



DIRTY DEALS

FOUR YEARS OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION
PUTTING POLLUTER PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF REPORT, OCTOBER 27 2020

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SINCE PRESIDENT TRUMP TOOK OFFICE IN JANUARY 2017, THE NEWS HAS BEEN FLOODED WITH HEADLINES ABOUT THIS ADMINISTRATION'S CORRUPTION, FRAUD, AND ABUSE OF OUR DEMOCRACY.



Between racist and xenophobic rhetoric and policies, ongoing obstruction of justice, abuse of reporters, and constant corporate quid pro quos, the media has barely been able to keep up.

But while our news alerts and social media feeds have been dominated by the president's gaffes, ethical failings, and other transgressions, his cabinet and other political appointees have been hard at work systematically dismantling the integrity of our federal government and the rights and protections on which we all depend. Above all, they have been willfully ignoring and denying the existential threat of climate change – the defining crisis of our generation.

This administration's intentional destruction of the government agencies that enforce our laws has combined with a bigoted and authoritarian policy agenda to create a genuine crisis of public confidence. President Trump has spent the last four years saying that – and governing as if – Puerto Rican Americans are not worth caring about, Native American communities and other systematically exploited areas across the country don't matter, and anyone he thinks didn't vote for him is an enemy.

This has taken a tragic toll on the American people, both in lives lost and futures destroyed, and has created a dysfunctional federal government that his successor will have to work overtime to repair.



Our public lands, waters, and other natural resources have been some of the Trump administration's primary targets. The consequences reach much farther than our environment and wildlife. The devastation of our natural resources has produced a crisis for our climate, our health and well-being, and our long-term sustainability. Indigenous peoples and residents of U.S. Territories have been especially harmed.

Democrats on the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources have used their legislative and oversight authority over the past four years to hold President Trump and his advisors accountable. Because of unprecedented obstruction by this administration and the Senate, the Committee's efforts have often been stymied.

We are approaching a point of no return. The health of our environment, ourselves, and our country, including Indigenous peoples and U.S. Territories, is on the line.

This report outlines the major damage the Trump administration has inflicted on the environment, economy, and energy supply of the United States and takes a closer look at the tactics they've used to perpetrate that destruction. Special attention is given to the federal agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including the Department of the Interior (DOI), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The report is not an exhaustive list of actions this administration has taken – it is a sampling of some of the most egregious examples.

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SECTION 1: WHAT HAS THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DESTROYED?

The Trump administration has waged an unprecedented attack on our environment and gravely damaged the federal government's relationship with Indigenous peoples and residents of the U.S. Territories over the past four years. That attack has come in many forms, from denying climate change and boosting dirty energy production to undermining wildlife conservation and aggressively ignoring the needs of our fellow Americans.

It's important to recognize that the damage reaches far beyond the physical state of our land, water, and air. As we're seeing with climate change, the health of our physical environment affects every aspect of our lives. The economy, our public health, our public safety, and the pursuit of social justice are all intertwined with the health of our environment. A broken environment leads to a broken society.

Tribal communities, coastal or island communities, and U.S. Territories are often hit hardest by climate change and the pollution caused by the out-of-control fossil fuel industry, which makes it all the more egregious that this administration treats Indigenous peoples and the residents of the U.S. Territories – especially Puerto Rico – like second-class citizens. In 2017, Trump told Puerto Ricans that his administration's inadequate funding for Hurricane Maria disaster relief was “throwing our budget out of whack,” which was especially insulting considering the severity of the damage and the administration's failure to provide assistance.¹ His administration frequently attacks Native American rights to land and natural resources and has done little to stop the spread of coronavirus in Native communities, leading to widespread condemnation and accusations of intentional harm.²

The president and his cronies routinely flout legal and moral obligations, leaving millions of Americans at severe risk. Much of the Trump administration's relentless and widespread environmental destruction and harm to Indigenous peoples and residents of the U.S. Territories falls into five categories, which we discuss in more detail below.

- 1. Gutting our fundamental environmental, public health, and safety protections.**
- 2. Making dirty energy sources even dirtier.**
- 3. Stripping protections from our wild lands, waters, and wildlife.**
- 4. Ignoring and disrespecting the rights of Native American and Alaska Native communities.**
- 5. Leaving the residents of Puerto Rico to fend for themselves in times of grave crisis.**

The Trump administration is gutting our fundamental environmental, public health, and safety protections.

As of August 2020, the Brookings Institute determined that the Trump administration had taken 74 major actions to weaken environmental protections.³ These attacks have focused in particular on two of the country's most important and long-standing environmental laws: the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Among many other abuses, this administration has also overused the authority to grant environmental waivers to build its costly, ineffective U.S.-Mexico border wall. These and other similar actions financially support fossil fuel developers and Trump-allied construction companies at public expense and damage our environment and public safety.

- **The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).** NEPA may not be a household name, but it is one of the nation's most important laws for ensuring the public a voice in protecting the environment. NEPA gives American communities that cannot afford expensive lobbyists a chance to weigh in on major decisions made by federal government agencies, including decisions about whether to site large polluting projects in local neighborhoods.

Without proper NEPA enforcement, the most destructive and heavily polluting projects will be sited in low income communities and communities of color that don't have the influence or political connections to oppose them. We should strengthen rather than weaken this law. Despite easily disproven Trump administration claims that NEPA burdens development, less than 1 percent of projects evaluated under NEPA actually generate a detailed NEPA analysis, called an Environmental Impact Statement.⁴

The vast majority of actions or projects subject to NEPA analyses (95 percent) are completed through a categorical exclusion, meaning they generally require only a few days to process. The projects that do go through the more detailed process are the biggest and most complicated – each of which certainly warrants a closer examination by affected communities.

In July of this year, while our country was reckoning with centuries of racism and oppression, the White House issued a rule that would gut NEPA, delivering a slap in the face to environmental and social justice efforts.⁵

The new rule would make it easier for federal agencies to ignore the requests of environmental justice communities and site new polluting projects in areas that already bear a disproportionate burden of pollution and environmental hazards. The rule also attacks efforts by federal agencies to assess climate change during the NEPA process.

- **The Endangered Species Act (ESA).** The ESA is one of the country's bedrock environmental laws and is supported by the vast majority of Americans.⁶ It is the most effective tool we have for protecting endangered and threatened wildlife; 99 percent of the species that have been protected under the ESA have avoided extinction.⁷ The ESA is especially vital now, as we experience the sixth mass extinction on a global scale.

Beginning in 2019, the Trump administration finalized several changes to the ESA that have long been wish-list items for the oil and gas industry.⁸

These are the biggest changes to the implementation of the law since it was signed in 1973. Until new standards are put in place, they remove guaranteed protections for threatened species and allow the government to consider factors other than the survival of a species when deciding whether a species deserves to be protected.

The Trump administration recently proposed two additional rules that would allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to use corporate economic considerations as an excuse not to designate areas of critical habitat for protection.⁹ They will also limit the ability of FWS and NOAA to conserve and restore habitats for ESA-listed species.

- **Waiving all laws and protections for Trump's border wall.** Despite the unprecedented health and economic crisis caused by the ongoing pandemic, President Trump has continued to funnel billions of taxpayer dollars into his racist, destructive border wall at the U.S.-Mexico border.

As laid out in the Real ID Act of 2005, the Secretary of Homeland Security has the authority to waive "all laws and legal requirements" when it comes to building the wall or other barriers or roads along the U.S.-Mexico border. These laws include not only our bedrock environmental laws like NEPA and the ESA, but also the laws that protect our health and human rights, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

The Trump administration has used and abused this waiver authority far beyond any precedent. Of the 33 times the waiver has been invoked, 28 have occurred during this administration.¹⁰

Trump officials have used the waiver to bulldoze through fragile ecosystems and sacred tribal spaces, often causing irreparable damage. They have not only robbed the American public of its natural and cultural heritage, they have robbed Tribal and border community residents of their most fundamental rights and continually treated them like second-class citizens.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Many of our environmental laws were written decades ago to make sure that policymakers base their decisions on science and consider impacts on affected communities before permitting drilling, mining or land development.

Without these standards, big developers and corporations motivated by short-term profits can exploit our land and water in a way that isn't sustainable.

Encouraging fossil fuel drillers and others to take environmental shortcuts puts our health and safety in danger. There is no compelling reason to allow profitable companies to pollute our air, water, and land, while putting entire communities at higher risk for respiratory diseases, cancers, and other illnesses.

If we want a livable world that will thrive for generations to come, we need protections in place. We need to obey our laws and put science and the wellbeing of the American public above the profit margins of environmentally destructive interests.

The Trump administration is making dirty energy sources even dirtier.

The Trump administration has been relentless in advancing its pro-polluter, pro-fossil fuel agenda, despite the undeniably destructive impact of fossil fuels on the concentration of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.¹¹ Starting with President Trump's March 2017 Executive Order on "Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth,"¹² the administration has put fossil fuel development ahead of public health and sustainable economic policy.

The Trump administration has used a variety of tactics to promote its dirty energy agenda, from slashing regulations to giving financial bailouts to polluting industries to leasing our public lands for pocket change. Not surprisingly, both Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and William Perry Pendley, the man Bernhardt chose to lead the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) despite lacking Senate confirmation, have enormous corporate conflicts of interest, including multiple former clients in the oil, gas, and coal industries. Below, we outline some of the most egregious examples of their industry handouts.

- **Leased away millions of acres of public land, particularly in the West, to oil and gas drilling and development.** At the urging of oil and gas companies, this administration quickly began auctioning off rights to huge swaths of our public lands for drilling, reducing permit-processing times, cutting opportunities for public input, and holding more frequent lease sales. All told, this administration has auctioned off more than 24 million acres of public land—a size greater than the state of Indiana.¹³ Many of these lands have been leased at rock bottom prices—less than the price of a cup of coffee per acre—due to the global decline in energy prices.¹⁴ Many fossil fuel companies taking advantage of this giveaway don't even need the land; they're just paying for it now because it's cheap and helps to artificially inflate their financial balance sheets.¹⁵
- **Tried to expand offshore drilling along the entire Atlantic and Pacific coast.** In January 2018, DOI published a proposed 5-year plan to open 90 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf to oil and gas leasing, including the entirety of the U.S.'s Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic coasts.¹⁶ The program was vigorously opposed by coastal state governors and other local leaders of both political parties due to the obvious threats to tourism, recreation, and fishing.¹⁷ The plan has currently been shelved, but the president has publicly indicated that despite current protections on some areas, he believes he can reopen them if he wins re-election.¹⁸
- **Eased financial obligations for fossil fuels.** Current standards for oil, gas, and coal leasing are already severely outdated, favoring industry and corporate profits over the needs of the American people. That hasn't stopped the Trump administration from giving numerous handouts to the fossil fuel industry. These include weakening fiscal strength requirements for oil and gas companies hoping

to lease land from the federal government;¹⁹ repealing the “Valuation Rule” that ensures states and the federal government get the full amount of royalties owed;²⁰ cutting royalty rates across the board for offshore drilling in shallow water;²¹ and granting royalty relief and allowing payment delays during the ongoing pandemic.²² Some royalty payments were reduced from 12.5 percent to as low as 0.5 percent during the pandemic, hurting state budgets that rely on royalty payments when they needed them most.

- **Slashed major regulations on fossil fuel extraction and production.** In September 2018, DOI rescinded the bulk of the Methane Waste Prevention Rule,²³ a 2016 BLM regulation that reduces the amount of natural gas that can be flared, vented, or leaked from oil and gas production. This is critical for reducing greenhouse gases and ensuring a fair return for taxpayers on oil and gas that is extracted from public lands. This administration also weakened the Well Control Rule put in place after the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in order to prevent catastrophic future disasters.²⁴ This move was accompanied by the rollback of other offshore fossil fuel production safety standards.
- **Let fracking go unfettered.** In 2018, DOI rescinded the 2015 Hydraulic Fracturing Rule that regulated fracking on public land. The rule lessened the risk to underground water sources and created stronger standards for the disposal of harmful pollutants.²⁵ There are now no baseline standards for fracking on federal public lands.
- **Gave handouts to a naturally dying coal industry.** In an effort to fulfill empty promises, the Trump administration has repeatedly tried to score political points by giving expensive handouts to the struggling coal industry.²⁶ Coal mining is highly environmentally destructive and a significant health risk for workers and nearby communities. Nevertheless, this administration ended the three-year moratorium for coal leasing on federal public lands and repealed the Coal Ash Rule²⁷ and Stream Protection Rule,²⁸ both of which protected people and the environment from harmful pollutants produced during coal mining and production. This administration canceled an ongoing National Academies of Science study on the health impacts of mountaintop removal mining in the middle of the analysis process, wasting hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and depriving the public of the findings.²⁹ Despite all this, coal used in power generation still decreased by 27 percent from 2016 to 2019.³⁰
- **Took steps to boost uranium mining.** Uranium mining is bad for human health. It is causally associated with numerous deadly diseases, including lung cancer, bone cancer, and impaired kidney function.³¹ As Chair Grijalva saw when he visited Navajo Nation last year, uranium mining and abandoned uranium mines have left a toxic legacy throughout the western United States.³² Nevertheless, at the behest of uranium mining interests, the Trump administration shrank Bears Ears National Monument to open new areas to extraction, recommended lifting protections against mining around the Grand Canyon, and included uranium on a

national list of “critical minerals”³³ despite the clear lack of scientific support for the move. Uranium companies like Ur-Energy, a former client of Secretary Bernhardt, have applauded these actions.

- **Stalled renewable energy development.** Above and beyond the president’s absurd claims that wind turbines cause cancer,³⁴ the Trump administration has repeatedly stymied efforts to develop wind and solar energy. The first major step was repealing the Clean Power Plan, which would have accelerated renewable energy development and considerably strengthened the American economy.³⁵ The Trump administration has approved approximately half the wind and solar projects approved by the Obama administration over the same timeframe.³⁶ DOI has failed to hold a single competitive lease sale for wind or solar energy on public lands and has only held two sales for offshore development. The administration has decimated BLM’s National Renewable Energy Coordination Office and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the Department of Energy.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The burning of fossil fuels is one of the most significant contributors to climate change - the number one threat to our health, safety, and economic stability.

Nearly 25 percent of all greenhouse gases emitted by the U.S. come from resources extracted from federal public lands. We need to do everything we can to incentivize cleaner energy sources. The fossil fuel industry is dying away, and rather than respect public preference, the Trump administration wants American taxpayers to pay out of pocket to keep it on life support. Since the Federal Reserve started its bailout of corporate debt in late March, oil and gas companies have issued nearly \$100 billion of debt in U.S. markets.³⁷ Rather than propping up a dying industry, we should diversify our energy sources with clean renewable sources like solar and wind and prepare ourselves for the changes ahead.

The Trump administration is stripping protections from our wild lands, waters, and wildlife.

The Trump administration has shown no regard for the value of wild spaces and wildlife. The president and his appointees view wild lands, waters, and wildlife as obstacles to the demands of campaign donors and industry friends. The examples below highlight just a few of the administration's most troubling actions.

- **Drastically cut protections for nationally prized public lands and ocean waters.**

The Trump administration orchestrated the largest giveaway of federal public lands in our nation's history.³⁸ They have rolled back protections for national monuments and national forests, supported drilling and mining right up to the boundary of national parks, and taken every opportunity to open public and ecologically sensitive lands to destructive activities. The administration has lifted bans on oil and gas exploration in the ecologically sensitive and significant Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.³⁹

The administration also proposed eliminating nearly half of protected national marine monuments in America's oceans, which would have been the largest rollback of ocean protections in American history. While they haven't implemented their full scheme, they did open Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument to commercial fishing, putting centuries-old cold-water corals and the entire surrounding ecosystem at risk.⁴⁰

- **Put migratory birds in harm's way.** The Trump administration fulfilled an oil and gas industry wish list item when it proposed major changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the nation's oldest wildlife protection laws.⁴¹ The changes would eliminate penalties for industries that kill large numbers of birds during their operations – penalties assessed when birds land in oil waste pits or fly into power lines.
- **Opened up national forests to the timber, oil, and gas industries.** The 2001 Roadless Rule prohibits road-building and commercial logging on select national forest lands. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently decided to exempt 9.2 million acres of Tongass National Forest in Alaska from the Roadless Rule, opening it to logging, mining, and energy development projects. The move was widely opposed by Alaska Natives who depend on the area for hunting, fishing, and foraging.⁴² Of the 144,000 public comments submitted about the rule, only 1 percent supported the administration's action.⁴³ In addition, the Forest Service recently released a proposal that would revise the oil and gas permitting process in national forests to reduce public participation and favor industry objectives.⁴⁴
- **Weakened protections for the sage-grouse.** The sage-grouse is classified as an indicator species, meaning that when its populations are declining, the surrounding ecosystem is also suffering. Despite the sage-grouse nearing federal

threatened status, the Trump administration announced in March 2019 that it would dismantle the 2015 Sage Grouse Conservation Plan, which covers more than 51 million acres in seven states. The plan was the product of a massive cooperative effort among industry, environmental groups, and federal, state, and local leaders.⁴⁵ The new sage-grouse plans make it easier for oil and gas companies to drill in the bird's priority habitat.

- **Made public lands vulnerable to climate change and development.** In December 2017, the administration eliminated dozens of measures that scientists and public land managers considered necessary to safeguard national parks from climate change. These included the 2015 Landscape-Scale Mitigation Policy, which advanced landscape-scale, science-based management of American's public lands and provided predictability and clarity to project developers throughout the permitting process. By rescinding this policy, DOI made its permitting process less efficient and stifled investment in climate change mitigation programs.
- **Encouraged trophy hunting and allowing cruel hunting practices.** Trophy hunting is the killing of certain species—usually large game like lions and rhinos—for sport, not subsistence or food. The president's son, Donald Trump, Jr. is an avid trophy hunter. The Trump administration created the International Wildlife Conservation Council at DOI to promote trophy hunting, which has since been dismantled amid litigation over the propriety of its operations.⁴⁶ The Trump FWS lifted a ban on some trophies and now considers imports of elephant and lion trophies on a case-by-case basis.⁴⁷ The agency also reversed an Obama administration rule restricting barbaric practices like killing wolf pups and bear cubs in dens.⁴⁸
- **Turned national parks into political tools during the government shutdown, ongoing pandemic, and holiday celebrations.** During the Republican-induced government shutdown beginning in December 2018, President Trump, Secretary Zinke and his successor, Secretary Bernhardt, made the unprecedented decision to keep all national parks open to the public in order to minimize negative public backlash against the shutdown's impacts. To do so, DOI illegally used \$252.9 million in Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act funds to cover operations – funds specifically dedicated to enhancing visitor experiences, not paying daily costs. After taking over from Zinke, Secretary Bernhardt contradicted multiple legal experts and said he saw no wrongdoing.⁴⁹ Just as seriously, the administration kept many parks and facilities open during the beginning months of the pandemic without adequate planning or safety protocols in place, putting visitors and employees at risk.⁵⁰ President Trump has used federally funded public spaces like the Lincoln Memorial and Mt. Rushmore for campaign rally-like celebrations on July 4, 2019, and July 4, 2020, respectively. The Mt. Rushmore celebration was strongly opposed by seven neighboring Sioux Tribal governments who have long criticized the monument for violating treaty agreements and denigrating their sacred sites.⁵¹

On the evening of June 1, 2020, the U.S. Park Police (USPP) and other law enforcement agencies under its command attacked peaceful protesters near the White House, where Americans of diverse backgrounds gathered at Lafayette Square to speak out against the police murder of George Floyd. Using batons, shields, and chemical munitions, they struck civilians without any provocation a full 30 minutes before the Washington, D.C., evening curfew took effect.

In addition to causing widely reported civilian injuries, the sudden and completely unjustified assault injured journalists who were following standard procedures and operating in supposedly “safe” areas. The attack drew international attention and condemnation, especially because the crackdown was followed quickly by President Trump’s walk from the White House to pose for a photo op with a Bible in front of historic St. John’s Episcopal Church. The Committee immediately opened an investigation of this grave injustice, holding two hearings and taking testimony from a National Guard whistleblower, Acting USPP Chief Gregory Monahan, and other eyewitnesses. The Committee’s investigation of the timing, purpose and method of the crackdown is ongoing.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Protecting habitat and wildlife in its natural state is a crucial to building a healthy, sustainable future. Conservation helps to maintain biodiversity and keep ecosystems in their natural balance. When one species goes extinct, it affects the entire food chain, resulting in unpredictable downstream consequences like a surge of harmful diseases, pests, or toxins. **These changes can drastically affect our own sources of food, medicine, clean air and water, and other natural resources. Conservation helps preserve our wild spaces and creatures that have both inherent and economic value as sources of comfort, respite, recreation, and sustenance.**

The Trump administration is ignoring and disrespecting the rights of Native American and Alaska Native communities.

The Trump administration's pro-polluter, anti-environment agenda has come at the expense of Indigenous sacred sites, cultural practices, and tribal sovereignty. DOI, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education, has a duty to conduct regular and meaningful Tribal consultation in the course of its activities, including the management of public lands. This administration has ignored this duty, ripping up sacred sites and ignoring or silencing Tribal voices. The examples here highlight some of the ways the Trump administration has failed Indian Country.

- **Greenlighting the Keystone and Dakota Access Pipelines.** Some of the first actions taken by this administration included approving the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline and greenlighting the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline,⁵² which harm sacred Tribal lands of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe and other communities. Tribal members vehemently oppose both pipelines, noting not just the unavoidable damage the construction would cause to their land and water but the risk of catastrophic damage from a rupture or spill.⁵³ This administration ignored these concerns and barreled through the permitting process, opening the door to numerous lawsuits.
- **Opening Bears Ears National Monument and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to fossil fuel interests.** The Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes fought tirelessly for the designation of Bears Ears National Monument during the Obama administration.⁵⁴ Less than a year after its establishment, the Trump administration illegally shrank Bears Ears by a staggering 85 percent, removing protections from many cultural and historical Tribal resources.⁵⁵ The administration similarly ignored scientists and Indigenous voices in its rush to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration.⁵⁶ The Refuge is sacred to the Gwich'in people and essential to their food security. Oil and gas activity will threaten the Porcupine caribou herd that the Gwich'in people rely on for subsistence.
- **Bulldozing tribal lands for the border wall.** The U.S.-Mexico border bisects the Tohono O'odham Nation's land, traversing ecologically sensitive and culturally rich resources like Monument Hill and Quitobaquito Springs. As noted in a previous section, the Secretary of Homeland Security can waive multiple laws and legal requirements when building the U.S.-Mexico border wall, including environmental impact assessments and tribal consultation requirements. By abusing this waiver authority, the Trump administration has bulldozed, blasted, and destroyed these sites without Tribal consultation and little to no advance notice, breaking longstanding federal promises to the O'odham.⁵⁷ Monument Hill, which was blown up in February 2020, is home to an O'odham and Apache burial site.⁵⁸ Border wall

construction has run directly through sacred sites of the La Posta Band of Diegueno Mission Indians.⁵⁹

- **Removed endangered species protections for grizzly bears.** In June 2017, DOI announced the delisting of grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the Endangered Species Act. Despite grizzly bears holding profound religious and spiritual importance for many Indigenous peoples, FWS did not meaningfully consult with Native American representatives before issuing the decision. This was a slap in the face to Tribal sovereignty, sacred site protections, treaty rights, consultation mandates, and spiritual and religious freedoms.
- **Proposed uranium mining at the Grand Canyon.** After years of study, the Obama administration enacted a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining claims around the Grand Canyon to protect the irreplaceable landscape and the Native American communities that depend on it, including the Navajo Nation. Since taking office, the Trump administration has sought to open this protected landscape to favor their uranium industry friends, publicly promoting misinformation about domestic uranium needs. Despite pushback from nuclear energy producers, they have taken steps to promote unnecessary domestic extraction and production quotas.⁶⁰ During the height of the ongoing pandemic, the Trump administration's Nuclear Fuel Working Group released a plan⁶¹ to create a new federal uranium reserve and exempt uranium mining from environmental review, ignoring the fact that the U.S. already has a large stockpile of uranium and a secure supply chain.⁶² These efforts threaten Tribal communities that suffer from legacy uranium contamination and the 40 million Americans who rely on the Colorado River for clean water.
- **Ignoring pandemic relief and response for Indian Country.** The Trump administration's treatment of Indian Country during the ongoing pandemic has been a human rights disaster. After the initial outbreak, the Indian Health Service stopped transferring much-needed funds to Tribes. When it came time to disburse \$8 billion in pandemic relief funds to Native governments, DOI Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney managed to direct a considerable chunk of the funds to her former employer, the for-profit Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.⁶³ Rather than pausing or delaying important public decisions during the pandemic, DOI pushed ahead with virtual meetings and limited public comment windows for decisions affecting remote Tribal lands. This presented numerous difficulties for Tribal members, due in part to the lack of dependable internet connectivity in many rural Tribal areas.⁶⁴ The reopening of in-person education at Bureau of Indian Education schools was poorly planned and lacked sufficient safety guidance.⁶⁵ Outreach to Tribes for the 2020 Census has been delayed and inadequate.
- **Failed to adequately address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW).** On reservations, American Indian and Alaska Native women on reservations face murder rates 10 times the national average.⁶⁶ After the Natural Resources Committee held multiple hearings on the issue in 2019,

the Trump administration established a task force to examine the issue.⁶⁷ However, the administration has simultaneously undermined the task force's purpose by green-lighting multiple mining and extraction projects, known to escalate MMIW cases on or near tribal lands. The projects bring in swaths of men who are non-tribal members and reside in temporary 'man camps.' These camps have been estimated to increase violence against Indigenous women in the area by up to 70%.⁶⁸ Other than creating satellite offices, wearing red clothing to show solidarity, and holding listening sessions that have been plagued by significant technological problems,⁶⁹ the task force has taken no real administrative action.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the lands that now comprise the United States. The U.S. government has stolen from, murdered, and betrayed Indigenous peoples repeatedly and shamelessly throughout our nation's history.

It is both the moral duty and the responsibility of the federal government to protect tribal sovereignty and tribal governments' authority over their land and natural resources.

The Trump administration is leaving the residents of Puerto Rico to fend for themselves in times of grave crisis.

The Committee oversees federal actions involving the U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico. In recent years, the 3.2 million residents of Puerto Rico have experienced a series of crises, including the territory's bankruptcy and economic depression, major natural disasters, and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The Trump administration has treated these Americans like second-class citizens, denying them timely emergency aid and actively obstructing their financial recovery. The examples below highlight just some of the ways this administration has left Puerto Ricans to fend for themselves.

- **Failed to provide leadership on timely federal initiatives.** In 2003, President Clinton established the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status through Executive order 13183 to develop proposals for the island's future political status.⁷⁰ In 2009, the Obama administration expanded the Task Force's duties to coordinate efforts with Congress on federal initiatives to benefit the island through economic development, job creation, education, health care, and clean energy.⁷¹ Despite an unprecedented crisis caused by Puerto Rico's bankruptcy, economic depression, and multiple natural disasters, President Trump has not appointed any members to or renewed the activities of the Task Force to coordinate federal efforts to address the island's most pressing needs.⁷²
- **Withheld billions in emergency aid for recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria and earthquakes—until election season.** In 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated Puerto Rico, killing nearly 3,000 people and destroying infrastructure, including the island's power grid, causing the largest blackout in U.S. history.⁷³ The Trump administration's response was abysmally slow; three years after the hurricane, Puerto Rico had still only received one third of its federal relief funds. The island then suffered a string of powerful earthquakes.⁷⁴ Despite the suffering of Puerto Ricans across the island, the administration blocked the disbursement of supplemental emergency funding for Puerto Rico to recover from the earthquakes (H.R. 5687).⁷⁵ In late September of this year, less than two months before the general election, President Trump announced the release of \$13 billion in overdue federal aid to Puerto Rico.⁷⁶
- **Blocked important tax credit programs for residents of U.S. Territories.** The Trump administration blocked House-passed legislation (H.R. 5687) that would extend the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and several other existing programs to the residents of the U.S. Territories.⁷⁷ Access to these programs would provide a significant income boost to low and middle-income families and is vitally needed given the disproportionately high poverty rates in the U.S. Territories.⁷⁸

- **Appealed court decisions that would eliminate discriminatory barriers for residents of U.S. territories.** Recent court decisions (i.e., *U.S. v. Vaello-Madero* and *Peña Martínez v. U.S.*) have been monumental in highlighting the need for equal access to federal programs for residents of U.S. Territories. These court decisions determined that denial of Social Security Income and other federal benefits, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to residents of Puerto Rico based on their residency is unconstitutional. These decisions affirm that the disparate treatment of the residents of U.S. Territories as compared to other Americans is not just morally unjust, but unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the Trump administration appealed the *U.S. v. Vaello-Madero* decision.⁷⁹
- **Failed to support nonpartisan political status education for Puerto Rico.** The Appropriations Act of 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-76) authorized \$2.5 million for “objective, nonpartisan voter education about, and a plebiscite on, options that would resolve Puerto Rico’s future political status.” The Department of Justice has not disbursed the funding so far. President Trump has repeatedly expressed his opposition to statehood for Puerto Rico.⁸⁰
- **Skewed appointments to the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico.** The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (FOMB) was established in the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA). It represents the Government of Puerto Rico in debt restructuring proceedings. Member appointments to the FOMB have expired, and the White House and Senate and House leadership are in the process of nominating new members. In October, the White House announced the nomination of Mr. Justin Peterson, who has opposed a debt restructuring mechanism for the Government of Puerto Rico and whose company actively lobbied for bondholders. This nomination presents a conflict of interest and threatens the FOMB’s ability to balance multiple stakeholder interests during a debt restructuring proceeding.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Puerto Ricans are Americans, but the Trump administration treats them like second-class citizens. The 3.2 million residents of Puerto Rico have been suffering under crushing debt and a series of devastating natural disasters, the aftereffects of which are still looming. They have been denied access to important federal programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, and SNAP. Appointing bondholder lobbyists to the Oversight Board for Puerto Rico, denying them adequate emergency aid, and failing to provide them equal access to federal programs to recover and prosper is unacceptable. At the same time, interfering with Puerto Rico’s ability to resolve its own political status is shameful.

SECTION 2: HOW HAS THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BEEN ABLE TO DESTROY SO MUCH?

The Trump administration's destruction is not the result of mere chance. Across the federal government, this administration has used a well-known playbook to systematically discredit and destroy federal agencies, undermine science, and disrupt the policymaking this country depends on. The Trump administration's environmental destruction playbook includes the following tactics:

1. **Pretending climate change is a hoax.**
2. **Stacking federal agencies with political appointees who play dirty.**
3. **Intimidating, silencing, and manipulating scientists and other agency experts.**
4. **Obstructing congressional and public oversight.**
5. **Using a global pandemic as a distraction while pushing an unpopular agenda.**

The Trump administration is pretending climate change is a hoax.

Climate change is the greatest existential threat of our time, but the Trump administration frequently says climate change doesn't exist or, if it does, that humans have no meaningful control over it. In nearly every agency that oversees energy or environmental policy, the president has appointed leaders whose views on climate change directly contradict prevailing science and the understanding of most Americans. **As Interior Secretary David Bernhardt said at a 2019 Natural Resources Committee hearing, when it comes to climate change, he's "not losing any sleep over it."**⁸¹ President Trump regularly tweets and otherwise spouts climate change misinformation to the public, suggesting at a public appearance on the recent California wildfires, "It'll start getting cooler. You just watch."⁸²

When President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement at the beginning of his term, it offered a preview of what was to come. Columbia Law School has since identified 138 actions this administration has taken to eliminate or scale back climate change mitigation and adaptation.⁸³ These include the following:

- Repealed the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan that defined greenhouse gases as a regulated pollutant, replacing it with a weaker standard that will only result in 1 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.⁸⁴
- Removed climate change from the list of national security threats in the administration's 2017 National Security Strategy.⁸⁵
- Repealed Obama administration guidance that helped federal agencies consider climate change and greenhouse gas emissions when making decisions on major federal actions.⁸⁶
- Revoked President Obama's executive order for federal agencies to cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 percent by 2025.⁸⁷ This action would have saved American taxpayers up to \$18 billion in avoided energy costs.
- Launched a full-scale attack on the most recent version of the National Climate Assessment, a regularly published report on the scientific consensus around climate change based on thousands of climate studies and involving the work of 13 federal agencies.⁸⁸ The report was quietly released on the afternoon of Black Friday, after which President Trump responded to its central finding by saying, "I don't believe it."⁸⁹
- Erased the term "climate change" from websites and other public communications across federal agencies, including DOI, the EPA, and the Department of Commerce.⁹⁰ Examples include a massive overhaul of the EPA's climate change website, deletion of climate change as a highlighted issue on the White House's website, and deletion of climate change from DOI's website for Tribal climate programs. The acting NOAA administrator even suggested removing the word "climate" from the agency's mission statement.⁹¹

The American people should be able to trust their federal government to provide objective, science-based information. This administration has ignored and even silenced the broad scientific consensus in favor of a political agenda benefiting narrow polluter interests at public expense. The president and his appointees ignore the global environmental, economic, and public health consequences of climate change and push their agenda without any sense of long-term consequence or acknowledgement of harm.

The Trump administration is stacking federal agencies with political appointees who play dirty.

President Trump has made no secret of his disdain for the very federal agencies he oversees. Some of his most prominent cabinet picks are former politicians or industry heads who had previously mocked or scorned the agencies the president selected them to run.

Former Energy Secretary Rick Perry famously campaigned for the presidency in 2012 with a promise to abolish the Department of Energy.⁹² William Perry Pendley called the BLM, the agency the Trump administration illegally put him in charge of despite lacking Senate confirmation, “the world’s worst neighbor” and claimed that “the Endangered Species Act is a joke.”⁹³ Former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt described himself as a “leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda.”⁹⁴

President Trump has made a habit of referring to the federal workforce as the “deep state,” indiscriminately suggesting that federal employees are part of a conspiracy to promote an anti-Trump political agenda. Trump’s own political appointee, former Interior Secretary Zinke, criticized the Department of the Interior workforce for not being “loyal to the flag” – his term for President Trump.⁹⁵

The president’s lack of respect for federal agencies and their dedicated workforce produced a team of political leaders that blatantly disregard the ideals of public service.

The Trump administration’s top leaders use the federal government as a political piggy bank, slashing regulations for the industries they came from and doing favors to shore up their friends’ finances.

A June 2020 analysis of Secretary Bernhardt’s and his five top aides’ public calendars showed that they met with the renewable energy sector only 22 times compared to 225 times with the oil and gas industry over the same period.⁹⁶ During Bernhardt’s tenure as DOI’s Deputy Secretary, the agency took at least 25 policy actions requested or supported by at least 16 of his former clients.⁹⁷

Here are some of the unlikely figures Trump selected to lead public lands and environmental agencies.



TRUMP'S DIRTY DEALERS

RYAN ZINKE FORMER SECRETARY DOI



PREVIOUS WORK:
Former U.S. House of Representatives (R-MT) and Trump loyalist.

Where is he now?
After resigning in disgrace for using his position for personal gain and lying to federal investigators, he landed a job at a gold mining firm that has projects with DOI.

DAVID BERNHARDT SECRETARY DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:
Former lobbyist whose clients included oil, gas, and mining companies seeking opportunities on public lands.



WILLIAM PERRY PENDLEY

DE FACTO HEAD OF
THE BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:
Attorney representing oil and gas companies seeking to drill on federal public lands. Former president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, which was founded to counter pro-conservation lawsuits.



DOUG DOMENECH ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INSULAR AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:
Director of a Texas Public Policy Foundation Initiative promoting what it calls the "forgotten moral case for fossil fuels," which is heavily funded by big oil companies. He has twice been found by the Inspector General to have broken ethics rules to benefit his family or former employer.



SCOTT ANGELLE

DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
ENFORCEMENT
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:

Louisiana Secretary of Natural Resources whose campaign was heavily funded by oil and gas companies. In 2017, he urged attendees of a big oil exposition to call his private cell phone since it would not be a part of the public record.



STEVE WACKOWSKI

SENIOR ADVISOR FOR
ALASKA AFFAIRS
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:

Operations manager for a joint venture between the Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation and Olgoonik Oilfield Services in Alaska..



VINCENT DEVITO

FORMER COUNSELOR TO THE
SECRETARY FOR ENERGY POLICY
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:

Lobbyist who represented a consortium of major oil companies. Treasurer of Republican PACs and Massachusetts Chair of Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

Where is he now?

Cox Oil LLC, an offshore drilling company.



JOE BALASH

FORMER ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND
MINERALS MANAGEMENT
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:

Worked for GOP politicians, including the Alaska legislature, Sarah Palin, and Senator Dan Sullivan, for more than a decade.

Where is he now?

Oil Search, a foreign oil company that's expanding operations on Alaska's North Slope.



DANIEL JORJANI

SOLICITOR
DOI

PREVIOUS WORK:
Held a key role at Freedom Partners, a major political operation led by Charles Koch, advocating the deregulation of fossil fuel production.



SCOTT PRUITT

FORMER
SECRETARY
EPA

PREVIOUS WORK:
Attorney General of Oklahoma who worked closely with oil and gas companies to sue the EPA at least 14 times.

Where is he now?
Consultant for coal baron and Trump donor Joseph Craft, energy consultant, and paid speaker.



ANDREW WHEELER

SECRETARY
EPA

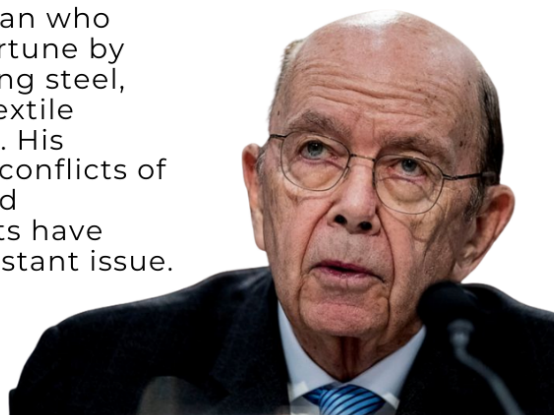
PREVIOUS WORK:
Coal industry lobbyist and legislative aide to prominent climate denier Sen. James Inhofe.



WILBUR ROSS

SECRETARY DEPT. OF
COMMERCE (INCLUDES NOAA)

PREVIOUS WORK:
Businessman who built his fortune by restructuring steel, coal, and textile companies. His numerous conflicts of interest and investments have been a constant issue.



The Trump administration is intimidating, silencing, and manipulating scientists and other agency experts.

Sound, objective science is critical to decision-making in federal agencies. Many federal laws mandate the use of “best available science,” including many of those implemented by DOI and the EPA. Even when the political values of an agency’s leadership change, an agency’s science analysis capacity must remain free from undue influence, both political and financial. Under the Trump administration, this independence has been intentionally dismantled. This is especially true for agencies that depend on accurate, non-politicized information about climate change. At DOI, a 2018 survey showed that 76 percent of scientists from the National Park Service (NPS) and 69 percent from FWS felt that political interests were a burden to science-based decision-making.⁹⁸ At the EPA, 70 percent of scientists felt that senior leadership figures from regulated industries or with a financial interest in a regulated industry were inappropriately influencing science.⁹⁹

By silencing, intimidating, and ignoring scientists and agency experts, the Trump administration has cleared the way for policies that support their political ideologies and enrich their industry friends rather than serving the best interest of the American people. The examples below highlight just a few of the many instances in which scientists or other career staff were sidelined.

- **Shelved a report on the damage caused by pesticides.** In August 2017, FWS scientists neared completion of a report on three intensively studied pesticides—malathion, diazinon, and chlorpyrifos—that determined the substances would harm at least 1,400 threatened and endangered species. The report was set to be released later that year. After being briefed on the findings, then-Deputy Secretary Bernhardt abruptly decided the report’s release would be indefinitely delayed, delighting pesticide manufacturers.¹⁰⁰
- **Canceled an important scientific study on the health impacts of coal mining.** In August 2017, Trump appointees at DOI cancelled a \$1 million study on the harmful health effects of mountaintop removal mining.¹⁰¹ The study was already well underway, and funding had already been disbursed. DOI leadership said the study was cancelled due to budgetary concerns—a claim the agency’s Inspector General found was not supported by any evidence.¹⁰²
- **Deleted references to human-made climate change from a scientific report.** In April 2018, public reports came to light that NPS employees were repeatedly and inappropriately pressured to delete any references to the human impact on climate change from an official scientific analysis. The report’s primary author refused to make the deletions and has since lost funding for her work with the agency.¹⁰³

- Intimidated and retaliated against career employees.** In June 2017, only six months into the Trump administration, DOI leadership reassigned dozens of senior career employees, giving them just 15 days to decide whether to change positions or resign. The agency's Inspector General found the majority of reassigned employees believed they were being reassigned for punitive or retaliatory reasons.¹⁰⁴ Many were reassigned to positions completely outside their expertise. In July 2019, DOI announced that it would relocate the BLM headquarters from Washington, D.C., to Grand Junction, Colo. The Government Accountability Office found that the move was not fully justified, raising suspicion that it was part of a larger ploy to disrupt the agency and sow distrust among the workforce.¹⁰⁵
- Forced an employee to change his decision about a big Trump donor's construction project.** In April 2019, a former FWS employee reported that he had been forced by a "high level politico" at Interior to change his decision about the Clean Water Act permit for a large Arizona property development called the Villages at Vigneto.¹⁰⁶ The developer made a one-time, out-of-cycle \$10,000 donation to the Trump Victory Fund shortly after the employee was told to change his decision.¹⁰⁷ Subsequent reports found that Secretary Bernhardt directed the pressure to change the permitting decision.
- Threatened National Weather Service employees after Sharpie-gate.** In September 2019, President Trump erroneously claimed that Alabama was at risk of storm damage from Hurricane Dorian, using an obviously doctored map of the hurricane's expected path. Although his claim conflicted with widely publicized findings by the National Weather Service and NOAA, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross threatened to fire employees if they did not support the president's inaccurate assessment.¹⁰⁸
- Slashed expert advisory committees by a third.** In June 2019, President Trump signed Executive Order 13785, which forced all federal agencies to terminate at least one third of their federal advisory committees.¹⁰⁹ These committees are generally made up of top experts in their field who provide respected technical and scientific recommendations on a wide variety of issues.
- Tied scientists' hands by putting bogus restrictions on their work.** In 2018, both DOI and EPA put forth directives that would force agency scientists to conduct studies based only on publicly available raw data, excluding important research that relies on confidential information and historical data for which online sources are not available.¹¹⁰ The thinking behind the directives was widely rejected by scientists and academics who pointed out that scientific advancement has always relied on more than raw, publicly available data.

The Trump administration is obstructing congressional and public oversight.

Congressional oversight is one of the legislative branch's most important constitutional responsibilities and prerogatives. As the Supreme Court has recognized:

[a] legislative body cannot legislate wisely or effectively in the absence of information respecting the conditions which the legislation is intended to affect or change; and where the legislative body does not itself possess the requisite information—which not infrequently is true—recourse must be had to others who do possess it.¹¹¹

The Trump administration's obstruction of congressional oversight has been unprecedented in its totality, disregard, and disrespect of historical standards. DOI's response to Committee oversight efforts has been to drag its feet, argue with Committee staff and members over trivialities, and answer document requests with largely unresponsive materials in functionally useless formats. DOI has gone out of its way to hide its decisions and the thinking behind them from Congress and the public.

The following are just a few examples of DOI officials obstructing oversight and investigations.

- Instructed staff not to respond to Chairman Grijalva for almost two weeks, after which all responses were tightly screened by political appointees. The instructions were given immediately after Secretary Bernhardt's Senate confirmation hearings were announced.
- Repeatedly redacted documents citing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions, which do not apply to Congress. In at least one case, DOI produced a document in response to an *actual* FOIA request that did not contain the same redactions included in the version sent to the Committee.
- Sent thousands of pages of duplicative and largely meaningless materials, such as 12,000 pages of printed Excel spreadsheets, in order to inflate the quantity of documents DOI could claim to have produced in response to Committee requests.
- Refused to send electronic documents, such as emails and spreadsheets, in their native digital file formats despite the Committee's specific instruction to do so, instead delivering boxes of hard copy printouts even in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic (during which most staff have been required to work remotely).
- Repeatedly sent poorly informed witnesses to testify at Committee hearings, where they pleaded a lack of basic understanding of policy questions and repeated that they would take members' questions "back" to DOI for an answer. This continued even though the Committee had given DOI prior notice of topics to be covered in each hearing.

- Refused to conduct meaningful discussions or hold productive meetings with Committee staff to resolve the ongoing problem of DOI's lack of responsiveness.
- Failed to cooperate with multiple Government Accountability Office investigations.¹¹²

DOI's obstruction of Committee investigations has often taken the form of lengthy delays in responding to requests for documents and testimony.

They exacerbate these delays by quibbling about procedure or the legitimacy of the investigative topic itself. These obstacles became so onerous during the Committee's investigation of the BLM reorganization and headquarters relocation that the Committee had to threaten subpoenas for DOI to produce information the Committee had been requesting for more than six months.¹¹³

DOI has used the ongoing global pandemic as an excuse to ignore the Committee's investigative prerogatives.

Based on recommendations by medical experts, Committee and other House staff have been instructed by majority leadership to work remotely. DOI has inexplicably continued delivering boxes of hard copy documents to unoccupied Committee offices in response to requests, some of them months old. These documents are printed versions of electronic originals that could be transmitted digitally. This wastes time and taxpayer money and evades accountability. DOI officials have repeatedly refused to explain why they cannot or will not send documents electronically.

DOI officials have refused to participate in the Committee's online hearings, implemented to protect members and staff from unnecessary personal contact and potential disease transmission.

They have stated that they will refuse to send witnesses until "members return to work," setting a meaningless standard in the midst of a pandemic.¹¹⁴ The Committee implemented the virtual hearing format after a Republican member remained unmasked at a hearing for a half hour and tested positive for coronavirus the next morning. Shortly afterward, Chair Grijalva himself tested positive after being seated six feet away from the Republican member.¹¹⁵

DOI's refusal to cooperate has crossed into petty hostility, with the apparent intention of slowing down valid investigative inquiries.

Officials with the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) have demonstrated a pronounced lack of professionalism in communications with Committee staff. An email from an OCLA official responding to a document request for an investigation asked Committee staff if it was "typical for a committee to lie and deceive like this," when the official had no reason to believe the Committee had been deceptive in its characterization of DOI's obstruction.¹¹⁶

The Trump administration is using a global pandemic as a distraction while pushing an unpopular agenda.

The nation and the world continue to grapple with the consequences of the ongoing global pandemic. In the first days of the U.S. outbreak, while the focus should have been on emergency public health measures, the Trump administration used federal agencies' limited resources to boost fossil fuel development and weaken environmental safeguards. Both came at public expense. While the rest of the country was focused on surviving, the Trump administration focused on taking advantage of an opportunity to approve long-sought industry demands while public attention was elsewhere. We outline a few of these coronavirus-era giveaways below.

Barreling through public comment periods. The Trump administration has refused to delay or extend public comment periods during the pandemic. In the first month, DOI opened or closed at least 38 public comment periods despite numerous requests by local elected officials and members of Congress to suspend rulemakings.¹¹⁷

One particularly egregious example was the 45-day comment period in late March for the assessment of a ConocoPhillips oil drilling plan in the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska.¹¹⁸ The plan would pose significant harm to the region's ecological and subsistence values and significantly impact rural Alaska Native communities. BLM refused to delay the comment period and only offered "virtual public meetings" despite the limited high-speed internet connectivity in the area. These meetings were fraught with technological glitches and bandwidth constraints, severely restricting public input.

Using emergency pandemic funds to bail out the dying fossil fuel industry. Rather than provide much-needed financial help to the American people, the Trump administration has been funneling money to the fossil fuel industry and other extractive interests. One analysis found that the no other industry has received as much financial help.¹¹⁹

Using the Paycheck Protection Program, originally intended to help struggling small business, the Trump administration has awarded nearly \$7 billion to mining and other extractive resource corporations.¹²⁰ The oil and gas industry is likely to gain an additional \$3.2 billion by taking advantage of a tax credit and write-off provision in the CARES Act. Showing just how debt-crippled the oil and gas industry really is, and how reliant on credit the industry remains, a recently released report identified nearly \$100 billion in new bonds that have been issued to oil and gas companies through the Federal Reserve just since March.¹²¹

The Trump administration also used the pandemic as an opportunity to slash royalty rates on oil and gas extracted from public lands. Since April of this year, BLM approved more than 550 instances of royalty reductions for many of the same companies that benefited

from other pandemic relief programs.¹²² A report by the Government Accountability Office found that DOI's process for slashing royalties was so poorly implemented that it is impossible even to know whether these royalties were in taxpayers' best interest.¹²³ The Trump administration went ahead with aggressive lease sales for the fossil fuel industry despite a glut in oil production and resulting collapse in oil prices. These sales resulted in rock-bottom prices for public leases, dealing a blow to state and local budgets already suffering from the pandemic-induced recession. In the first month of the pandemic, DOI held eight lease sales, including the following:¹²⁴

- The auction of 78 million acres for offshore oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico, of which only 400,000 acres were sold, bringing in the smallest total for an offshore sale since 2016.
- The auction of more than 32,000 acres for oil and gas leasing in Utah, resulting in 87 percent of the land offered going for the minimum bid of \$2 per acre.
- The leasing of more than 2,600 acres for coal mining in Colorado, which went for the equivalent of a meager 36 cents per ton of coal.

Many of the companies that benefited from these decisions were former clients of Secretary Bernhardt or illegally appointed BLM Acting Director Pendley.¹²⁵

Relaxing regulation enforcement and rejecting stricter standards for polluters. In late March, the EPA announced that it would indefinitely ease enforcement of environmental standards like the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act for the oil and gas industry to help them cope with pandemic impacts.¹²⁶ The EPA assistant administrator for enforcement and compliance assurance said the agency did not expect power plants, factories or other companies to meet environmental standards or pollution reporting requirements during this time — and it wouldn't pursue penalties if companies broke the rules.¹²⁷ This was a win for the nation's most frequent environmental offenders, including companies like Sunoco Pipeline L.P., American Refining Group, and Dow Chemical that have racked up millions of dollars in fines since 2019.¹²⁸

In early April, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission announced “measures to relax enforcement for a host of regulations” for energy companies. Of particular note, they gave “direction to the Office of Enforcement staff to work more flexibly with ongoing audits and investigations, and schedule no new audits until after July 31.”¹²⁹ Many of the companies under audit at the time of the announcement had made major campaign donations to President Trump.¹³⁰

In mid-April, the EPA announced that it would not set stricter national air quality standards despite the growing body of evidence linking air pollution to more severe outcomes from respiratory diseases like COVID-19. These standards would have tightened regulations around fine particulate matter, otherwise known as soot, which is typically released by smokestacks, cars, and industrial operations. Low income communities and communities of color are at greater risk of being exposed to air with higher levels of soot.¹³¹ A draft analysis of the soot policy from September 2019 showed that tightening the existing standard by 25 percent could save as many as 12,150 lives a year.¹³²

SECTION 3: WHO IS THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION HURTING THE MOST?

Everyone has the right to pure air, clean water, and an environment that enriches life, but for many American communities, these rights are unrealized. The Trump administration has hastened a pattern of government neglect in the face of intentional, systematic exploitation by polluting industries. Waste disposal, dirty energy extraction and refining, and other heavily polluting projects are more often placed in already disadvantaged communities and operated in a way that disproportionately harms them. The effects of climate change are already disproportionately hurting communities susceptible to increased coastal flooding, severe weather damage, and wildfires – communities that already tend to be more economically exploited.¹³³

The communities that are being hurt first and worst are communities of color, low income communities, Indigenous communities, residents of U.S. Territories, and other under-resourced populations.

The Trump administration's all-out attack on the environment and willful ignorance of climate change has worsened these injustices, sometimes irreparably. The Trump administration silences or ignores these communities when they speak on their own behalf. As shown in this report, this administration has gutted laws like the National Environmental Policy Act, rushed public comment periods or made them inaccessible, and made backdoor deals that benefit a favored few industry friends and donors.

We highlight a few examples of the communities bearing the brunt of these injustices below.

Cancer Alley, Louisiana

According to the EPA, seven out of the ten U.S census tracts with the highest cancer rates lie in an 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River named "Cancer Alley."¹³⁴ Cancer Alley is home 150 chemical plants and refineries. The communities located closest to these plants are predominantly Black and low income.¹³⁵ Formosa Plastics Corp. is now planning the construction of another chemical facility in the same area. The project would emit 800 tons of toxic air pollution each year, doubling toxic air emissions in the parish and more than tripling the levels of cancer-causing chemicals in the region.

In a preliminary injunction filed in July 2020, the Center for Biological Diversity claimed that the Trump administration's Army Corps of Engineers failed to adequately disclose the environmental risks of the Formosa plastic complex as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.¹³⁶ The Corps also failed to adequately consider the harm to slave burial grounds and other cultural resources, which is a violation of the National Historical Preservation Act.

Alaska Native Communities

Climate change is disproportionately affecting Alaska Native villages as global temperatures and sea levels both rise.¹³⁷ These changes have increased erosion, flooding, and extreme weather events that can severely damage important infrastructure and have even caused whole villages to relocate. Thawing permafrost threatens access to drinkable water and the stability of buildings and other infrastructure. The lack of permanent sea ice impacts Alaska Native villages' ability to practice subsistence ice fishing.

The Trump administration's denial of climate change and aggressive pro-polluter agenda worsen the effects of climate change and push Alaska Native communities closer to a point of no return. As already described in this report, the administration has refused to listen to Alaska Native concerns regarding the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Tongass National Forest for industry exploitation. These public lands and wildlife are crucial to the subsistence practices of Alaska Native villages.

Los Angeles Neighborhoods

Los Angeles is the most polluted metropolitan area in the United States, according to the American Lung Association.¹³⁸ Within a 20-mile stretch, communities such as Bell, Compton, Hunting Park, Lynwood, and South Gate are wedged between major highways, downtown Los Angeles, and the port of Long Beach. The population of this area is 93 percent people of color, and 68 percent are considered low income—more than twice the national average.¹³⁹

Though conventional oil reserves have dwindled, oil drilling in Los Angeles remains pervasive. More than 580,000 Los Angeles residents live within a quarter mile of an oil well, leading many residents to call for larger buffer zones around these facilities.¹⁴⁰ Industry opposes these requests. The Trump administration's regulatory rollbacks, eased enforcement, and squashing of public input puts at-risk Los Angeles residents in even greater danger from the health impacts of these pollution sites.

Puerto Rico's Southwestern Municipalities

Since 2019, municipalities in the southwestern region of Puerto Rico have been hurt by a series of earthquakes, including 13 earthquakes of greater than 5.0 magnitude, that have destroyed homes, roads, schools, and businesses. Though Puerto Rico lies in a tectonically active region, the island had not been struck by a major earthquake in more than 100 years.

These earthquakes have destabilized communities and families recently harmed by major hurricanes. Earthquakes are unnerving, especially to those that have never experienced them, in part because they often happen repeatedly and without warning. The Republican-controlled Senate and the Trump administration oppose emergency supplemental appropriations for Puerto Rico, which could help Puerto Ricans recover by investing in housing, infrastructure, and mental health specialists.

SECTION 4: WHAT ARE THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEMOCRATS DOING TO FIGHT BACK?

Since Democrats took the House majority in January 2019, the Committee on Natural Resources has been working hard to fight against the Trump administration's destructive agenda. Unfortunately, this administration and the GOP-controlled Senate have been working just as hard to stop them. Sen. Mitch McConnell and the rest of the GOP-led Senate have refused to debate, let alone vote on, common-sense legislation that would protect our environment, health, and safety from the fossil fuel industry and other corporate interests.

The following pages highlight just some Committee efforts that would benefit the country if the GOP-led Senate and Trump administration stopped their chronic obstruction.

WAITING, WAITING...

The following bills have been referred to the Senate or are waiting for a full House vote. In many cases, the House chooses not to vote on a bill because the Senate is not expected to hold a hearing on the measure regardless of its merits.

H.R. 1941 (Cunningham) and H.R. 205 (Rooney) — Bipartisan Opposition to the Draft Five-Year Offshore Drilling Plan

In March 2019, the Trump administration released a draft five-year plan to open more than 90 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf to drilling, despite widespread bipartisan opposition. H.R. 1941 (Rep. Cunningham), the Coastal and Marine Economies Protection Act, and H.R. 205 (Rep. Rooney), the Protecting and Securing Florida's Coastline Act, ban DOI from leasing off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and the eastern Gulf of Mexico, respectively.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and were referred to the Senate.

H.R. 1146 (Huffman) — Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act

Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was prohibited until the passage of the 2017 Republican tax giveaway law, which opened the area to exploration. Chair Grijalva, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) and other leading Democrats led a press conference with Alaska Natives and conservation advocates to support H.R. 1146, which would stop efforts to lease the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas companies.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 560 (Sablan) — Northern Mariana Islands Residents Relief Act

H.R. 560 provides Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Resident status to certain otherwise qualifying people who do not meet a current requirement of having

resided continuously and lawfully in the Northern Mariana Islands from November 28, 2009, through June 25, 2019.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 737 (Sablan) — Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act

H.R. 737 addresses the sale of shark fins and the inclusion of rays and skates in the Seafood Traceability Program by making it illegal to possess, buy, or sell shark fins or any product containing shark fins, except for certain dogfish fins.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 5687 (Lowey) — Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief and Puerto Rico Disaster Tax Relief Act, 2020

The Committee on Natural Resources contributed to H.R. 5687 which would provide emergency and reconstruction aid to Puerto Rico after a series of earthquakes hit the island. It provides supplemental appropriations to respond to recent natural disasters in other U.S. Territories. The bill also expands access to tax credits—the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and several others—and modifies related requirements that affect the residents of Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 6800 (Lowey) — The Heroes Act

H.R. 6800 would improve public health and support the American people through the coronavirus pandemic. The bill included provisions from the House Natural Resources Committee to prevent wildlife-borne disease outbreaks, and funding for tribes to manage the pandemic.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 1904 (Grijalva) — Indian Water Rights Settlement Extension Act

H.R. 1904 ensures that the federal government sufficiently funds Tribal water rights settlements, a key mechanism for funding and providing running water for Native American communities. In light of the growing need for water access caused by climate change, this bill helps Tribes build and improve water systems, sustain cultural practices, improve health and welfare, and expand their economies.

Status: Language from the bill was incorporated into text of H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which passed the House.

H.R. 1373 (Grijalva) — Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act

H.R. 1373 prohibits new mining claims on approximately 1 million acres of public land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. By making permanent the 20-year moratorium currently in place, the bill secures the sole source of drinking water for many tribal

communities, protects the Colorado River watershed from mining impacts, and safeguards a national treasure on which local communities depend.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate. The bill's text was also incorporated into H.R. 6395, the "William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021" (NDAA), which passed the House. The Senate's version of NDAA did not contain similar language.

H.R. 2546 (DeGette) — Protecting America's Wilderness Act

H.R. 2546 combines six previously separate bills that together preserve more than 1.3 million acres of wilderness across the West and protect more than 1,000 river miles under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This package will help prevent climate change by improving land management and by limiting resource extraction on especially sensitive public lands.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate. The package's text was also incorporated into the NDAA which passed the House. The Senate's version of NDAA did not contain similar language.

H.R. 823 (Neguse) — Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

H.R. 823 would protect more than 400,000 acres of public lands throughout Colorado, supporting the state's growing outdoor recreation economy and preserving vulnerable ecosystems. The proposal, which receives broad support at the local, county, and state level, would limit inappropriate oil and gas extraction, protect landscapes as wilderness, and establish a first-of-its-kind National Historic Landscape at Camp Hale.

Status: Passed the House with bipartisan support and was referred to the Senate. The package's text was also incorporated into the NDAA which passed the House. The Senate's version of NDAA did not contain similar language.

H.R. 5986 (Grijalva) — Environmental Justice for All Act

After more than two years of collaboration with advocates and stakeholders, Chair Grijalva and Rep. A. Donald McEachin introduced H.R. 5986 with supporters at a Capitol Hill press conference in early 2020. The bill establishes a fund to support communities as they transition away from fossil fuel-dependent economies, creates grants to improve public health in under-resourced communities, requires consideration of cumulative impacts in permitting decisions under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, and strengthens the Civil Rights Act. The legislation's introduction underlined the principle that all people have the right to pure air, clean water, and a healthy environment and that federal policy should seek to achieve environmental justice for all.

Status: Several provisions of the bill were included in H.R. 4447, the Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act, which passed the House.

H.R. 5435 (Grijalva) — American Public Lands and Waters Climate Solution Act

H.R. 5435 is considered flagship legislation in the fight against the climate crisis. This bill directs DOI and USFS to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from public lands and waters by 2040, establishes an Office of Climate Change Mitigation and Planning to oversee implementation, and increases royalties on fossil fuel extraction by oil, gas, and coal corporations, using proceeds to support workers and communities impacted by dirty energy and the transition to a cleaner economy.

Status: The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on the bill.

H.R. 2711 (DeGette) — Methane Waste Prevention Act

H.R. 2711 requires DOI to reduce the waste of natural gas via venting, flaring, and leaks on public lands, and to establish more stringent requirements for reporting natural gas production and disposition volumes. The bill also codifies the Obama administration's New Source Performance Standards at EPA that curb methane emissions from oil and gas operations.

Status: The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on the bill. A portion of the bill was included in H.R. 4447, the Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act, which passed the House.

H.R. 2245 (Grijalva) — CECIL Act

H.R. 2245 restricts the importation of African lion trophies and other sport-hunted species that have been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The legislation increases protections for species for the purposes of trophy hunting import licensing; requires that any wildlife imports to the U.S. enhance the conservation of the species; and directs a study to determine whether there is any evidence that trophy hunting in foreign countries contributes to wildlife conservation.

Status: The Committee on Natural Resources passed the bill.

H.R. 2579 (Grijalva) — Hardrock Leasing and Reclamation Act

Chair Grijalva and Senator Tom Udall introduced House and Senate mining reform bills to modernize the nation's badly antiquated hardrock mining laws. H.R. 2579 establishes a leasing system to protect American taxpayers and public lands, establishes a fair royalty on new mining operations, requires meaningful tribal consultation, and ends the outdated claim-staking and patenting system that gives miners almost unfettered access to nearly all public land.

Status: The Committee on Natural Resources passed the bill.

H.R. 2918 (Grijalva) — Extinction Prevention Act

H.R. 2918 provides much-needed funding for some of the country's most imperiled and chronically underfunded wildlife species, such as North American butterflies, Hawaiian and Pacific Islands plants, freshwater mussels, and southwest desert fish. For each species group, the bill authorizes conservation projects related to restoration, protection and

management of ecosystems, monitoring of populations, enforcement of conservation laws, and community outreach.

Status: The Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing on the bill.

H.R. 2532 (Grijalva) — Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act

H.R. 2532 ensures that grizzly bears are permanently protected for their ecological and cultural value and guarantees Tribal governments a role in conserving and managing the species. The bill also bans trophy hunting and non-discriminatory predator control measures while creating a process for reintroduction of grizzly bears on suitable lands of willing Tribal governments.

Status: The Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing on the bill.

Other Committee on Natural Resources bills that have passed the House, but are still waiting on action in the Senate:

BILL		SPONSOR
H.R. 139	Springfield Race Riot Study Act	Rodney (R-IL)
H.R. 182	To extend authorization for Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Committee	Keating (D-MA)
H.R. 312	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Reservation Reaffirmation Act	Keating (D-MA)
H.R. 315	Community Reclamation Partnerships Act*	LaHood (R-IL)
H.R. 335	South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act	Mast (R-FL)
H.R. 375	To amend the Act of June 18, 1934 (i.e., the Carcieri Fix)	Cole (R-OK)
H.R. 453	Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act	Fleischmann (R-TN)
H.R. 473	To authorize the Every Word We Utter Monument	Neguse (D-CO)
H.R. 496	Sinkhole Mapping Act*	Soto (D-FL)
H.R. 722	Miracle Mountain Designation Act	Curtis (R-UT)
H.R. 729	Tribal Coastal Resiliency Act†	Kilmer (D-WA)
H.R. 759	Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Settlement Act	Babin (R-TX)
H.R. 988	National Estuaries and Acidification Research Act	Posey (R-FL)
H.R. 1088	First Infantry Recognition of Sacrifice in Theater Act	Marshall (R-KS)
H.R. 1162	Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act*	Napolitano (D-CA)
H.R. 1314	Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act Amendments†	Young (R-AK)
H.R. 1446	Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Reauthorization Act	Clay (D-MO)
H.R. 1472	To rename the Homestead National Monument of America	Smith (R-NE)
H.R. 1487	Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Boundary Adjustment Study Act	Lieu (D-CA)
H.R. 1585	Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act	Bass (D-CA)

H.R. 1702	Free Veterans from Fees Act	Steube (R-FL)
H.R. 1980	Smithsonian Women's History Museum Act	Maloney (D-NY)
H.R. 2156	Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More Act*	Cartwright (D-PA)
H.R. 2185	District of Columbia Flood Prevention Act†	Norton (D-DC)
H.R. 2420	National Museum of the American Latino Act	Serrano (D-NY)
H.R. 2490	To conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail	Fortenberry (R-NE)
H.R. 2551	Great Lakes Environmental Sensitivity Index Act†	Kildee (D-MI)
H.R. 2611	Public Lands Telecommunications Act*	Huffman (D-CA)
H.R. 2795	Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act*	Beyer (D-VA)
H.R. 2819	Gold Star Mothers Families National Monument Extension Act	Kim (D-NJ)
H.R. 2956	To provide for the establishment of the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge*	Calvert (R-CA)
H.R. 3068	Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act*	Keating (D-MA)
H.R. 3094	To designate the National Pulse Memorial	Soto (D-FL)
H.R. 3115	Living Shorelines Act*†	Pallone (D-NJ)
H.R. 3160	Blackwater Trading Post Land Transfer Act	O'Halleran (D-AZ)
H.R. 3349	Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act	Doggett (D-TX)
H.R. 3465	Fallen Journalists Memorial Act	Napolitano (D-CA)
H.R. 3510	Water Resources Research Amendments Act*	Harder (D-CA)
H.R. 3541	Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act†	Carbajal (D-CA)
H.R. 3548	Bolstering Long-Term Understanding and Exploration of the Great Lakes, Oceans, Bays, and Estuaries Act†	Bonamici (D-OR)
H.R. 3596	Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act†	Pingree (D-ME)
H.R. 3723	Desalination Development Act*	Levin (D-CA)
H.R. 3742	Recovering America's Wildlife Act*	Dingell (D-MI)
H.R. 3794	Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act†	Gosar (R-AZ)
H.R. 4059	To take certain lands in California into trust for the benefit of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians*	Ruiz (D-CA)
H.R. 4248	Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Amendments*	Cartwright (D-PA)
H.R. 4299	Data Preservation Act†	Velazquez (D-NY)
H.R. 4346	Bonding Reform and Taxpayer Protection Act*	Lowenthal (D-CA)
H.R. 4495	To acquire private land to facilitate access to the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center*	Ruiz (D-CA)
H.R. 4512	Outdoors for All Act*	Barragán (D-CA)
H.R. 4828	Sport Fish Restoration and Recreational Boating Safety Act	Cunningham (D-SC)
H.R. 4891	Western Water Security Act*	Torres Small (D-NM)
H.R. 4957	Native American Child Protection Act	Gallego (D-AZ)
H.R. 5068	Women Who Worked on the Home Front World War II Memorial Act	Norton (D-DC)
H.R. 5126	Direct Enhancement of Snapper Conservation and the Economy through Novel Devices Act	Graves (R-LA)
H.R. 5179	Tribal Wildlife Corridors Act*	Gallego (D-AZ)
H.R. 5316	Move Water Now Act*	Cox (D-CA)
H.R. 5347	Disadvantaged Community Drinking Water Assistance Act*	Cox (D-CA)
H.R. 5366	Chesapeake Bay Oyster Research Act†	Brown (D-MD)
H.R. 5541	Tribal Power Act*	O'Halleran (D-AZ)

H.R. 6050	Puerto Rico WaterSMART Grants Eligibility Act*	González-Colón (R-PR)
H.R. 7056	To award additional funding through the Indian Health Services Sanitation Facilities Construction Program*	O'Halleran (D-AZ)
H.R. 7273	To provide for the Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program*	Schrier (D-WA)
H.R. 7387	Shovel-Ready Restoration Grants for Coastlines and Fisheries Act*	Muscarsel-Powell (D-FL)

* Partially or fully passed the House as part of H.R. 2 Moving Forward Act.

† Partially or fully passed the House as part of H.R. 729 Coastal and Great Lakes Communities Enhancement Act.

‡ Partially or fully passed the House as part of H.R. 4447 Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act.

PASSED INTO LAW

Fortunately, not all efforts were in vain. Through the leadership of Chair Grijalva and other members, the Committee spearheaded the passage of critical legislation that will protect our environment, public health, and economy for generations to come. Four of these historic statutes are highlighted below.

The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act Signed into law March 12, 2019

The Committee began the 116th Congress by signing a sweeping conservation bill into law. This package, which included items nearly a decade in the making, protected more than 1 million acres of wilderness, established new national park sites and new national recreation areas, and permanently authorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). It allows every fourth grader in America to visit national parks for free and supports a civilian conservation service corps. The bill was the culmination of months of bipartisan, bicameral negotiations, and resulted in the most significant conservation bill in nearly two decades.

The Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act Signed into law April 16, 2019

Introduced by Chair Grijalva, the “Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act” authorizes water conservation measures for the Colorado River needed to manage prolonged drought conditions and regional climate change impacts across the American Southwest. The legislation facilitates essential water conservation measures across seven western states and the nation of Mexico, effectively safeguarding the water supply for 40 million people while planning continues for long-term climate change conditions.

Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act Signed into law June 25, 2019

Originally introduced by Rep. Sablan, this law grants Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Resident status to certain people who have resided continuously and lawfully in the CNMI. An individual with such status shall be authorized to work in the CNMI and issued travel documentation. Sablan introduced his bill shortly after the Trump

administration announced it was ending humanitarian parole for people in the CNMI, a decision that was expected to separate families.

The Great American Outdoors Act

Signed into law August 4, 2020

Successful passage of the “Great American Outdoors Act” is one of Congress’ most significant investments in environmental conservation in a generation. The legislation fully funds the LWCF at \$900 million annually and creates the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, which provides funding to the NPS, Forest Service, FWS, BLM and the Bureau of Indian Education. Chair Grijalva, other members of the Committee, and a large network of advocates have championed permanent authorization and full funding of the LWCF for years, and their efforts will aid in protecting public lands for generations to come.

OTHER LANDMARK EVENTS ON THE COMMITTEE

Despite GOP obstruction, the Committee held dozens of Democratic-led forums, roundtables, field hearings, press conferences, and other events that gave the public a chance to see and hear about the issues highlighted in this report and more. Two particular highlights are explored below.

House Committee on Natural Resources Climate Change Hearing Series

At the start of the 116th Congress, the Committee held its first-ever series of congressional hearings to convey the urgency of addressing the climate crisis and prioritize climate issues in Congress. The hearings explored how climate change would impact energy, Tribal communities, public lands, water and wildlife. The series ended by highlighting the parallels between the Trump administration’s climate change denial campaign and other industry-funded science denialism efforts.

Environmental Justice Summit

In June of 2019, Chair Grijalva and Rep. McEachin hosted the Congressional Convening on Environmental Justice, bringing together policymakers, environmental leaders, frontline advocates, and community-based organizations to educate Congressional staff on the history and context of the environmental justice movement. The first event of its kind, the convening provided a venue to address longstanding inequities in economically oppressed and politically marginalized communities and produced a framework on which H.R. 5986, the Environmental Justice for All Act, is based. The event established the importance of including frontline voices in the policy-making process and set the baseline for the work that Chair Grijalva and other advocates have continued to pursue on environmental justice throughout the 116th Congress.



CONCLUSION

UNDER THIS ADMINISTRATION, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HAS BEEN DECEIVED, DISTRACTED, AND ROBBED BY A PRESIDENT WHO IS MORE CONCERNED WITH DOING FAVORS FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS IN THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY THAN DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR THE COUNTRY.

THEIR ACTIONS ARE ACTIVELY DESTROYING OUR PROGRESS TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY, AND SOCIETY.

THEY MUST BE STOPPED.

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