# House Natural Resources Hearing on DOI’s FY2022 Budget and Spending Priorities

([Watch Here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL6b6Nk-4uI))

**Rep. Grijalva opening statement:** In his opening statement, Chair Rep. Raúl Grijalva recognized historic significance of Haaland’s position as DOI Secretary despite history of the Department. Said he supported Haaland’s nomination because of her experience, perspective, and fair-mindedness.

**Rep. Bruce Westerman opening statement**: In his opening statement, ranking member Rep. Westerman’s said DOI’s proposed budget fell short of many goals surrounding access, conservation, innovation and transparency. Said the budget should mean access for timber, water, grazing lands, minerals, and energy in addition to recreational opportunities. Said the budget showed the administration’s deeply flawed inconsistencies like its opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline while supporting foreign pipelines. Westerman said the budget focused on promoting renewable energy but said virtually nothing about domestic mineral sourcing. He questioned why the budget supported full funding of LWCF while cutting off those revenue sources by halting fossil fuel development. Highlighted importance of addressing drought and wildfires. Said the budget did not include serious support for water storage or wildfire prevention treatments on public lands. Said he was disappointed the budget and DOI ignored transparency.

## Witness Statement

**Secretary Deb Haaland**: In her oral testimony, Sec. Haaland said the FY22 budget reflected important role interior would play to accomplish the administration’s goals to move country forward in this unprecedented time. Said the budget proposed $17.6 billion in discretionary investments in Interior along with proposals to implement the American Jobs Plan. Said programs reflected in the request lifted the President’s goal to address climate crisis, providing resources to tribal nations, restoring balances on public lands, advancing environmental justice, investing in a clean energy future, and creating jobs. Haaland said the budget supports America the Beautiful initiative to conserve 30% of public lands by 2030. Said request also allocates full mandatory funding for the LWCF and included $86 million in funding for the civilian climate corps initiative. Haaland said budget included “unprecedented investments” to address the climate crisis including more than $1.9 billion in new funding for conservation, clean energy, climate science and fleet modernization. She said the budget included an increase in funding to support clean energy deployment on federal lands and included funding to reduce risk of wildfires. Said the budget request also included funding for reclamation jobs initiative and legacy pollution cleanup program that would plug orphaned oil and gas wells and cleaning up abandoned mines. Haaland said the budget included investments for Indian country, focused on strengthening tribal sovereignty, and tribal safety and justice programs.

## Q&A

**Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32)**: Talked about recycled water and questioned why we weren’t using recycling to combat drought. Asked Haaland how much demand she was seeing from water districts for Title 16 grants and if funding levels were sufficient to meet current demand. Also asked Haaland if the Department would help advance regional projects to address water security. Said she requested $500 million for Title 16 and didn’t understand why it wasn’t included in the budget. Haaland said she understood how severe the drought is in the west and DOI cares about it deeply and works to address it day. Said DOI would use their best to use every single tool to address the drought.

**Rep. Westerman (R-AR-04)**: Said 40% of lands along the southern border were federal lands and this year saw hundreds of thousands of pounds of drugs in the U.S. He asked Haaland about DOI’s plan to make sure the southern border was protected and asked why the budget didn’t request funding specifically for this purpose. Westerman said Mexican traffickers were the principal suppliers of most illegal drugs on reservations and Indian country. Said during a visit with tribal leaders, they highlighted problems with illegal drugs. Westerman also criticized 30x30 plan and asked how the administration could claim to support indigenous people when its 30x30 plan reportedly could lead to human rights abuses. Also mentioned investigation into World Wildlife Fund for crimes including rape and murder. Westerman asked why were funding organizations with serious human rights abuses.

**Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA-16):** Talked about drought in western states. Said climate change was causing droughts to increase in intensity and said this was the worst drought since 1978. Mentioned CA governor’s drought resistance plan and urged Haaland to take a look at budget and consider increasing funding to address drought. Costa talked about potential land loss and loss of employment opportunities as drought worsens. Haaland said she shared deep concerns about the drought and DOI worked to address the issue every day. Talked about $2.5 billion in funding for western water resilience. Costa also talked about dam safety, how fires have devastated national parks and needed maintenance.

**Rep. Lamborn (R-CO-05):** Said thank goodness a federal judge ruled on the leasing halt and asked if there would be a permanent ban on oil and gas leasing once the review is completed. Asked if she favors new production in the future. Lamborn said $10 billion comes in for oil and gas leasing and said that money was used for conservation programs and asked how we would replace $10 billion if leasing was permanently banned. Also said he was concerned about restrictions on mining, asked how we could meet the need for critical and rare minerals when it takes so long to set up mining in the U.S. Haaland said the administration understood the importance of critical minerals and believed in energy independence but wants to make sure mining takes into consideration environmental safety. Lamborn said he hoped don’t have to rely on countries like China that have horrible environmental policies.

**Rep. Gregorio Sablan (D-N. Mariana Islands):** Said he wanted to work with Haaland on insular area affairs. Said responding to climate change was important to his constituents who experience the front-line impacts. Praised the increased funding for insular area programs in DOI’s budget. Said he wasn’t convinced however that the Department was using the money effectively. Mentioned that the department wasn’t using the Energizing Insular Communities program. Asked Haaland for commitment to create energy action plans for insular areas and for commitment that she report annually on progress.

**Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA-04):** Talked about environmental impact statement under Trump on raising Shasta Dam. Asked Haaland if she would commit to moving forward with the Shasta Dam raise. Haaland said she would circle back with McClintock. McClintock said it was desperately needed and that the budget included no funding for new water storage capacity despite the severe drought. Said he wondered how the administration expected to address the West’s crisis without proposing any funding for long term water storage. Haaland said water storage was one of the tools they were looking at to combat drought. Complained that Haaland wasn’t answering any of his questions. Also asked Haaland if she supported Wind Act reauthorization. Haaland said yes and said they were working on reauthorization. McClintock asked Haaland to commit to fully reopening parks despite pandemic, criticized addition of new acres despite catastrophic wildfires on public lands.

**Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-02):** Praised DOI and the administration for reversing and reconsidering “ill conceived” policies of the Trump administration including decision to suspend leasing in the Arctic Refuge. Said the leases were rushed through at the 11th hour and announced minutes before Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. Huffman said the leases are of “dubious legality” and a “terrible idea.” Said he urges the department to throw the leases out entirely. Huffman said California is feeling the worst of climate change impacts, including drought and wildfires. Said many ecosystems are suffering. Criticized her predecessor who “always had his thumb on the scale” for fossil fuel friends. Suggested DOI consider increasing funding for water programs like title 16 in light of western drought. Thanked Haaland for pause on oil and gas leasing. Asked Haaland about stockpiled permits and leases and current leasing on millions of acres of public lands.

**Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ-04):** Mention funding in the budget for tribal water settlements. Said it was important to settle many of these. Highlighted “tragic” closing of Navajo generating station in Arizona. Said the station’s closing forces redesignation of billions of gallons of water. Said Haaland would be pressured by environmentalists to return these waters to the Colorado River but hoped she would work with him to make sure these waters stayed in Arizona. Gosar asked for her commitment on that and Haaland said she would work with him and reach out to his office. Gosar also highlighted Navajo nation was working to develop helium resources and asked if Haaland would work with him and the Navajo nation to approve permits in a timely manner.

**Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA-47)**: Asked Haaland about offshore wind development off the coast of California. Said DOI made progress on offshore wind and asked about unique challenges on the west coast and how they are working with local stakeholders. Haaland said she was proud of the advancements they’ve made on offshore wind and recently met with Gov. Newsom. Said they were committed to active engagement with stakeholders. Also thanked Haaland for undoing damage from the Trump Administration to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Asked how the budget’s proposed funding for migratory bird management would help with the responsible deployment of clean energy and updated to MBTA implementation.

**Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA-06):** Asked Haaland if she knew how much oil was imported from Russia last year. Said it was none and this was under the Trump Administration. Graves said under Biden, it was projected to be 7 million barrels for the month of June 2021. Said it was baffling to see pauses and moratoriums while increasing our reliance on foreign, unfriendly economies. Mentioned ruling on leasing pause and said the continuation of the pause seemed inconsistent with the federal ruling. Asked Haaland about current status is there a pause or not? Haaland said they were reviewing the ruling and would follow the law. Graves asked what has changed since the ruling? Questioned why DOI is taking so long to abide by the ruling. Talked about storms that devastated coastal Louisiana and said when oil and gas revenue in stopped, that effects the revenue that restores coastal ecosystems. Asked what she would stay to those suffering in Louisiana.

**Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ-07)**: Pushed back on Graves claims about imported oil under Biden vs. Trump and highlighted that the pandemic was a factor. Praised DOI for reviewing Trump’s “illegal shrinking” of Bears Ears and recommendation of a full restoration. Said Bears Ears was a sacred place and asked for update on when decision would be announced. Haaland said it was up to the president. Asked about tribal consultation process and asked if DOI is taking into account tribes’ request to expand the monument. Haaland said they’ve spoken and met with tribal leaders and are committed to consulting with tribes. Asked if they’ve also met with local Utah stakeholders as well. Praised increase in funding for Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Rep. Jody Hice (R-GA-10)**: Said his district was rich in history and included a revolutionary war battle site, Kettle Creek. Thanked members of the committee and DOI for helping designate the site. Said under current administration, his office has reached out a number of times to DOI to finalize designation and has not heard back. Asked for update. Haaland said someone would reach out to his office with an update. Also mention increase in budget, called it “staggering” and asked how in the world they would pay for the increase. Said he knows there are proposed tax increases that would “heavily” impact American citizens and said it was only fair that the American people know how its paid for. Said the maintenance backlog was not addressed at all in the budget.

**Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO-02)**: Said Colorado experienced record-setting wildfires recently. Said wildfire management mostly falls under DOI and said urged increased funding for wildfires. Asked how DOI was working with local and state leaders to leverage resources to combat and restore following wildfires. Also talked about the climate conservation corps, said he was very excited about it and asked if post-wildfire restoration could be among the activities that the corps would participate in. Haaland said she was really excited about the initiative and the opportunities it would present. Said they were still narrowing down the kinds of activities the corps would participate in.

**Rep. Aumua Radewagen (R-American Samoa):** Thanked Haaland for funding to the American Samoa Operations Account. Asked for attention to insular area health care and health infrastructure issues. Asked Haaland how DOI would prioritize local fee to trust applications at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Haaland said they would set up a briefing with her staff on the issue.

**Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA-49)**: Thanked Haaland for reviewing oil and gas leasing. Said his constituents relied on clean beaches and under the last administration Bernhardt refused to assure drilling wouldn’t happen on California’s coast. Asked about BOEM’s need to develop new 5-year leasing plan and asked if Haaland would commit to listening to his constituents before making new decisions about offshore drilling. Asked if Haaland would work with member of Congress to prevent new drilling off of California’s coast. Haaland said she would work with him. Praised smart renewable energy development on public lands but highlighted cost of acreage rents. Asked what DOI planned to do to address high costs of rents for wind and solar on public lands. Also mentioned ocean desalination and asked if she thought the infrastructure plan should support a broad range of water infrastructure projects including local solutions like desalination.

**Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID-01):** Mentioned critical and rare earth minerals. Said many of them are needed by homeland security and just for everyday use. Said China provided over 90% of the minerals and that was problematic for many reasons. Said we have those minerals in the U.S. but they are on public lands and harvesting is prevented for the most part. Said Haaland’s view of 30x30 plan focused on preservation and would not allow for mining of critical minerals. Asked Haaland if they would proceed with 30x30 plan under conservation approach (which would theoretically allow for responsible mining) or preservation approach. Haaland said the conservation approach is the one they plan to take when it comes to America the Beautiful and said stakeholder voices were considered. Fulcher also mentioned wildfires on public lands.

**Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA-45)**: Said as chair of oversight subcommittee, she takes transparency seriously and the American people have a right to know how policies are made. Said under last administration, getting answers from DOI was no easy task and asked Haaland if she would commit to being more responsive than her predecessors. Haaland said they would be as responsive as they possible can. Said they were processing unfulfilled requests from the previous administration. Porter asked if Haaland was committed to operating in good faith with both party’s requests and Haaland said they want to be responsive to the full committee. Asked about the Every Kids Outdoor program and said it didn’t have a specific line item and asked how much would be spent on the program for FY22. Said we can do more to make the program more robust. Porter also mentioned the importance of protecting taxpayer money and asked Haaland if she has an obligation to identify waste, fraud and abuse. Haaland said public lands below to all Americans and she is committed to protecting them with respect to funding issues. Porter also talked about the losses under onshore leasing.

**Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN-08):** Stauber mentioned budget’s increase for mineral resources program. Said U.S. was over reliant on foreign sources for minerals and talked about minerals available in his state. Said we don’t need to map minerals. Displayed headlines from Biden’s campaign supporting domestic mineral development and compared that to Biden’s current plan to pursue minerals abroad. Asked what changed Biden’s plan to use domestic miners for critical minerals. Haaland said Biden does support domestic energy production and said DOI could continue to work to address the issue. Stauber said Obama catered to anti-mining, anti-jobs interests and pulled mineral leases that were later restored by Trump. Asked Haaland if she would commit to keeping leases until review is completed.

**Rep. Teresa Fernandez (D-NM-03):** Fernandez thanked and praised Haaland, said NM is ground zero of the climate crisis. Highlighted bigger storms and more frequent storms from climate change. Said NM relies on revenue from oil and gas as well. Said the market is shifting to clean energy and she is sponsoring a bill to aid in this shift. Asked Haaland what she thought about proposals to support states like NM and Louisiana that would lose money as we shift to clean energy economy. Haaland said components of the budget would also assist and make sure no workers are left behind as we shift to clean energy. Rachael Taylor also highlights reclamation projects that are helping provide solutions. Fernandez also talked about the increase for Indian Affairs and if the budget would address infrastructure needs especially at schools.

**Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-WI-07):** Tiffany mentioned that report that found 39% of lands were federally owned and asked Haaland “how much is enough?” Haaland speaks to America the Beautiful plan and says the land wouldn’t be locked up. He asked if Haaland knew about the increase in price of timber and blamed the increase on the U.S. “shutting down lands” especially in the west. Tiffany talked about the delisting of the grey wolf and asked if Haaland commit to maintaining 2020 rule allowing states to manage wolf populations. Haaland said the department cares about wildlife and would rely on science in decisions for protecting endangered species. Tiffany also talked about NEPA requirement to coordinate and work with local governments on land use plans.

**Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-13)**: Tlaib talked about Environmental Justice for All Act and said she represented one of the most polluted communities in the country. Said the community is surrounded by multiple sources of pollution that contribute to prevalence of asthma and cancer. Asked Haaland to speak to why its important to consider public health impacts when permitting development in areas already suffering. Haaland said she cared deeply about the issue and talked about how she lived in an area with the world’s largest open pit uranium mining and said people are still dying from the exposure to uranium. Haaland pointed out Justice 40 initiative and said every child should be able to breathe clean air. Tlaib also highlighted harassment and intimidation BLM staffers faced in local communities.

**Rep. Jerry Carl (R-AL-01):** Said he was very upset about the moratorium on new leases and said it was estimated that thousands in Alabama would lose their jobs as a result. Mentioned how important the GOMESA funds were to his district. Said if the leases continue to be canceled, coastal communities would be denied a vital source of funding. Said it hypocritical for the Biden Admin. to “preach to us” about the environment but ignore this important component of offshore called GOMESA. Drilled down on previous points made about DOI’s plans to comply with court ruling on the leasing pause. Asked when the review would be release.

**Rep Ed Case (D-HI-01):** Said he supported the President’s budget and the inclusion on money to address climate change. Said DOI has been chronically underfunded over the years. Thanked Haaland for BOEM’s recognition of native Hawaiians. Case mentioned compacts of free association that are up for renegotiation and are bogged down at DOI and the State Department. Haaland said she has not forgotten about the compacts

**Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-MT-AL):** Mentioned full funding of LWCF and the National Parks Legacy and Restoration Fund. Asked how we would replace revenue loss cause by the administration’s pause on new leases, said it jeopardized the revenue source of those conservation programs. Haaland reiterates that the pause only effects new leases. Rosendale says DOI is shutting down the pipeline to the future.

He said at her confirmation hearing, she made a promise on the ESA. He said grizzlies have met the criteria for delisting and asked if she would “follow the science” and delist the Grizzly bear in 2 areas highlighted by Rosendale. She said she will be in touch with his office on that. Rosendale mentioned missing and murdered indigenous women as a big issue in Montana and asked Haaland what she was doing to improve collaboration between tribes and federal authorities to improve investigations and prosecution of the perpetrators.

**Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NM-01):** Told Haaland it was humbling to be there with her and said she was getting emotional listening to Haaland speak and said NM and the country was proud. Said she feels hope from the budget and said science is clear on the need to address climate change. Said the budget invested in the communities and in protections for land, water, and wildlife. Said state and country are facing drought that has shattered records already. Said action was needed now.

**Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT-01):** Thanked Haaland for visiting Utah and listening to stakeholders on Bears Ears. Asked if Biden would also meet with them before making his decision on Bears Ears. Asked Haaland about a report on the planned management of the monument. Moore asked if he thought management issues should be handled by the administration or by Congress. Haaland said she would support decision to handle legislatively if they decided to do that.

**Rep. McEachin (D-VA-04)**: Talked about a previous mention of cumulative pollution effects as addressed in the Environmental Justice for All Act. Said he and Grijalva worked to figure out how best to help underserved communities. Called Grijalva a true EJ advocate. Said we needed to resist the temptation to tell these communities what’s in their best interest rather than supporting them with resources and expertise so that they can implement their own solutions. Also talked about recent bill he sponsored with Sen. Booker to clean up legacy pollution.

**Rep. Yvette Herrell (R- NM-02):** Mentioned injunction on leasing pause and asked Haaland for a definitive date when lease sales in New Mexico and other oil and gas states would once again be held. Haaland said the review will be out very soon and that they would be complying with the court’s decision. Asked Haaland how much money in the budget was allocated for mitigating orphan wells. Talked about beneficial use on public lands and added that she thought everyone in the U.S. benefits from fossil fuels and timber use. Said we needed to ensure we are protecting the industries. Asked if Haaland would consider coming to New Mexico as well.

**Rep. Michael San Nicolas: (D-Guam):** Said Biden’s mention of tribes in his inaugural address was a high point. Praised Haaland’s nomination to be Secretary. Talked about Free Association compacts and talked about need to renegotiate. Praised budget’s inclusion of funding for indigenous people but said with respect to territories, the budget did not adequately reflect impact of compacts and hosting of treaty allies.

**Rep. Boebert (R-CO-03):** Highlighted Colorado and other western states experiencing drought. Asked why the budget did not include investments in water storage. Haaland said they’d go back and take a look at the issue. Boebert also asked if Haaland also supported reauthorization of title J in the Wind Act. Encouraged DOI to “get their priorities straight instead of pandering to radicals” on dams. Also mentioned BLM relocation and said it had strong support from Coloradans. Claimed the move has improved BLM in many ways and asked if Haaland planned to visit the Grand Junction headquarters.

**Rep. Grijalva (D-AZ-03):** Talked about climate change and said Haaland’s comments on tribes were very important. Reiterated Haaland’s points on the many oil and gas leases currently in existence and said the committee would like to make some comparisons on existing leases. Suggested there may need to be a “use it or lose it” policy when it comes to leases. Said he opposed BLM relocation but said he was happy to wait for the results of DOI’s review of that decision. Said the committee asked for information constantly from DOI under the Trump admin and thanked Haaland for her commitment to providing information and access. Also talked about the Colorado River and the drought.

**Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-04):** Showed bottle of water and called it a natural resource. Said without it our lives don’t exist. Said water was in a competition with oil and gas and said she appreciated DOI and the forest service for doing what it needed to protect water for future generation. Talked about honoring our trust and treaty responsibilities in Indian Country. Praised Haaland’s activity on schools in Indian Country. Praised increase in budget for Indian Affairs.

**Rep. Bentz (R-OR-02):** Talked about grim situation in the Klamath Basin on water scarcity. Asked if the working group has been formed yet and when Haaland expected for the working group to come together to address. Haaland said she would be in touch with his office as the working group moves forward. Talked about local issue with access to nearby water sources. Also asked how efforts were going to find additional funding for those affected in the basin.

[Hearing adjourned]