more by BLM than through this ecological services group. Is that correct?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, the Fish and Wildlife Service is working with whomever the land management agency is on what needs to be done, so that we hopefully can avoid the need for a listing. The BLM, as the largest land manager in the area——

Mrs. LUMMIS. Yes.

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. Will be doing a lot of that work on the ground, as will States and private land owners, and so on.

Mrs. LUMMIS. OK. Well, as you know, Wyoming has done a lot of work on this——

Secretary JEWELL. Yes.

Mrs. LUMMIS [continuing]. To try to keep us off the list. And when do you expect the Department to sign a record of decision on

the BLM's revision to the land use plan in the Lander field office? Including revisions for sage grouse conservation.

Secretary JEWELL. I believe we expect all of the resource management plans to be signed by the end of this calendar year, and we are being held into account by the deadlines imposed by—court order deadlines.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Yes, yes——

Secretary JEWELL. I know the Lander decision is in there now, there is—it is something that our team is looking very closely at. It knits together a larger picture over 11 States. And so, they are working to do them all, I think, at one time.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Yes, that is what I understand, too. And so, one of my next questions is, why wait? The Lander plan is ready to go. How does waiting for other land use amendments to catch up help the sage grouse, itself?

Because we know that, through statements we have previously gotten from the Fish and Wildlife Service, that the Service believes the greater sage grouse core area protection provides an excellent model for meaningful conservation of sage grouse if fully supported and implemented. The Lander plan is ready to go. So why wait for other plans and doing them all at one fell swoop? We would love to just take it and run with it.

Mr. CONNOR. The release of the Lander plan is being discussed right now. It is ahead of all other plans. And so we will have to get back to you. It will be some time this year, and it will probably precede the other ones, but we will have to——

Mrs. LUMMIS. That would be great.

Mr. CONNOR [continuing]. Find out for the record——

Mrs. LUMMIS. You know, I will get back to you on that, and I appreciate——

Mr. CONNOR. Sure.

Mrs. LUMMIS [continuing]. Your willingness to discuss that.

Mr. CONNOR. Absolutely.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Thank you. Now, let me read you what the Fish and Wildlife Service has said about other things in our plan. Again, if fully implemented, we believe the executive order—this is in Wyoming—can provide the conservation program necessary to achieve Wyoming's goal of precluding listing for greater sage grouse in Wyoming. So we are very, very interested in seeing our opportunity in Wyoming to proceed.

My question is, what more are you looking for?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, first, I want to compliment you, and I want to compliment Governor Mead for the State's leadership around greater sage grouse conservation. Governor Mead co-chairs this with Governor Hickenlooper.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Yes.

Secretary JEWELL. All the States are involved. I have had multiple meetings with the States. We share a common goal of precluding the need of a listing of this species, and there is a tremendous amount of work going on to make that happen.

Because it is an 11-State range, an individual State doing a great job isn't enough to provide the habitat necessary, which is why we are keeping all the States together. And I would say it is an un-

precedented amount of cooperation that we are working very, very hard with to, hopefully, preclude the need of a listing.

But if a listing does occur, to make sure that the kinds of activities and the people that have signed up through 4(d) rules and otherwise will be protected in their ongoing use of those lands for the activities they are engaged in.

Mrs. LUMMIS. And Madam Secretary, I can assure you the gentleman to my right and this gentleman to my left are as concerned as I am. So thank you. We will get back in touch with you on this. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico, Mr. Pierluisi.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, welcome you, Madam Secretary, and Mr. Deputy Secretary. And I encourage both of you to visit Puerto Rico as soon as possible.

My district is home to five national wildlife refuges; one important National Park Service unit, the San Juan National Historic Site; and, although not under the direct purview of the Secretary, a gem in the U.S. forest system, El Yunque National Forest, where the Interior Department is helping advance cutting-edge climate science.

I quickly want to emphasize a few parts of the Department's budget and mission that I support and that have great relevance for Puerto Rico.

First, the Department is supporting ecosystem-based resource management decisions in Puerto Rico in an integrated fashion with the local community through a landscape conservation cooperative, or LCC approach, that your predecessor launched nationally in 2010. The Carribean LCC, the most recent one formed, is bringing the best available science to bear to preserve habitat and respond to climate change effects on land, water, ocean, fish, and wildlife, and cultural heritage resources in Puerto Rico. This is a great synergy of all the resource agencies and non-Federal partners, and I urge the Department to continue budgeting resources for the national network of LCCs.

My second point relates to funding for the National Wildlife Refuge system. The three refuge units in particular in Puerto Rico—Cabo Rojo, Culebra, and Vieques—have a significant backlog of maintenance projects totaling roughly $50 million. The refuges on Culebra and Vieques are directly relevant to the economies of the two island municipalities in which they are located. The Fish and Wildlife Service currently controls over half of the island of Vieques, and about a quarter of Culebra.

As a large land manager, it is important that the Service continue working with the Department of Defense and local authorities to expedite the clean-up of these former military training range lands. While clean-up progress has been made, much remains to be done. And as areas are cleaned up, according to the final remedy reached between DoD, Interior, EPA, and the local government, opportunities for transfer of the lands from Interior to the local government will become very important.

Last year I raised these opportunities at a subcommittee hearing, and would like your commitment, Madam Secretary, to work on advancing the dialog inside the Department about ways to rescale the

national—the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge so that lands currently within its boundaries can be opened for local economic development and recreational purposes, including through the possibility of legislation to transfer title.

I don't want to burden you with more oversight, because I join my colleagues in commending your responsiveness, the Department's responsiveness, to all the requests and subpoenas that you have received from this committee. But I tell you I respectfully urge you to take a look at the size of the wildlife refuge in Vieques. It is huge. And if there are opportunities to assist Puerto Rico and the government of Puerto Rico, in particular, which is going through an economic crisis right now, so that we can develop some of those lands, use them for valid economic development purposes, please have an open mind there.

Last, as we approach the centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, I want to highlight the role that Old San Juan and the National Park Service unit on our island fulfills for the preservation and interpretation of our Hispanic heritage. The unit protects evidence of Spain's history in what is now the United States, the forts of El Morro, San Cristobal, and San Geronimo. There is an incredible story to tell through interpretation of these structures, and preservation of these forts and the old city walls is key to our cultural identity and to our tourism sector.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, I urge you at some point to hold a hearing in Puerto Rico. I mean those forts are amazing, and they are treasures for our Nation. And the Department of the Interior is really the watchdog. It is really the one overseeing, acting in a way as the protector of those sites.

There are ongoing projects, particularly trails surrounding El Morro Fort that I would urge you to oversee, as well as a study dealing with the San Geronimo Fort, which is not part of the Park System presently, but which is connected to them both, El Morro Fort and the San Cristobal Fort. So, please take a look at those matters. And if you would like to comment on——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, real quickly, because we have some time, and I know the Secretary is under a timeframe here.

Mr. PIERLUISI. I am sorry. So?

The CHAIRMAN. Madam Secretary, very briefly.

Secretary JEWELL. I will give a very brief response. First, I would like nothing more than to go to Puerto Rico after this winter here. Very interested in working with you on Vieques and potential legislation. I do understand the importance of the economy and outdoor recreation as a very important part of that economy for Puerto Rico. And so we would be very happy to advance that dialog, as well as on the forts that you referenced. The Park Service has done work to really help tell the story of Latinos within, you know, the broad United States, and this is a good opportunity to do that.

I would also say on the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, we have $17.7 million in the budget, and that is an increase over where we are for this year.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Thank you.

Secretary JEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Recognize the gentleman from Alaska, Mr. Young.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, in your nearly $12 billion budget, how many dollars did you request to provide alternative access to King Cove or weather-related emergency medical evacuations?

Secretary JEWELL. I don't have specific money in the budget for that, but we are pursuing and have had conversations with the Corps of Engineers, the Coast Guard, and will continue to do that, and happy to work with you, Congressman, on suggestions that you have to look at alternatives.

Mr. YOUNG. Well, I will suggest respectfully during the Senate hearing you are going to look at other methods to have transportation for those that are medically incapacitated. And you had 2 weeks. Have you come up with an answer in this 2 weeks about how we are going to move these people that are stricken?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, I certainly had follow-up discussions, Congressman Young. There is a road that has been put in recently all the way to the edge of the refuge that shortens the distance considerably for things like helicopter flights, perhaps boat transportation. And my colleague, Pat Pourchot, in Alaska, who represents the Secretary's office up there, has been working actively with a number of parties. That has pre-dated my hearing with the Senate, and continues today.

Mr. YOUNG. Well, with all due respect, a helicopter costs about $200,000. We have had six since your hearing, this period of time, and they cost about $200,000 a piece.

Should the Department of the Interior, who has trust responsibility to the native people of King Cove, be responsible for reimbursing the Coast Guard for these expenses?

Secretary JEWELL. Sir, we have trust responsibility to consult with Tribes. We have done that in that region——

Mr. YOUNG. No, no, no, no. Answer the question. Should you be responsible, out of the Department of the Interior, with increasing your budget, especially with the Park Service—should you be responsible for those helicopter trips?

Secretary JEWELL. The Indian Health Service is responsible for Medivac flights——

Mr. YOUNG. The Department of the Interior is over the Indian Health Service.

Secretary JEWELL. No, the Department of Health and Human Services is over the Indian Health Service.

Mr. YOUNG. Department of the Interior has the BIA, which has the authority of—the trust authority with the natives.

Secretary JEWELL. The BIA does have trust authority with the natives——

Mr. YOUNG. That is right.

Secretary JEWELL [continuing]. In consultation with the Tribes.

Mr. YOUNG. So you should be held responsible. And if we do so—and this will happen, Madam Secretary, I think your decision stunk. This will happen. If we put it into the law, or into the appropriation bill, we will take it out of the Department of the Interior. Which one of those departments do you think we should take it out of?

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, I will continue to be——

Mr. YOUNG. Which one of the departments should we take it out of?

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, I do not believe that money for a medical——

Mr. YOUNG. You don't think it will happen, do you?

Secretary JEWELL. Can I finish? Would you like me to answer the question?

Mr. YOUNG. No, I want to ask you which department. You answer. Which department would you take it out of? It is your responsibility. You won't let a road be built. You have not allowed this. And I am losing lives. I just think that is very inappropriate.

And, by the way, does a helicopter bother the birds on that refuge?

Secretary JEWELL. Sir, I am sure when a helicopter is flying it bothers birds on the refuge.

Mr. YOUNG. Just like the birds out here, on the George Washington Parkway. We have thousands of cars go by, and they are about 6 feet from the road. The birds get used to it.

Secretary JEWELL. Congressman, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge is unique. It has been recognized as wilderness by Congress back in 1980 as a wetland of critical international significance. The birds that are in that area are different than the birds in the Potomac River, and there is science——

Mr. YOUNG. They are no different, they are the same type of birds, same species, as far as genetically goes, and you and I know that.

Secretary JEWELL. No, sir. The Pacific black——

Mr. YOUNG. There is exactly the same attitude. They get used to it, it is not new. They have traffic on that refuge, and you and I know it. The difference is I have a group of people over here, and I want—do you have grandkids?

Secretary JEWELL. No.

Mr. YOUNG. No. Do you have children?

Secretary JEWELL. Two.

Mr. YOUNG. Two. How old are they?

Secretary JEWELL. Twenty-nine and twenty-eight.

Mr. YOUNG. OK. They are in Cold Bay now. They are not in Cold Bay. They are in King Cove. And they get sick. And there is no way to get across there, but you don't have the road. And the winds are blowing 80 miles an hour. There is no way to go, because the Secretary of the Interior, this one and the last one, said we couldn't build a road. This Congress passed the ability to build that road. And your son is dying. I hope you feel good about that. I really do.

And, by the way, I want to congratulate both of you. If we had a show of dancing, like they have on television, both of you would be outstanding dancers on that show. I watch this program in my office. I love your answers. It is dancing. And yours is just as bad. This hearing accomplishes nothing, because you don't take the time to communicate with us here, through our offices, picking up the phone. We have these hearings, and nothing occurs.

So, Madam Secretary, I told you when you were sworn in, I would like you to get a little more involved and say, "What can we help you with in your district? How can we be of benefit to you,"

instead of saying, "We are the Secretary of the Interior, don't question us." I just suggest you ought to do it.

And, by the way, if someone dies out of King Cove, I want you to really think about it and be ashamed of yourselves.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, it is great to have you with us. Last July, whenever you were before this committee, I was pleased to talk with you about the White River Watershed and the National Blueways issue that affected a big portion of my district, and appreciate you rescinding that program by the urging of this committee and the numerous outpouring of the grass roots within Missouri and Arkansas. So I do want to thank you for that.

Also in that hearing I brought to you my concerns about the proposed general management plan that was going to affect the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. It is the national park that is encompassed solely in my congressional district, in the State of Missouri. And in that hearing there were four items that I told you that I did not want to see in the general management plan. And those four items were not to restrict the horsepower, or the use of boats on the Current and Jacks Fork River. Also, reducing horse trails and other trails, limiting access points, and creating a wilderness area. Those were four points that I said, back in July, before the general management plan was ever brought up, of concerns that I had in it. And the general management plan was filed in November.

Are you aware—there were three alternatives that were proposed by the National Park Service during the comment process. Which of those three alternatives included the provisions that I just asked for?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, it is my understanding—and I don't have a deep understanding of this—but the National Park Service is reviewing public comments based on what they submitted. I don't think that they have completed that process, and intend to by the end of the year.

I will also say that your Governor has spoken with me about this, and you have a little bit of a different point of view. I know that there are a lot of assessments that the National Park Service will be—a lot of input the National Park Service will be taking into account as they work on this management plan.

Mr. SMITH. You know, the four proposals that I said that I did not want in the general management plan is because I am speaking for the 750,000 people that I represent. And plus Missourians. And you mentioned our Governor. And, unfortunately, our Governor has a different view of the individuals in Missouri. In fact, he has a different view from his own Department of Conservation for the State of Missouri. The Department of Conservation also submitted comments to you that I hope that you take very close attention to that disagrees with our Governor and agrees with myself, in saying that you need to have the no-action alternative.

This plan has worked since 1984, and it has been adopted twice in the last 30 years. In 1964, when the Ozark National Scenic Riverways were established, it was established to preserve our nat-

ural resources—we have some of the most beautiful waterways in the country—but also balance that with our recreational use. And the alternatives that were submitted by the National Park Service, both A, B, and C, all three of them include all four provisions that I specifically asked to not be included.

And I am asking that you strongly consider my comments, you strongly consider the 4,000 comments that were brought forward in all the public hearings, and that you strongly pay attention to the Department of Conservation for Missouri's comments, and not so much of our Governor, who doesn't have an understanding of this river. I grew up on this river. This is where my family has been for seven generations. And I sure hope that you continue to balance the preservation with the natural resources by keeping it a balanced approach.

Mr. Knox was in here on February 26, and I asked him who was going to be involved in the decision process. And he gave me a few names. And we have been trying to set up personal meetings with every one of those individuals for about a month now, and haven't had a meeting. He also mentioned that you would be part of the decisionmaking process. I am hoping that you can let us know exactly everyone who is going to be in, and see if they will meet with me. I would love to talk to them about the importance to our district. Can you help make sure those meetings occur?

Secretary JEWELL. I will certainly make sure that your comments here get to the people in the Park Service that are going to be assessing this. This isn't something that would come to me, from a decisionmaking standpoint. But I appreciate your input. And I also will say that when Congress sets aside land as a national park or a national scenic river, part of the objective is to manage it in perpetuity for all Americans. And so, the local residents, recreation, habitat conservation, long-term management, all these things are taken into account by the Park Service, as well—including the comments of you and your constituents.

Mr. SMITH. And I totally agree. I mean these parks are the parks for all Americans. And all Americans should be able to access their own parks, instead of allowing them to limit their access on the riverways that has been happening for decades.

Your Park Service restricted baptisms along our riverways, where they had to get special use permits, until they finally rescinded it. These kind of things are the attack that you are doing on rural America. And I will tell you, I will fight tooth and nail if you continue to implement these programs that eliminates access to all Americans, if I have to fight in the appropriations process or through the legislation process.

So, I hope that you hear my concerns and you hear the concerns of the people of this great country.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The last individual to be recognized—and I thank you for your patience, Madam Secretary—is Mr. Tipton from Colorado.

Mr. TIPTON. Thank you, Secretary Jewell and Secretary Connor, for taking the time to be able to be here. And I appreciate you extending your visit just a moment. I did want to be able to speak to some questions that are important for our district.

I was very pleased, in terms of your comment, that you want to be able to work with the locals in a thoughtful management process on public lands. But I did want to be able to get some clarity in regards to the RS 2477, in regards to closing of roads. Does the Bureau of Land Management have unilateral authority to make binding determinations on the validity of claims, rights of way, under this statute?

Secretary JEWELL. I am not—could you repeat that one more time?

Mr. TIPTON. Yes. Do you have the authority, basically, to be able to go in, unilaterally, and make these decisions to shut down the roads?

Secretary JEWELL. I am not familiar with the legal ramifications and what our authorities are and aren't, so I will have to get back to you for the record on that.

Mr. TIPTON. OK. Well, we would appreciate that. When the BLM does close roads—I am sure you are aware we have had a lot of access points going into our public lands that have been shut off recently. I think you heard about it when you were in Colorado. When we were closing these county roads, citing land use and planning management purposes, is this done with any consultation with the counties?

Mr. CONNOR. I am not sure, Congressman. I think the interpretation of the RS 2477 roads, and whether they are still valid, existing roads is probably an administrative decision by the BLM as part of their resource management plans. But I think, to be more accurate, I would probably want to expand on that for the record.

Mr. TIPTON. And——

Mr. CONNOR. And I think the initial decisionmaking is probably a Bureau of Land Management decision.

Mr. TIPTON. Right. And going back to that comment that was made initially on willing to be able to work with the local communities, I would encourage you to talk to some of those local communities before some of those road closures actually take place.

Are you aware, when a closure is being planned, are the counties notified?

Mr. CONNOR. I am not aware of how that works.

Mr. TIPTON. Not aware of——

Secretary JEWELL. I am not, either. We are going to have to research this with the BLM, and we are very happy to get back to you on that.

Mr. TIPTON. In regards to some of the closures, is any consideration given—the nature of my State, my district, we have outdoor people—to the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Mr. CONNOR. I think the decision on whether an RS 2477 road still exists is just whether it has had continual use. I think that is the issue before the administrative agency.

Mr. TIPTON. Would you be willing to work with us in terms of getting some kind of a consistent policy when we look at ADA issues, when we look at impact on communities, to be able to make sure that those communities are included?

We had Chief Tidwell, and he talked about a computer model in regards to being able to fight forest fires. I was on both of the incident command centers at the West Fork Complex Fire, Pagosa

Springs over in Monte Vista. First words out of the mouth were, "Our computer models are out the window." So this is a real concern, in terms of the road closures, access into our public lands, and we are seeing this accelerate, and we would love to be able to visit with you more on this issue, and to be able to get your cooperation for our local areas.

Another area that is of interest for our particular district is the—and it goes back, actually, to Mrs. Napolitano's comment in regards to clean water. We have the—Reclamation knows of the Arkansas Valley Conduit, and offers an effective regional answer to be able to deliver clean drinking water down into Southeastern Colorado. And will Reclamation commit to carry over the next fiscal year any unobligated funds for the project from prior appropriations to strengthen the fiscal year 2015 budget request to ensure that this vital project from my district does continue?

Mr. CONNOR. Typically, Reclamation—that is a separate line item in Reclamation's account, and we typically carry over those funds for that specific purpose.

Mr. TIPTON. Great. And in regards to the hydro development power, as you are aware, we passed the Small Hydro Electric and Jobs Act, signed into law. It has been law now for 8 months, and I think a very good opportunity to be able to create clean energy.

Do you have any information on the number of projects that are currently under consideration, and what you are doing to be able to accelerate their development?

Mr. CONNOR. We have—first of all, I would like to say thank you for your leadership in working with us on those provisions. We have revised our lease of power privilege process, in accordance with the legislation, as it has been enacted. Beforehand, we had also revised the regulatory structure so we would have clarity on how to move forward. So that has spurred a lot of interest. We have a lot of projects that are currently——

Mr. TIPTON. Just have one more, and I apologize, I am running out of time. If you will keep us updated on that, we would appreciate it.

I would like to go on to the sage grouse issue. Is the Department going to be able to provide measurable species preservation goals, so our State and local officials can meet with them? I would love to have met with you, but when you came into my district we only found out 3 days in advance that you were coming. Otherwise, I would have been there.

Secretary JEWELL. I am going to answer that one for the record. We will get back to you with specific numbers and how that all works. I know that the COT Report from the Fish and Wildlife Service is what will govern the decisions made. I do believe that there are targets, but I need to get back to you with specifics.

Mr. TIPTON. We would love to be able to know those numbers, so that we have something actually to shoot at. When we are looking—having 11 States encompassed, if we have full recovery in the State of Colorado, but we are still in that full recovery of 11 States, we have had remarkable progress at the State, the local, the community level to be able to achieve that, and——

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Madam Secretary, Mr. McAllister was tied up in another meeting, and he promised me that his remarks would be very, very short. Would you entertain Mr. McAllister?

Mr. McAllister, you are recognized. From Louisiana.

Mr. MCALLISTER. Thank you so much, Madam Secretary, I appreciate it. It is a real quick—it is kind of a two-part question, but it is real simple, and nothing much to it, other than I need an answer.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the BSEE Administration, the administration of the post-Macondo drilling safety rule has resulted in drilling timelines that are more than double what we see elsewhere around the globe for comparable activities. This long timeline is estimated to add additional costs over $26 million per well. While I am sure that some of the larger companies are able to handle their increases, my concern is with the numerous small companies that this burden weighs heavier on. I don't think we will have found an easy solution to these post-Macondo regulatory concerns, but the pending BOP rule could help or hurt the situation.

So my question, Madam Secretary, is when does BSEE plan to introduce the BOP, the Blowout Preventer Rule? Because companies need to clarify certainty for operating in the Gulf of Mexico, and it is hard to plan for long-term operations without understanding where the regulatory regime will stand over the next couple of years. So what are the scope of changes, the BOP requirements being considered? And will this new rule require the retirement of the existing blowout preventers?

Secretary JEWELL. Thanks for the question. I will check back on the exact date. I am not sure they have released a date. I do know they are working actively and taking comment on the blowout preventer rule. Some of the things that they are considering, for example, is the rule appropriate to require double-blind shear rams, or do you just need to make sure that the BOP can actually sheer the pipe that you have.

Mr. MCALLISTER. Right.

Secretary JEWELL. Those are the kinds of things that they are taking into account, because new technologies are evolving.

I will say that I recognize that, as the larger operators move off some of the more mature fields, and smaller operators come in, that it is still important those smaller operators operate safely and responsibly. And sometimes they don't have the resources accessible to them to the larger players. But we have seen several shallow-water incidents that have provided some concern. And BSEE is working alongside the IPAA and industry, as well as the API, on thoughtful regulations that they believe are necessary to make sure that your resources in the Gulf are protected.

Mr. MCALLISTER. Well, I know the rule has been pending over a year. Do you think maybe summer 2014 we will get an answer, or——

Secretary JEWELL. I will have to check with them on where they are, in terms of a date.

Mr. MCALLISTER. OK.

Secretary JEWELL. I don't know of a specific date that they have. But I know they are working hard on it.

Mr. MCALLISTER. And then just the second part of that is, I am hearing the cost impacts from some of the post-Macondo regulations in the Gulf of Mexico appear to be much higher than the Department's original estimates. And are you taking any steps to better account for the cost impacts for future administrative rules, such as the pending BOP rule, of what it is going to cost, compared to what the projections were?

Secretary JEWELL. Well, Congressman, I—everybody learned a painful lesson with Macondo.

Mr. MCALLISTER. Right.

Secretary JEWELL. And what we are trying to do is bring the best available technologies that are there. And I think, given the cost of these drilling operations, making sure that we have the best available technology on things like blowout preventers is a relatively small cost to the total that they are spending on the leases and the drilling activity and the production. So we certainly recognize it is expensive. We don't want to add unnecessary burden, but we do want to make sure that we are doing our job.

And so, we have very, very knowledgeable people working on this, alongside industry, to make sure that there is an appropriate balance.

Mr. MCALLISTER. Well, I appreciate that. And that is the only thing, is just to make sure that we know we are projecting the right costs of what they are going to be by learning from our mistakes, and not assuming that it is going to be a lot less and—I mean you know some of the numbers that it came out to be. And so it is the reality of the world that we live in, but we just have to be honest with each other about what it is going to cost, so we can make proper adjustments to do it.

So I thank you so much for taking—I had to beg Chairman Hastings to let me ask you those couple of questions, and he didn't want to. So he was on your side. But thank you so much, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I thank the gentleman, and I noted that he asked his question in the right timeframe, and you took more time to answer his question so, therefore, that is the way it all worked.

Madam Secretary, Mr. Connor, thank you very much for being here. Many times these hearings prompt newer questions that come up. That may happen. And in fact, I am sure it will happen. And if you could respond in a timely manner, I would appreciate it. I know Mr. Flores wanted his responses within 7 days. He said that three or four times, and if you could comply with that, we would appreciate that very much.

If there is no further business to come before the committee, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:49 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD RETAINED IN THE COMMITTEE'S OFFICIAL FILES]

- DOE Task Force Report submitted by Mr. Lowenthal

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