

**Statement for the Record
Department of the Interior
Before the
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs**

On

**H.R. 1010, Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety for Native Communities Act;
H.R. 7954, Don Young Doug LaMalfa Indian Buffalo Management Act; and
H.R. 8483, Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Act
of 2025**

May 21, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement for the record on H.R. 1010, the “Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety for Native Communities Act”; H.R. 7954, the “Don Young Doug LaMalfa Indian Buffalo Management Act”; and H.R. 8483, the “Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025.”

The Department of the Interior (Department) appreciates the Subcommittee’s continued engagement on issues related to Tribal self-determination, public safety, stewardship of Tribal lands and wildlife resources, and strengthening the federal government’s partnership with Tribal Nations.

H.R. 1010, Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety for Native Communities Act

The BADGES for Native Communities Act would establish new programs and reporting requirements intended to improve coordination, data collection, and public safety responses related to missing or murdered Indigenous persons and Tribal public safety systems. Among other provisions, the bill would require annual reporting to Congress regarding staffing, vacancies, turnover, and infrastructure needs for federal law enforcement agencies operating in Indian country.

The legislation would further establish a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) demonstration program intended to expedite law enforcement background investigations and security clearances for BIA law enforcement personnel. Additionally, the bill would create a grant program to support Tribal, state, and regional coordination efforts related to missing or murdered Indigenous persons cases, including data-sharing, notification systems, and investigative coordination.

The Department recognizes the serious and ongoing public safety challenges facing Tribal communities and appreciates the Committee’s continued attention to missing and murdered Indigenous persons issues. Recently, the Department of the Interior announced a new Indian Country Violent Crime Task Force to strengthen law enforcement coordination, protect families in tribal communities, and crack down on violent crime and drug activity. Improving

coordination, supporting Tribal law enforcement capacity, and strengthening data systems remain important priorities across the Department and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services. The Department supports H.R. 1010 and would like to work with the sponsor and Subcommittee on technical enhancements.

H.R. 7954, Don Young Doug LaMalfa Indian Buffalo Management Act

The Don Young Doug LaMalfa Indian Buffalo Management Act would direct the Department to work with Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations to support buffalo restoration, buffalo habitat management, and Tribal buffalo-related economic and cultural initiatives on Indian lands.

The bill highlights the historical, cultural, spiritual, subsistence, and economic importance of buffalo to many Indian Tribes and seeks to promote Tribal capacity to manage buffalo and buffalo habitat. The legislation would authorize the Secretary to enter into contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants with Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for buffalo restoration and management activities, including herd management, commercial activities, habitat planning, and related economic development initiatives.

The bill would also direct the Department to consult with Indian Tribes regarding buffalo management activities, establish policies relating to buffalo habitat management on Indian lands, and authorize agreements for the transfer of surplus buffalo from federal lands to Tribal lands.

The Department recognizes the important cultural and historical relationship between buffalo and many Tribal communities and appreciates the Subcommittee's efforts to support Tribal self-determination and Tribal resource management initiatives. The Department supports continued collaboration with Tribes on buffalo conservation, habitat restoration, and wildlife stewardship efforts across Indian country. The Department supports H.R. 7954 and remains committed to advancing Tribal self-determination by supporting Tribal governments in managing their lands, protecting their communities, and preserving culturally significant resources.

H.R. 8483, Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Act of 2025

The bill would transfer administrative jurisdiction of approximately 160 acres of Bureau of Land Management land and 676 acres of U.S. Forest Service land to the Secretary of the Interior and require the land to be taken into trust for the benefit of the Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians of the Barona Reservation, California.

Under the bill, the covered land would become part of the Tribe's reservation and would be administered in accordance with laws and regulations generally applicable to trust land held for the benefit of Indian Tribes. The legislation includes provisions preserving existing rights-of-way, public recreational access, emergency access for federal personnel, and existing water rights and service agreements. The land placed into trust would not be eligible for class II or class III gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (Pub. L. 100-497).

Congress, through its plenary authority, can direct the Department to accept and administer lands to be held in trust for the benefit of a Tribe through legislation. Acquisition of land in trust for the benefit of Indian Tribes is essential to Tribal sovereignty and empowers Tribal self-determination in the use of Tribal lands to best serve their communities. The Department appreciates the Subcommittee's interest in advancing legislation affecting the Tribe.

The Administration supports conveying these lands into trust for the benefit of the Tribe and welcomes the opportunity to work with the sponsor to address any technical matters related to the legislative map and legal descriptions, survey authority, and the timing of trust acquisition. The Department supports H.R. 8483 and defers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding lands managed by the Forest Service affected by the bill.