

**From:** Chambers, Micah  
**To:** [Virginia Johnson](#); [Benjamin Keel](#); [Katharine Macgregor](#); [Cameron, Scott](#); [Magallanes, Downey](#)  
**Cc:** [James Cason](#); [Domenech, Douglas](#)  
**Subject:** RZ Docs  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 21, 2017 9:13:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [RZ - Committee Hearing Promises .pdf](#)  
[RZ QFR Responses 1-17-17 SENR.pdf](#)  
[RZ Record\\_ConservationSportsmen.pdf](#)  
[RZ Record\\_EnergyMineralResources.pdf](#)  
[RZ Record\\_Tribes.pdf](#)

---

All. I've attached the list of promises from his confirmation hearing along with a couple position papers and his QFR responses. Be glad to clarify any issues or questions as they come up if you'd find that helpful.

--

Micah Chambers  
Special Assistant / Acting Director  
Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs  
Office of the Secretary of the Interior

# PROMISES, PROMISES

## Congressman Zinke's Opening Statement Promises

### Overall Commitment

“When asked about what my goals might be, I would say there are three immediate tasks.

The **first** is to restore trust by working with rather than against local communities and states. I fully recognize that there is distrust, anger, and even hatred against some federal management policies. Being a listening advocate rather than a deaf adversary is a good start.

**Second**, is to prioritize the estimated 12.5 billion dollars in backlog of maintenance and repair in our National Parks. The President-elect is committed to a jobs and infrastructure bill, and I am going to need your help in making sure that bill includes shoring up our Nations treasures.

And **third**, to ensure the professionals on the front line, our rangers and field managers, have the right tools, right resources, and flexibility to make the right decisions that give a voice to the people they serve.”

### Senate Hearing Promises

Alabama, Jeff Sessions  
None

Alaska, Lisa Murkowski

- Travel to Alaska
- Review King Cove access road issue
- Work with the people of Alaska to be sure promises are kept re the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
- Conduct a formal review with the Park's service and wit NFW on the regs and then work with the state of Alaska re management decisions
- Conduct formal review of the Obama Administration's actions that took resource-bearing lands and waters in Alaska off the table - can the actions be reversed?

Arizona – visit second, Jeff Flake

- Travel to Arizona
- Review Tribal water rights issues
- Review Lower Colorado River drought contingency plan to be certain that Arizona has enough water
- Commitment to work with the Tribes and other parties in Arizona to move the Hualapai settlement forward, and to get the necessary clarifications to the White mountain Apache tribe settlement

Colorado, Cory Gardner

- Travel to Colorado
- Commit to work with Congress to make LWCF permanent
- Committed to look at DOI across the board, especially BLM, re moving agencies to the West
- Work to protect the private water rights and work with Congress on permits and water storage projects

#### Hawaii, Mazie Hirono

- Travel to Hawaii,
- Climate Change debate – more commitment in research
- Water research commitment – nothing specific
- Concerns on sexual harassment at NPS – need zero tolerance
- Travel to Guam, Puerto Rico, Palau, Marshall Islands, and Micronesia requested by Hirono

#### Idaho, Jim Risch

- Travel to Idaho, visit NIFC in Boise
- Sage grouse – FWS and BLM management review process
- Wild Fire plans/funding

#### Illinois, Tammy Duckworth

- Concerns on sexual harassment at NPS, what will you do other than listen to the front line?

#### Louisiana, Bill Cassidy

- Travel to Louisiana
- Leasing permit – complete review
- Coastal impact issues
- National Parks review
- Pipeline review process

#### Maine, Angus King

- Funding for maintenance of the National parks to address the backlog
- Attempt to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

#### Michigan, Debbie Stabenow

- Travel to Michigan
- Sexual harassment issue – create a work environment for victims free of fear of retaliation
- Great Lakes concerns – advocate funding for FWS to control invasive species (Carp)
- Support USGS science
- Support the right to clean water

#### Minnesota, Al Franken

- Travel to Minnesota

- Climate Change debate – more commitment in research
- Support for LWCF

Montana, Steve Daines

- Tribal water right agreements concerns
- Fossil fuel permit process – complete review
- Gas flaring – complete review
- Sage grouse – complete review
- Wild Fire funding – complete review

Nevada, Catherine Cortez Masto

- Concerns on federal land exchanges
- Commit to guarantee that tribal members on the 32 reservations will have a seat at the table when it comes to decisions, activities, and land management near their communities
- Address the wild horse and burro problem
- Commitment to working with the states on drought contingency plans

New Mexico, Martin Heinrich

- Travel to New Mexico
- Climate Change debate – commitment to more research
- Continue to work together on access issues
- Support for LWCF
- Pursue the pillage and profiting side of repatriating a sacred shield from an auction house in Paris working with the State and Justice Departments

North Dakota – visit third, John Hoeven

- Travel to North Dakota
- Dakota access pipeline protest – need BIA law enforcement to resolve situation-make sure the rule of law is followed
- Gas flaring – complete review
- Review Wild Fire management/funding
- Review buffer stream rule

Ohio, Rob Portman

- Travel to Ohio
- Help with funding the National Parks Centennial Act fully in the next appropriations cycle
- Review stream buffer rule in Eastern Ohio

Oregon, Ron Wyden

- Travel to Oregon
- Seek collaboration on bipartisan healthy forest issues
- Klamath River project – complete review
- Review wild fire funding
- Support for LWCF

Tennessee, Lamar Alexander

- Wild Fire review
- Look at allocation of funding between the Smokies and other parks
- Agreed to look ahead and think about ways to motivate and incentivize millennials by teaching the importance of the great outdoors.

Utah – visit first, Mike Lee

- Travel to Utah, talk to the people affected by the monument designation, and return to DC and make a recommendation to the President.
- Sage grouse – review policy
- Monument(s) – review
- Federal land exchange discussion – specific ask

Vermont, Bernie Sanders

- Climate Change analysis – RZ to further study
- Improve life (healthcare and education) for Native American people throughout the country

Washington, Maria Cantwell

- Travel to Washington
- Get rid of the maintenance backlogs in National parks
- Continue work on the Yakima River Basin project support
- Review/update of coal permits
- The war on coal – taxpayers' fairness
- Tribal concerns review sovereignty and tribal rights
- Pacific Gateway Terminal, follow NEPA process and complete EIS before making any decisions
- Technology review of LiDAR, and push for funding on the next budget request
- Look at ways to support the Spokane Tribe on their dam construction settlement

West Virginia, Joe Manchin

- Travel to West Virginia
- Discussion about appropriating AML funds

Wyoming, John Barrasso

- Travel to Wyoming
- End the moratorium on federal coal leasing
- Support efforts to reverse the venting and flaring rule under the Congressional Review Act
- Sage grouse – commit to returning conservation and management authority back to the states

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Questions for the Record from Chairman Lisa Murkowski**

**Question 1:** From 1944 to 1982, the Interior Department conducted oil exploration in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, leaving behind 136 well sites in need of environmental remediation and proper plugging and abandonment. While I secured \$50 million in 2013 to clean up many of these legacy wells, by 2019, when that funding is exhausted, the Department estimates there will still be 29 wells in need of remediation. If you are confirmed as Secretary, will you commit to working with me to develop a plan to expedite the cleanup of all remaining wells, rather than allowing piecemeal, bare minimum federal efforts to continue year after year?

**Response:** Madam Chairman, I believe that cleaning up those legacy wells should be a priority, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve that goal.

**Question 2:** Fisheries and tourism are vital to the livelihoods of thousands of Southeast Alaskans, but the Canadian government is permitting new hardrock mines that could threaten transboundary watersheds if they do not adhere to strong environmental standards. While the State Department is generally the lead on this issue, one of Interior's agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has provided grant funding to study water quality on the Stikine, Taku, and Unuk Rivers. This will help establish a baseline and protect our ability to seek damages in the event of an environmental mishap under terms of a treaty between the U.S. and Canada. Are you willing to engage on this issue, consider increasing transboundary water studies, and consult with other Departments to encourage Canada to take all necessary steps to protect the environment in this region?

**Response:** If confirmed, yes.

**Question 3:** Will you review recently completed and ongoing Resource Management Plans in Alaska to ensure that these plans are consistent and do not prevent access to resources needed for economic development?

**Response:** If confirmed, yes.

**Question 4:** Will you staff the Alaska Special Assistant to the Secretary positions, both in Anchorage and Washington, DC?

**Response:** As I have discussed with you and your staff, Alaska deserves special attention given the large Federal footprint and impact on the state. With this in mind, if I am confirmed, I will work with you to fill the Special Assistant position based in Anchorage, and learn more as to why the position in Washington was eliminated.

**Question 5:** Will you ensure that all Interior agency actions affecting Alaska are consistent with recent principles set forth in Supreme Court decision in the *Sturgeon* case, requiring that agency organic acts' interpretations and all agency actions be consistent

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

with the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act?

**Response:** I have been informed that the Supreme Court in the *Sturgeon* case, recognized that when passing the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Congress appreciated that Alaska is different in many respects from the lower 48 states in law. To the extent that the Congress has recognized such differences in the law, I will work to ensure that those differences are properly recognized in agency decisions.

**Question 6:** Will you review BLM's recent decision to require new cadastral survey standards for lands being transferred to the State of Alaska and Native corporations, which are opposed by the State, and which could affect the dependability of land title?

**Response:** If confirmed, yes.

**Question 7:** One of the greatest challenges facing Alaska is that our economic backbone, the Trans-Alaska-Pipeline System, is running three-quarters empty. It now carries just about 500,000 barrels per day—not due to a lack of resources, but instead an almost blanket lack of permission to access our federal areas. If you are confirmed as Interior Secretary, will you make it a priority to work with me, as well as Senator Sullivan, Congressman Young, and Governor Walker, to develop a plan to refill the Trans-Alaska Pipeline?

**Response:** President-elect Trump has declared energy dominance to be a strategic economic and foreign policy goal of the United States and that he intends to unleash America's \$50 trillion in untapped shale, oil, and natural gas reserves. Accomplishing that goal will, in part, depend on increasing flow on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that happens.

**Question 8:** A critical element of statehood is the primary authority to regulate resident fish and wildlife and establish the means, methods, seasons, and bag limits for the taking of such resident fish and wildlife. This state authority also extends to federal lands unless and until expressly and specifically countermanded by Congress using its Property Clause authority. Congress later provided that federal land designations and administration were not to diminish this State authority. Do you concur that states, possess primary authority to regulate hunting and fishing on federal lands?

**Response:** Madam Chairman, I agree that, in general, states have primary responsibility for wildlife management and that authority generally extends to federal lands. Moreover, I am committed to collaborating with state wildlife managers to ensure that we jointly conserve our wildlife resources.

**Questions for the Record from Ranking Member Maria Cantwell**

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 1:** If confirmed, do you intend to serve the entire four-year term as Secretary?

**Response:** Yes.

**Question 2:** Have you severed all ties with the Special Operations For America super PAC you formed in 2012?

**Response:** Yes.

There was a complaint filed against the Special Operations For America super PAC with the Federal Election Commission in 2014 that alleged improper contributions to your congressional campaign. What action did the FEC take on that complaint?

**Response:** Because I no longer have any role at Special Operations For America and am not a party to the complaint, I do not know all the actions the FEC has taken on that matter, but I do understand it remains under review.

Have you severed ties with SEAL PAC? If not, what involvement will you have with it if you are confirmed as Secretary? What steps will you take to avoid any conflicts of interest or the appearance of any conflicts of interest resulting from your association with SEAL PAC?

**Response:** SEAL PAC is my leadership PAC, and I will step down from my position with the PAC upon confirmation if confirmed.

If confirmed, I will abide by the recusal policy of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources which requires that I:

- (1) Abide by the recusal requirements imposed by federal conflict of interest laws and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch;
- (2) Seek the advice of my designated agency ethics officer before proceeding whenever faced with a situation that may give rise to an actual or apparent conflict of interest, and;
- (3) Adhere to the principles of ethical conduct and avoid any actions creating the appearance of violating the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch

**Question 3:** Thinning at-risk ponderosa pine forests and re-introducing prescribed fires (when the conditions are acceptable) is an idea supported almost universally by the scientific community, the environmental groups, and the timber industry. Will you be helpful in getting the pine pilot we developed here last Congress—a program to expedite those thinnings—enacted?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

I know the House prevented any wildfire or forestry legislation from being enacted at the end of last Congress—I suppose thinking they'd have a better chance this Congress to enact some of the sweeping ideas and environmental waivers that have been floating around. But don't you think a program focused on collaborative projects in the most at-risk forests—which are supported by science—are a better approach to protecting our communities, strengthening our timber industry, and restoring our forests?

If confirmed, will you be supportive of fixing the fire-borrowing problem that plagues the Federal wildland-firefighting agencies? And working within the Administration and with your current House colleagues on putting in place a plan that takes this issue off the table once and for all?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work with you, Members of the House of Representatives and my colleagues within the Administration to get a handle on the fire-borrowing problem.

**Question 4:** The Department of the Interior has put into place a robust scientific integrity policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Department's Bureaus and Offices, including the Secretary, are using the highest quality science, subject to rigorous scientific and scholarly standards, to inform decision making. This policy is also in place to ensure that the production and use of science at the Department is insulated from political intervention.

What are your views on scientific integrity and how will you ensure that the highest standards of scientific integrity are maintained at the Department of the Interior?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. Department of the Interior depends on the best available science for agency decision-making. I will review agency policies and guidance to ensure that scientific integrity underpins agency action.

**Question 5:** The U.S. Geological Survey is the Nation's primary earth science agency and is responsible for producing the science to ensure that our nation is prepared for hazards like floods and earthquakes, produces our nation's maps, assesses our nation's energy and mineral resources, conducts science necessary to understand and manage our nation's lands and waters, and produced critical satellite imagery which is all over the world and by our own military and civilian agencies. Each of the Department's bureaus also produce science needed to carry out their missions.

What do you believe is the role of science in informing decision-making and how will you ensure that the USGS and science at the Department is properly resourced to provide for the safety and prosperity of our country?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** The U.S. Department of Interior will rely on objective science and rigorous scientific review to inform agency decisions. I look forward to reviewing agency resources at the U.S. Geological Survey and other divisions if confirmed.

**Questions for the Record from Senator John Barrasso**

**Question 1:** In December 2016, the National Park Service issued its Record of Decision (ROD) for the Moose-Wilson Road Final Comprehensive Management Plan. The Moose-Wilson Corridor is a 7.1-mile stretch of road at the southern end of the Grand Teton National Park. Public access to the corridor is highly valued by locals, state residents, and national and international visitors alike for the unique opportunity it provides to view wildlife and enjoy the natural setting and beauty of the Grand Teton National Park.

The 2016 ROD represents a dramatic shift in the management approach for the Corridor from the 2007 Final Transportation Plan by severely limiting the public's access to this national park, forcing a 30-plus mile rerouting; eliminating a multi-use pathway from the southern entrance despite 2 tragic deaths from vehicle-cyclist collisions in this park; and reversing course on the 2007 decision to reroute the northern segment of the Road out of important wildlife habitat and wetlands. The Park Service has decided to limit access to the Corridor to no more than 200 vehicles—a threshold that lacks any rational scientific or factual basis, and will require new construction of 3-lane queuing station on both ends of the Corridor essentially cutting off public access to the Park. The second Environmental Impact Statement spent millions of taxpayer dollars for 7.1 miles of road planning – intended to keep the public out. The park even says it may be 2-4 years of through-road closures to pave 1.7 miles of the road and a spur entrance – which raises serious questions of intent to habituate the public to keep out of their national park.

Given the contrived and arbitrary nature of this decision and the dramatic shift from the Final Transportation Plan, will you consider reopening the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Moose-Wilson Road Final Comprehensive Management Plan?

**Response:** Senator, I am not sufficiently informed of the details of the situation to make a judgment today. However, access to our public lands is one of my highest priorities, and, from your description, it appears this may be an example of a situation that needs attention. I commit that, if confirmed, I will review this situation and consult with you further.

**Question 2:** In Wyoming, and other states across the West, agencies have identified limited land parcels that would be more suitable for management or ownership by the state, county, or other entity. Administratively, these lands could be made available for sale, transfer, or other means of disposal, but change in the status of these lands is limited by agency use of employee time and funding priorities. Given your support for H.R. 1214, the National Forest Small Tracts Act Amendments Act of 2015, will you commit to

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

prioritizing funds for disposal of lands that have been identified, agreed upon, and approved by the respective agencies?

**Response:** I remain committed to managing our federal land in a way that best serves those who use it. Wyoming and Montana are very similar. Both our states understand the challenges and opportunities associated with Federal Land. I supported H.R. 1214's unanimous passage because it is common sense. While I oppose the large-scale sale or transfer of public land, small parcel exchanges or conveyances that benefit the local community have received my full support as a Congressman and will continue should I be confirmed as Secretary of the Interior.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Ron Wyden**

**Question 1:** When working on difficult forestry issues, which I've been doing for over 20 years, you learn that no one gets everything they want but everyone must get something they need. My O&C bill brings people together, it gets the harvest up, and it protects bedrock environmental laws. I understand the urge to streamline process, but forestry policies that stack the deck in favor of one side won't work, particularly if you're interested in rebuilding faith in the federal government, which you noted in your remarks and in our meeting.

Litigation reform bars the path to the courthouse and sufficiency language essentially hands forests over to just one side of the debate. Coupled together, you create a scenario where the actions of one side are deemed automatically compliant and the other side has no way of challenging the action. That's the definition of stacking the deck and it will drive the two sides of an issue further apart, rather than bringing them together in a collaborative way.

How would you encourage collaboration in forestry while balancing the needs of all interests and avoiding reforms, like sufficiency language, that hand the entire deck over to one side?

**Response:** I appreciate your concerns about the need for collaboration in balancing the needs of all interests while avoiding policies that stack the deck for one side of any issue. As a member of the Natural Resources Committee in the House, I supported legislation that would have expanded the collaborative model to help resolve natural resource conflicts on our public lands. I would like to work with you and the other members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to provide appropriate authority to the Department of the Interior to expand and protect the work of the Resource Advisory Committees under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plans that have been collaboratively developed under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 2:** Representative Zinke, in our meeting, I told you about my bill, the Recreation Not Red-Tape Act, to cut the bureaucratic red tape that stands in the way of getting more people outdoors and opening access to America's special places. Recreation is an economic driver, particularly in rural areas, with studies showing recreation is a \$646 billion economy.

As Secretary, will you commit to working with me on my bill and prioritizing outdoor recreation and its vast economic potential on public lands, without sacrificing critical environmental protections?

**Response:** Senator, I appreciate the time you took to meet with me prior to the hearing. As we discussed, I believe public lands should be available for the enjoyment of all, and, if confirmed, outdoor recreation will be a priority of mine, and I believe recreation can occur while respecting and caring for the environment.

**Question 3:** Throughout the process of developing the Klamath water management agreements in Southern Oregon, the Bureau of Reclamation, under the direction of the Secretary of Interior, was a critical player in helping with stakeholder negotiations. Those agreements have expired and the future of the Klamath Basin remains uncertain. Are you familiar at all with what is happening in the Klamath Basin?

**Response:** Senator, I am somewhat familiar with the issues in the Klamath, but, if confirmed will need to learn a great deal more. I hope I will have the opportunity to visit the area with you and learn from you what needs to be done.

**Question 4:** Can you commit to working with me and the other members of the Oregon delegation and to supporting the Bureau of Reclamation and their efforts to help solve this complex problem in the Klamath Basin?

**Response:** If confirmed, yes.

**Question 5:** I've introduced the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act for the last several congresses, and I know you cosponsored the House companion bill in the past. While the issue of wildfire funding has been primarily a Forest Service issue, wildfires don't pay any attention to jurisdictional borders and they don't care who manages the land they're burning, so as Secretary of Interior, this is an issue you'll have to address. Do you think the practice of fire borrowing should be ended?

**Response:** Thank you for your leadership on the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. The entire Montana delegation has cosponsored this bill because Western states like ours intimately know the devastation of forest fires. I understand the importance of fixing the current wildfire borrowing system, but I believe it is only one component of the problem. As Montana's Congressman, I have been an active proponent of forest management reforms so wildfires are less severe. Active management reforms will get to the root of

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

the problem and lessen the burden of fighting wildfires. I fully agree that our firefighting funding mechanisms must be reformed, but it must be part of a comprehensive solution. I look forward to crafting those measures with you if I am confirmed.

**Question 6:** Do you think controlling the 10-year average cost of fires by freezing it at a certain level, or using some other budget control tool so it doesn't continue to erode the agency budgets, help the agencies better budget for and fund fires in the future as well as fund other non-fire programs in forest management and recreation?

**Response:** As you know, we are both supporters of the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. I do believe these budget reforms would provide relief to the agencies to better invest in other priorities. However, if we do not tackle comprehensive management reforms, forest health will continue to deteriorate and escalate the potential for severe forest fires. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on comprehensive solutions that fix our budget process and management shortfalls.

**Question 7:** I'm sure you're aware of the situation that unfolded at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County Oregon this time last year and the disruptions it caused in the local communities. I was grateful that federal officials coordinated closely with the County Sheriff and Commissioners to ensure that community members were safe and that the rule of law was preserved. Incidents like this, led by extremists, that compromise our public lands are very concerning and I'm just glad it ended without escalating further.

If you are confirmed as the Secretary of Interior, you will be in charge of managing National Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Areas, and recreation lands, in an era where hostility toward federal lands and federal officials is rampant, particularly in rural areas.

What will you do to ensure the protection of not only our incredible public lands that have been set aside by Republican and Democratic Presidents and Congresses, but also the protection of your employees, like the employees at the Malheur Refuge, who are not just federal employees, but Oregonians?

**Response:** Senator, as someone who has led soldiers in combat, I am committed to the safety of the Department's employees. I am also committed to restoring trust by freeing up our employees to make decisions and to collaborate with local law enforcement if things get difficult.

**Question 8:** Oregon is no stranger to an ESA listing, so ranchers and conservationists took a front seat in the collaborative efforts to establish land management plans to prevent one. After all the collaborative success, the last thing that the people of my state want to see is an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of the greater sage grouse. Fortunately, that was avoided in September 2015, when the Fish and Wildlife Service decided that listing the bird was unwarranted. However, FWS's decision was

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

predicated on the strength of federal sage grouse conservation plans, without which, the bird would likely have been listed.

As secretary, can you outline what steps you will take to support the robust implementation of both federal and state grouse conservation plans, so that we can prevent an ESA listing and continue to support and encourage collaboration?

**Response:** I believe that the goals of the Endangered Species Act, which are to halt and reverse the trend towards species extinction, are very important. I am aware that there are several grant programs within the Department of the Interior to provide federal funding towards species recovery efforts. If I am confirmed, I will review these programs and work with Congress to set appropriate funding levels for them.

**Question 9:** Are you committed to meeting the goals of the Endangered Species Act and would you agree that federal funding to help recover threatened and endangered species is crucial to preserving our nation's wildlife and biodiversity?

**Response:** I support the goals of the Endangered Species Act. I agree that focusing efforts on the recovery of listed species is important and I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

**Question 10:** Can you help me understand your stance on public land ownership and tell me whether you think that public lands should remain in federal ownership or be sold or transferred to states or other jurisdictions?

**Response:** I believe that Teddy Roosevelt had it right when he put under federal protection millions of acres of federal lands. I share President-elect Trump's view that federal lands should not be sold to states and I have voted 17 times against such action.

**Question 11:** Oregonians and all West Coast residents are becoming increasingly concerned about the next major earthquake, which has become a matter of "when" and not "if." Preparation is key, and even just a few seconds of warning is enough to take steps to prevent casualties and mitigate destruction. In a few seconds, supplies of oil, natural gas, and chemicals can be turned off, trains and cars can be slowed or stopped, sensitive data can be secured, and people can get to safe places. This is a bipartisan priority and we need to get this system finished -- failing to prepare for these events is not an option, and could have dire consequences for West Coast populations. Given the importance of this technology to provide the kind of warning that exists for hurricane, winter storms, and other extreme events, how would you, if confirmed, work with USGS to ensure ShakeAlert becomes fully operational for the west coast?

**Response:** As a geologist, I am fully aware of the hazards along the western coast of the United States, and appreciate that the risks are a matter of "when" and not "if". Earthquakes are an important applied science focus of USGS' Natural Hazards Mission

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

Area. I fully support the collaborative research and scientific efforts related to earth hazards and, if confirmed, will continue these efforts.

**Question 12:** Can you assure us that the annual budgets you would propose would back up your stated commitment to those resources with the actual conservation and maintenance dollars they clearly need?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will review these programs and work with Congress to set appropriate funding levels for them.

**Question 13:** The California water provisions that passed as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act gives the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce discretion in implementing the mandates to maximize water deliveries to Central Valley farmers. How do you plan to balance the mandates to maximize water deliveries to farmers with the mandates to protect fishery resources and comply with the Endangered Species Act when making critical decisions about how to interpret and implement the provisions in this legislation?

**Response:** Water from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers Delta provides drinking water to 25 million Californians from the Bay area to San Diego and provides water supplies to over two million acres of farmland. In addition, it serves as an important stop on the Pacific flyway and is home or a gateway to the home for numerous endangered fish species. In addition to other provisions, the WIIN Act calls for the Secretaries of the Interior and of Commerce to use science and the adaptive management provisions of the existing biological opinions to maximize water supply and water supply reliability, consistent with the Endangered Species Act. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Commerce and the State of California to fulfill the directives in the WIIN Act, consistent with the Endangered Species Act.

**Question 14:** The Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) provides funding in the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and now California) to carry out fish passage projects and screen irrigation channels to reduce fish mortality. This program was recently reauthorized, but authorized funding was drastically reduced. Would you support funding for the implementation of this critical program that benefits farmers and fish?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will review these programs and work with Congress to set appropriate funding levels for them.

**Question 15:** The Secretary currently oversees eight regional DOI Climate Science Centers, including an active center at Oregon State University. Would you support the continued climate change research and education at these eight centers?

**Response:** I value and support collaboration with public and private research institutions. As mentioned at the confirmation hearing, I believe that programs are most

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

effective when they operate according to “clear and precise” goals. I look forward to a complete review of the eight DOI Climate Science Centers and their results over the past six years as we develop an agenda for moving forward.

**Question 16:** In general, what do you see as your role and the role of the Department of Interior in combating climate change?

**Response:** Senator, that is a challenging question simply because it is so broad. Many programs at the Department relate to or impact the climate. In general, my role, if confirmed, and the Department’s role will be to ensure that we manage programs and makes decisions based upon best available information and sound science.

**Question 17:** The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has made the following statement: “The scientific evidence is clear: global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society.” Would you agree with this statement?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at my confirmation hearing, I believe the climate is changing, and man is an influence.

**Question 18:** The American Geophysical Union has made the following statement: “The scientific evidence is clear: global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society.” Would you agree with this statement?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at my confirmation hearing, I believe the climate is changing, and man is an influence.

**Question 19:** Representative Zinke, I noticed that, in 2010, you signed a letter to the President and the Congress calling for “comprehensive clean energy jobs and climate change legislation.” I applaud your leadership, and I have submitted that letter for the record. Do you still agree, as you apparently did in 2010, with the vast majority of scientists that climate change is happening and that we as humans are contributing to it?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at my confirmation hearing, I believe the climate is changing, and man is an influence.

**Question 20:** Do you still believe, as you did in your letter to the President in 2010, that “the clean energy and climate challenge is America’s new space race”? And that our country should not back down from a challenge on this scale?

**Response:** Senator, I believe that the impacts of climate change are uncertain and that we have not yet determined the best way or ways to address it.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 21:** Representative Zinke, do you think the American taxpayer should get a fair, market-value, return on the coal, oil and natural gas extracted from publicly-owned lands?

**Response:** Yes.

**Question 22:** The GAO found, for example, that in order to get a fair return on oil and gas from public lands, the BLM should update its more than 30-year old rules on the venting and flaring of gas. I assume you would agree that it is time to dust off these rules and make sure they're delivering appropriately for the American people? Correct?

**Response:** I am committed to ensuring that the American taxpayers get a fair return on all natural resource development on federal lands. While I have not been briefed on the details of the regulations covering the venting and flaring of gas, I will review them if I am confirmed and make a determination on whether those rules need to be updated.

**Question 23:** Using GAO's estimates about the amount of federally owned natural gas that is wasted due to venting and flaring, over \$63.5 million in royalties was lost, over \$31.1 million to individual states in 2013 alone. This is millions of dollars that could go to state infrastructure needs, schools, and emergency services. Do you believe that states should be receiving this money instead of allowing companies to waste American energy resources and not give the American public their due? If so, how do you plan to make sure that states are getting the money they should from wasted natural gas, especially since you stated in your nomination hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee your support for the repeal of the current rule under a Congressional Review Act joint resolution of disapproval?

**Response:** I am committed to ensuring that the American taxpayers get a fair return on all natural resource development on federal lands. While I have concerns about the current rules regarding venting and flaring on federal lands, I will commit to a review of the oil and natural gas leasing program in order to evaluate whether any further regulation is appropriate.

**Question 24:** A federal court in Wyoming refused to enjoin the BLM's new wasted gas rule on January 16<sup>th</sup>. The court found that the rule was "unambiguously" within the BLM's authority to regulate oil and gas development for the prevention of waste, has economic and environmental benefits, will not impinge on states' sovereign interests, and will not cause significant economic burden to states or oil and gas companies. Do you believe the BLM has the authority to regulate oil and gas production on federal lands so as to prevent waste?

**Response:** While I have not been briefed on the legal issues surrounding the litigation over the BLM rules regarding venting and flaring on federal lands, I will commit to a

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

review of the oil and natural gas leasing program in order to evaluate those legal issues and determine whether additional regulation of these activities is appropriate.

**Question 25:** I applaud your comments in your nomination hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that “we’re wasting a lot, we’re venting a lot, and we’re wasting energy, and that is troubling me...The amount of venting in North Dakota alone almost exceeds what we get out of the fields. Let us build a system that recaptures what is being wasted.” Given that only 9% of venting or flaring requests cite a lack of infrastructure as the reason, according to the GAO, and the vast majority of wasted gas can be traced to leaks, what would you do to fix this problem?

**Response:** I am committed to ensuring that the American taxpayers get a fair return on all natural resource development on federal lands. While I have concerns about the current rules regarding venting and flaring on federal lands, I will commit to a review of the oil and natural gas leasing program in order to evaluate whether any further regulation is appropriate.

**Question 26:** If you support the repeal of the current rule under a Congressional Review Act joint resolution of disapproval, as you stated in your nomination hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, how do you plan to use existing DOI authority to address what you say is troubling to you regarding the amount of wasted gas coming from production on federal lands?

**Response:** I am committed to ensuring that the American taxpayers get a fair return on all natural resource development on federal lands. While I have concerns about the current rules regarding venting and flaring on federal lands, I will commit to a review of the oil and natural gas leasing program in order to evaluate whether any further regulation is appropriate.

**Question 27:** Based on hundreds of thousands of public comments, on January 11, 2017, the Department of Interior has clearly identified there is a need to modernize the federal coal program. We have a responsibility to ensure the public gets a fair market-value return from the sale of America's coal, and that we operate the program efficiently, while minimizing the impact of coal production on our communities and environment. The only responsible next step is to continue the review and implement the commonsense measures identified in the Department’s recent roadmap. I want your commitment to continue the work of modernizing the federal coal program, through the completion of an above-board transparent, scientific and public process.

What assurances can you give me that you will continue this important work?

**Response:** I have not personally reviewed the Federal Coal Programmatic EIS scoping report published by the Bureau of Land Management, which I believe is the document you are referencing. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that decisions are based on

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

objective science and transparency. I will examine the scoping document and visit with the Bureau of Land Management and determine the appropriate next steps to be taken as part of the NEPA process.

**Question 28:** What will you do to limit liabilities to the American people associated with the cleanup of mining on public lands, including bonding and other protections?

**Response:** As someone from Montana, I appreciate the need for reclamation and want to ensure that we hold companies appropriately accountable for their responsibilities.

**Question 29:** You have said that you are supportive of an “all of the above energy policy, which includes renewables.” I suspect we agree renewable that energy projects can be important drivers of economic development in rural communities, often supplementing the income of farmers and ranchers and raising needed tax revenue for small towns. Yet we must balance the need for clean energy with the need to protect wilderness and fragile habitat. What will you do to ensure the Department of Interior continues to support the responsible construction of renewable energy projects on public lands?

**Response:** I will support responsible construction of projects. However, I have not been fully briefed on the regulatory regime in place for permitting renewable projects on federal lands, but I do believe that the NEPA process is a critical component of any federal permitting decision. If confirmed, I will review the process for evaluating these projects and ensure that all of the Department’s actions are appropriate.

**Question 30:** What are your plans for the siting and leasing processes for offshore renewable energy development, such as wind and marine hydrokinetic? How do you plan to involve other maritime industries, such as fishing and shipping, to ensure that the development of offshore renewable energy is collaborative?

**Response:** I have not been fully briefed on the permit applications for these projects, but I do believe that the NEPA process is a critical component of any federal permitting decision. A critical component of the NEPA process is consultation with all affected stakeholders. If confirmed, I will review the process for evaluating these projects and ensure that all of the Department’s actions are appropriate.

**Question 31:** You recently made some misinformed comments about the competitiveness of wind and solar energy in relation to coal-fired electricity. Wind energy is one of the most affordable options for new electric generation, and wind energy is reliably providing over 30% of the electricity in Iowa, and over 20% in Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Oklahoma; and generating more than 10% of the electricity in eight additional states. In fact, 79% of electricity power generation jobs in Oregon are in wind and solar, according to the Energy Information Administration. Given the importance of renewable energy in so many states, will you state for the record your support for good,

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

American jobs in renewable energy production that are not only affordable but also provide an over 13% share of US energy production?

**Response:** I strongly support good, American jobs in renewable energy production.

**Question 32:** I know you have been supportive of the Keystone XL pipeline. Although Keystone is an international project, other pipeline projects--like the Dakota access pipeline--could fall onto your plate. Could you give us some insight into how you would deal with such a sensitive tribal issue, such as the Dakota Access Pipeline?

**Response:** Senator, the current situation with regard to the Dakota Access Pipeline is very challenging and unfortunate. This country needs to build and operate infrastructure, and the permitting process for infrastructure needs to comply with all laws and regulations and be relatively predictable so that companies and individuals undertaking infrastructure projects can reasonably estimate costs and schedules.

We must also be sensitive to tribal issues. Our great Indian nations deserve respect, and, if confirmed, I will work to rebuild the trust that comes from mutual respect. I believe that, if we build and then maintain mutual trust, we can build relative consensus around infrastructure siting issues.

**Question 33:** Reuters has reported that the incoming administration aims to privatize oil-rich and coal-rich Indian reservations. Can you comment on your understanding of such conversations, and what is your opinion on whether we should privatize tribal lands for the purpose of extracting energy resources?

**Response:** I have not personally reviewed the referenced Reuters' report. I am unaware of any effort by anyone to privatize tribal lands.

**Question 34:** As Secretary of Interior, you are in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the trust relationship with all U.S. Tribes. What are your thoughts on tribal sovereignty and the role of the federal government in the tribal trust relationship?

**Response:** As I stated during the hearing, I believe tribal sovereignty is very important. I believe it should be meaningful. As a member of Congress, I have been a strong advocate for the Tribes in Montana.

**Question 35:** When Secretary Sally Jewell spoke of DOI's scientific integrity policies, she stated that the Department must be a leader in the federal efforts for robust scientific integrity policies because "science is the very foundation of our mission." Would you agree that science is the foundation of the DOI's mission and what would be your plan to ensure that the Department's integrity policies remain robust and reliable?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** I have not studied the referenced policy. However, I would agree that DOI's mission has always included a strong science component within its bureaus. I will want to be informed by objective science as I make policy decisions, and I look forward to hearing from the Department's scientists in that regard.

**Question 36:** How will you work with your counterparts at the Defense and State Departments to support approval and implementation of the 2010 Agreement between the U.S and Palau to update and extend the strategic "Compact" relationship between our two nations?

**Response:** This is an important issue. As I have said, the relationship between the United States and the territories and freely associated states is important to me. If I am confirmed, I will learn more about this issue and work with you to address it in a way that benefits the people of Palau, and the U.S. Government.

**Question 37:** Will you, if confirmed, work with the ENR Committee and with the Departments of Justice, Treasury and Labor to fully investigate any allegations that money laundering and abuse of guest workers is occurring in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands?

**Response:** Allegations of the criminal abuse of workers anywhere are significant and serious. If I am confirmed, I will look into this matter, work with the appropriate law enforcement agencies, and act accordingly.

**Question 38:** Prior to 2008, even though the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) was under US sovereignty, it had authority to control its borders and immigration. However, the CNMI proved unable to properly control the border or to prevent the abuse of guest workers who were admitted to the CNMI under local immigration control. Consequently, Congress extended federal border and immigration control to the CNMI. Can you assure the Committee that you will oppose any proposal to weaken federal border and immigration control in the CNMI?

**Response:** Control of US borders is important whether in CNMI or anywhere. If I am confirmed, I will learn more about this issue and work with you and other federal agencies to develop an appropriate response.

**Question 39:** There have been press articles regarding the activities of "Best Sunshine" corporation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Would you please review these articles and let me know what action, if any, should be taken by the Interior Department and other Departments.

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will make it a priority to review this material and respond accordingly.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 40:** One responsibility of the Interior Department is to create economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for Americans in the insular areas of our nation: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, and the Virgin Islands. There have been improvements over time. But in terms of income, infrastructure, and many other measures these insular areas still lag far behind the rest of America. Often they are not given the same level of funding or access to federal programs as other parts of our country. Federal agencies often don't compile data on the territories the way they do for the rest of the U.S. What specific plans do you have to increase the pace of development in the insular areas to bring them up to the economic level of the rest of America?

**Response:** Economic development is the best way to increase opportunity and the standard of living for all peoples. The U.S. territories face significant challenges and deserve special attention. If I am confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the ways we can work to correct these issues.

**Question 41:** Currently, an Interior Assistant Secretary heads the Office of Insular Affairs. That is a serious acknowledgement of the importance of the work of this office; and I think the office should continue to be led by an Assistant Secretary. Do you plan to maintain this position of Assistant Secretary?

**Response:** U.S. territories deserve recognition and representation within the Department. If I am confirmed, I will look into the ASIA position, but I am not aware of any effort to change the status of the position.

**Question 42:** In a bipartisan appropriation for the current fiscal year, FY17, the Senate voted to increase funding for the Office of Insular Affairs by \$6.9 million dollars. Will you be supportive of providing increased bipartisan support and funding to America's insular areas to create economic opportunity and improve quality of life?

**Response:** Providing resources is one important way the U.S. can support the challenges of the territories. If I am confirmed, I will work with you and the Congress on the proper appropriations levels for this and other areas of the budget.

**Question 43:** As a follow-up to my question on the Office of Insular Affairs, is more funding needed? And if so, how exactly do you think additional funds should be targeted to be most effective?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the budget needs and allocations and will work with your office as appropriate.

**Question 44:** A role of the Office of Insular Affairs is to make sure that all federal agencies take the islands into account when formulating and implementing policy. What plans do you have to make sure that the Interior Department's input is welcome—and

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

listened to—by other agencies, when they put together and administer policies that affect the territories?

**Response:** This is an important issue to me. Often the parts of the federal family neglect the territories completely or forget to take into account their unique circumstances. If I am confirmed, I will learn more about the ways we can solve this problem.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Bernard Sanders**

**Tribal Issues**

**Question 1:** The Department of the Interior is the most important federal government agency for dealing with the issues that affect Native American tribes. The Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs “assists and supports the Secretary of the Interior in fulfilling the United States’ trust responsibility to the Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages and individual Indian trust beneficiaries, as well as in maintaining the Federal-Tribal government-to-government relationship.”

If confirmed, will you commit to an open door policy for the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to ensure sufficient access to you and recognition of the importance of Indian Affairs within the department? Will you commit to an open door policy for tribal leaders to ensure that the federal government upholds its trust responsibility and maintains its government-to-government relationship with tribal leaders?

**Response:** Yes.

**Question 2:** While the Department of Interior plays a primary role in upholding our Government’s obligations to Indian tribes, there are many other federal agencies that also work to meet the responsibility. Department of Health and Human Services plays a major role in providing health and mental health care. Department of Justice works to ensure the public safety. Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, and other agencies administer programs designed to help improve Indian reservation economic development.

To succeed in its tribal relationships and trust, Interior must work with these agencies and ensure that they work collaboratively with Indian tribes. President Obama formed the White House Council on Native American Affairs to help inter-agency coordination.

How will you ensure that inter-agency coordination remains a top priority in this new administration?

**Response:** Senator, I agree with you that the federal agencies with obligations to and responsibilities for Indian tribes need to coordinate effectively. I am not familiar with the White House Council on Native American Affairs, but, if confirmed, inter-agency

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

coordination will be a priority of mine, and, if the Council continues, I will utilize it to advance the interests of Indian tribes.

**Question 3:** The failed federal policies of Removal, Allotment and Termination resulted in the forced taking of hundreds of millions of acres of Native American homelands. The Interior Secretary is authorized to restore tribal homelands through the Indian Reorganization Act and the administrative Part 151 Indian land to trust process. The U.S. Supreme Court attacked that process in 2009.

What are you prepared to do to ensure that the administrative land to trust process continues to move forward under your administration?

**Response:** I understand that the land into trust process is very important to the Tribes. I will meet with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to gain a greater appreciation of the specific administrative challenges caused by the referenced 2009 decision and determine how they are best addressed.

**Hydropower**

**Question 4:** The U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources debated several bills regarding energy and natural resource policy that culminated in the Energy Policy Modernization Act. One of the energy sources addressed in this legislation was hydropower, which accounts for roughly 7 percent of all energy produced in the United States today. While the legislation this committee reported, and the Senate sent to the House, protected the ability of states to manage water and the ability of the federal resource managers to rely on science and expertise, the House passed legislation effectively stripping them of the tools available to them.

Hydropower is a critical source of carbon-free energy, but it is not without negative externalities. Several states, including Vermont, support hydropower, but opposed these efforts to hobble oversight.

**Question 5:** As Secretary of the Interior, would you counsel the President to reject legislation that would eliminate the ability of states and federal resource managers to protect drinking water, outdoor recreation, fisheries, and vulnerable wildlife populations?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will seek to inform the President of my views on specific legislative proposals related to water, outdoor recreation, fisheries and wildlife as they arise.

**Question 6:** Would you resist efforts by industry to federalize all aspects of the hydropower licensing process and consolidate in the industry-captured FERC responsibilities for evaluating environmental impact?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work to gain a greater appreciation of the specific role Interior’s agencies play in the hydropower licensing process.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been an important source for state and local outdoor recreation facilities, state parks improvements, and public park land acquisition. Vermont has benefitted extensively from LWCF funding.

**Question 7:** You have been a long-term supporter of the LWCF. If confirmed, do you plan to continue your strong advocacy for this important source of funding for states and local governments to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities?

**Response:** You and I both share a deep appreciation for the LWCF. This program has been incredibly successful in Montana. I have seen the benefits of the program first-hand with critical projects in my hometown. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues to protect and bolster this important program.

**Question 8:** As the Secretary of the Interior, will you recommend to the President that the LWCF be fully funded?

**Response:** LWCF has my full support. I have cosponsored two bipartisan pieces of legislation to permanently reauthorize the program, have opposed my own Chairman’s reform proposals and was the only member of the Montana delegation to vote in support of the program’s reauthorization and funding. As a Montanan, I have personally witnessed the good work LWCF does for local communities, the sportsmen and recreation community, and conservation. As the budget process moves forward, I look forward to working the President-elect and Congress to support LWCF’s critical work.

**Question 9:** Federal funding programs like the LWCF often involve a lot of “red tape” which can make them inaccessible to small rural communities with limited staff and resources. Would you be willing to re-examine any of the rules and regulations related to applying for and using federal funds such as the LWCF monies?

**Response:** Since coming to Congress, I have been one of the most vocal proponents of LWCF. It is a great program that serves Montana and our nation incredibly well. However, that does not mean it is perfect. We both represent rural states and I share your concern regarding “red tape” and limited resources. I have consistently voiced my opposition to the excessive bureaucracy that inhibits funds from making their way to those who need them most. The process should be streamlined and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve this goal.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Conservation and Public Lands**

**Question 10:** During your time in Congress, you earned a 3 percent rating (out of 100 percent) from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV). The votes used to rate Senators and members of Congress are scored on protection of the environment, public lands, waters and air.

Your LCV score reflects that, with just one exception, you voted against federal conservation policies. You have voted for cutting back Antiquity Act authorities, against public review of hard rock mining on public lands, against a review process for grazing permits on drought-damaged public lands, and against removing harmful riders undermining protections for imperiled species including removing Endangered Species Act-protections for the gray wolf. All of these issues will be under your authority as Secretary of Interior.

Can you explain your anti-conservation voting record while in Congress? How does this record suggest that you will protect our lands, waters and wildlife against corporate short-term interests, like Teddy Roosevelt?

**Response:** The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) voting score does not accurately represent my commitment to clean air and water, conservation and protecting public lands. I am a firm believer in the multiple use doctrine that President Roosevelt championed. However, under the current administration, the Executive Branch has often governed by rules and regulations that should have been debated and passed by Congress. I fundamentally believe in the separate but equal roles of government and the rule of law. Many of the votes calculated by the LCV had to do with rules that I believed were outside the purview of the Executive Branch. If I am confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, you have my commitment to follow and enforce the laws passed by you and your colleagues in Congress rather than governing by Executive Order.

**Question 11:** You signed the Montana Constitutional Governance Pledge promising to “legally and administratively oppose the multitude of bureaucracies that have sprung up to enforce the unlawful seizure of our native land and its resources including, but not limited to: the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Park Service, the various bureaus of Wildlife and Fisheries, etc., and restore the rightful powers over the land to the state and private ownership.”

Could you provide examples of the “unlawful seizure of our native land and its resources” by the agencies of the Department of Interior and what measures you would support as Secretary of interior to “restore the rightful powers over the land to the state and private ownership?”

**Response:** States across the West are uniquely familiar with the ‘checkerboard’ of private, state, and federal lands. The mix of lands under different management poses

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

numerous issues, ranging from protecting recreational access to respecting the rights of private land owners. If confirmed, I want to ensure our public lands remain in public hands, and private and state-owned lands are respected as well. This means making sure small tract land transfers and sales adhere to the proper procedures.

**Question 12:** You are on record as supporting retention of federal lands in public ownership yet you voted for H. R. 3650, the “State National Forest Management Act of 2015” which would transfer over two million acres of Forest Service land to the states for sale to private interests. Could you explain the apparent inconsistency?

**Response:** I would like to respectfully correct the record. I was actually the only Republican on the House Committee on Natural Resources to vote against H.R.3650 when it came up for a markup on June 15, 2016. After the bill passed committee without my support, I reiterated my promise to my constituents that I would not support any legislation that transfers or sells large portions of our public lands. I remain committed to that promise should I be confirmed as Secretary of the Interior.

**Question 13:** What improvements can be made to the management of federal public lands?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work to improve the management of our federal lands for multiple uses, including recreation, conservation and responsible energy development. I intend to restore trust by working with states and local communities to inform agency decisions. I intend to promote greater public access, responsible development and ensure that professionals within the Department of the Interior receive the resources, training, and tools needed to make informed decisions that give voice to the American public. I also recognize and will preserve those lands that deserve special recognition and are better managed with man as an observer.

**Scientific integrity**

**Question 14:** Are you familiar with the scientific integrity policy at the Department of the Interior? What is the importance of the policy in your opinion?

**Response:** Senator, I have not had the opportunity to review the Department’s scientific integrity policy. I value sound science, and I will review the policy if confirmed.

**Question 15:** Should Department of the Interior scientists be allowed to express their personal opinions about any issue as private citizens as long as they provide a disclaimer that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not for the agency?

**Response:** Senator, I have not had the opportunity to review the Department’s scientific integrity policy. I value sound science, and I will review the policy if confirmed.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 16:** Should Department of the Interior scientists have the right of last review to ensure the accuracy of materials that rely on their scientific work or expertise—including scientific reports, executive summaries, congressional testimony, press releases, and websites?

**Response:** I will review federal guidelines and Departmental policies on this issue and rely on the best available science for agency decision-making, if confirmed.

**Question 17:** Are there any parts of the Department of the Interior websites that you believe contain incorrect, incomplete, or erroneous information? Specifically, do you believe that any web pages currently contain incorrect, incomplete, or erroneous descriptions of climate change science?

**Response:** I have not reviewed the full extent of the Interior Department website, but if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing it further and paying special attention to the questions you raise.

**Question 18:** The most robust federal government scientific integrity policies empower scientists to speak openly with the public and the press about scientific matters. Would you improve your agency's policy to make this explicit?

**Response:** Senator, I respect scientists and the need for scientific integrity. I have not yet reviewed the Department's scientific integrity policies, but I will do so, and I am certainly willing to discuss this with you further if I am confirmed.

**Management of Government Employees**

The Department of the Interior employs 70,000 people at nine technical bureaus and a number of other offices. The following questions ask about how you would manage these personnel.

**Question 19:** Do you support and promise to uphold the merit system principles set forth in Chapter 23 Title 5 U.S. Code, which prohibit factors other than merit from consideration in civil service employment decisions?

**Response:** I support the merit system principles.

**Question 20:** As Secretary, do you believe that Congress using the Holman Rule, which allows any member of Congress to propose amending an appropriations bill to single out a government employee or cut a specific program, to be an appropriate measure when used against your Department? Will you support Congress in passing an amendment under the Holman Rule or would you oppose?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** The U.S. House of Representatives sets its rules. If confirmed, as Secretary, it will be my responsibility to express my views to the President on any specific legislative proposal, and I will do so.

**Question 21:** As Secretary, do you believe that you will be better able to recruit and retain top talent if Congress is able to individually target employees based on their political whims?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work to restore trust and give the employees on the front lines – our rangers, field managers and managers – the space and support to make the decisions they need to make. If I do that, I believe we will continue to retain and recruit top level talent.

**Question 22:** As Secretary, do you support Congress targeting and altering the salaries of individuals within your Department?

**Response:** I recognize that Congress has the power of the purse pursuant to the Constitution.

**Question 23:** As Secretary, how do you view the division of responsibility and authority between Congress and your Department on personnel issues?

**Response:** The Senate has the responsibility of advice and consent. Beyond that, I believe the authority of specific personnel decisions rests with the Department of the Interior and its bureaus.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Debbie Stabenow**

**Question 1:** I serve as Ranking Member of the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee -- which has a good deal of oversight of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. When we met, we discussed your position on the Forest Service in broad terms. Please answer, preferably with a simple yes or no, whether you would advocate for Congress to approve legislation to transfer the Forest Service to the Interior Department?

**Response:** Senator, when we met, I said that I think we should consider moving the Forest Service to the Department of the Interior. As we discussed, the structure we use to manage federal lands has not been given a comprehensive review since its inception, and I believe there are numerous issues that need to be addressed. Among those issues, I believe the current situation in which one federal agency manages the surface and a second manages subsurface issues creates unnecessary duplication and conflict.

I clearly got the impression in our meeting and from these questions that you have concerns about moving the Forest Service to the Department of Interior. If confirmed, I

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

look forward to further discussions with you. My goal is to ensure that our public lands are managed consistent with the inscription in the Roosevelt Arch at Yosemite, “for the enjoyment and benefit of the people.”

**Question 2:** If you would recommend transferring the Forest Service to the Interior Department, why with all of the challenges facing the Forest Service – including ballooning costs for wildfire suppression, nationwide invasive species outbreaks, and record numbers of recreationists and sportsmen looking for well-maintained trails and facilities on their public lands – would you want to undertake a complex, multi-year bureaucratic reorganization that will cost millions of dollars and precious staff time?

**Response:** Senator, I agree there are real challenges facing our public lands agencies, and I want to work to solve those problems rather than make them worse. If confirmed, I will work with you to that end.

**Question 3:** As you know, the responsibility for suppressing wildfires is shared between the Interior Department and the Agriculture Department’s Forest Service. In recent years, as suppression costs have ballooned, critical resources have been siphoned away from programs to safeguard and enhance our public lands and are instead being used to fight wildfires. The Forest Service is now spending over half their budget fighting wildfires, which is up from 16% in 1996. If Congress does not act, the Forest Service will be spending 2/3 of their overall budget on wildfire in 2025.

Bipartisan bills have been introduced in both chambers to address this problem and you were a cosponsor of the latest House bill, the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. As Interior Secretary, will you continue to support the measure and work with Congress to see it enacted?

**Response:** If confirmed, fighting forest fires will be a major effort of mine. We need to better manage our forests to reduce the risk and consequences of fire, better coordinate firefighting and firefighting policies among federal agencies, and we should develop a better method of funding firefighting efforts. I realize these are complex issues and that you have spent considerable effort working to address them. If confirmed, I want to work with you on these issues.

**Question 4:** In addition to the maintenance backlogs that exist on federal lands, which I am also concerned with, I am distressed about insufficient funding for staff on Park Service lands. For example, Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan has experienced more than a 7% reduction in base level park staff and more than a 12% reduction in its base budget between 2010 and 2015. If confirmed, will you support additional cuts in funding for park rangers and other on-the-ground personnel that are struggling to meet their mission with increasing numbers of visitors; or, is this an area in the budget that you think should be increased?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** Senator, I want front-line Interior employees to love their jobs and be committed to their mission. That will require attractive benefits, ensuring that staffing levels are commensurate with the need, and that those employees have the resources they need to do their jobs well. You can be assured that I will be an advocate for on-the-ground personnel.

**Question 5:** U.S. Department of Agriculture grant programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service provide hundreds of millions of dollars around the country for on-farm conservation projects that improve water management. The Bureau of Reclamation, through its WaterSMART water efficiency grant program, provides around \$30 million annually for water conservation projects proposed by its beneficiaries and other water suppliers. In June, USDA and Reclamation agreed to coordinate these programs for on and off farm funding to maximize the benefits of both programs, specifically in the Colorado River Basin. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, would you commit to continue this cooperation and make it a funding priority in your budget?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will review the coordination between DOI and USDA on these programs, as well as the funding levels for those programs and work with Congress to set appropriate funding levels for them.

**Question 6:** Farmers and ranchers in the west receive substantial assistance from federal conservation initiatives to improve sagebrush ecosystem, consistent with state wildlife recommendations. A key driver of these resources are the sage grouse conservation plans, which were a factor for the Fish and Wildlife Service decision against an endangered species listing for the sage grouse last year. Can farmers and ranchers be certain that you will continue to support funding for these land management efforts?

**Response:** I have not been fully briefed on the conservation plans that have been put into place for the sagebrush ecosystem. If I am confirmed, I will review those plans and work with Congress to set appropriate funding levels for them.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Jeff Flake**

**Question 1:** The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, or “IGRA,” was intended to provide an economic engine for tribes on their traditional tribal lands. In Arizona, tribal casinos in the Phoenix metropolitan area have created some controversy. Late last year, the State of Arizona and the tribes agreed to amendments to their gaming compacts. Previous Secretaries of the Interior have rejected these compacts negotiated in good faith between tribes and states. Shouldn’t the Secretary foster the tribes’ collective rights to self-determination by giving deference to the compacts they negotiate?

**Response:** I am an advocate for tribal sovereignty and self-determination. In general, if a tribe and a state have reached an agreement, it should be given meaning, but I will have

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

to learn more about specific instances such as the one to which you refer and I look forward to doing so.

**Question 2:** The Department's Colorado River Basin study identified a growing gap between water supply and demand in the basin. One of the options identified by the Department and the State of Arizona is desalination of seawater. Israel has been a world leader in desalination and there are a number of partnerships developing with Israel on water. These include the participation of Arizona Governor Ducey in a recent trade mission and water conference in Israel. What role do you see the Department playing in desalination technology and cooperation with Israel in the water field?

**Response:** Israel is our ally, and cooperation with Israel will be an important part of President Trump's foreign policy. Your question highlights one of the many ways that our country's cooperation with Israel can provide a benefit here at home. Finding new water supplies and securing existing supplies is important to all western state economies and desalination is one of the possible options. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this and working with you moving forward.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Al Franken**

**Question 1:** If you are confirmed as Secretary of Interior, you will be responsible for overseeing the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). With the multitude of problems in Indian Country today, from disturbingly high rates of youth suicide to a lack of sufficient economic opportunity and many others, we need a bipartisan commitment to address the living conditions on tribal lands. One of the most frustrating issues with the BIA has been the chronic underfunding of important programs and general lack of support from the federal government.

- a. As Secretary of Interior, would you advocate for strong funding for federal programs that support American Indians?

**Response:** Yes, as appropriate.

- b. Do you have a timeline for filling BIA positions?

**Response:** If confirmed, the timeline for filling positions at the BIA is the same as it is for all other positions – as quickly as possible.

- c. Will expand on your ideas for improving living conditions in Indian Country?

**Response:** I believe we need to listen to the tribes and we need to work to empower them, recognizing that each Tribe's situation is different.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 2:** Economic development is vital for improving Indian Country, and one area of opportunity is the energy sector. For example, there is significant potential for clean energy development in Indian Country—like wind, solar, and biomass.

- a. Will you commit to working with me to boost renewable energy generation on tribal lands, which would bring important funds and jobs to these communities?

**Response:** Yes. If confirmed, I will work with you.

- b. I have been working to fund the Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program (TIELGP), which was included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 but has never been funded. This program would allow the DOE to guarantee up to 90 percent of the principal and interest of a loan issued to an Indian tribe for energy development. By leveraging federal resources, this program would encourage borrowers to partner with the private sector to develop energy projects. While I know that this program falls outside of the purview of the DOI, would you commit to working with me to get this program funded?

**Response:** I will commit to learning more about the program. I would be happy to work with the Secretary of Energy and you as appropriate.

**Question 3:** Many of the communities in my home state of Minnesota cannot safely rely on the water currently supplied to their homes. These communities and my state have worked tirelessly, investing millions of dollars, in a tristate water system known as the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System. A successful state and federal partnership, Lewis & Clark is funded by local communities, states and expected annual funds from the federal government. Like two water projects in your home state of Montana, federal funding for Lewis & Clark is allocated through the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. Nearly completed, all communities and states involved have paid their share of the project and in numerous cases, prefunded the necessary dollars to complete this critical water project. However, the federal share of the project has fallen short year-after-year, putting the project far behind construction schedule causing an increase in cost to the project. Will you support prioritizing the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System through the water funds allocated by the Bureau of Reclamation?

**Response:** I am unaware of the specifics regarding the funding for the referenced project, but I will look into it as the budget for the Department is developed, if I am confirmed.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 4:** I appreciate your support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In April of 2015, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board received one of 8 new Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grants administered through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state and local assistance program for Sheridan Veteran's Memorial Park. This grant is helping to connect low income communities to trail networks, an environmentally restored riverfront, and other outdoor recreation opportunities near Minneapolis' newest war memorial. If confirmed as Secretary, will you commit to ensuring LWCF dollars continue to foster partnerships that connect people, particularly those in underserved communities, to safe, accessible places to enjoy the great outdoors and establish meaningful relationships with their communities and public lands?

**Response:** Senator, growing up in Whitefish, Montana, Glacier Park was the sort of national park I learned about as a kid. But I recognize that lots of kids don't have the opportunity to visit parks like Glacier, and for them an urban park may be their gateway to our great national parks. I want our parks to serve and inspire all Americans, and I will work with you to accomplish that goal.

**Question 5:** Under what circumstances would support or oppose the transfer of public land to state governments? For example, if Congress passed a bill transferring large sections of public lands to the states, would you recommend that the President veto it?

**Response:** I generally oppose the sale or transfer of federal lands, and President-elect Trump shares that view. There are some situations in which commitments have previously been made, inholdings need to be swapped or exchanged, or land banks are well situated to address the needs of growing urban areas, where limited transfer is appropriate. However, to your question, while I would wait to evaluate any legislation based on its specifics, I am inclined to oppose legislation that would transfer "large sections of public lands to the states."

**Question 6:** Do you support allowing state and local governments to manage federal public lands? From a practical standpoint, how is this different from transferring federal lands to states?

**Response:** Yes.

Federal lands belong to all Americans, but they need to be managed with particular consideration of the people in local communities whose lives and livelihoods depend on the land. Implicit in the notion of allowing local and state governments to manage federal lands is the belief that local and state officials will be more aware and respectful of the interests of their local constituents and that land will be managed differently based on local considerations. I believe that

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

federal ownership and local management can provide the proper balance among interests and be a viable model for management of certain federal lands.

**Question 7:** According to the Bureau of Land Management’s statistics for Fiscal Year 2015, there are 32.1 million acres of public lands (approximately the size of Alabama) currently under lease for oil and gas activities. However, merely one-third of these acres are actually producing fuel. In fact, the United States has a record high 7,500 approved drilling permits that industry has yet to put to use. In light of this overcapacity, do you believe it is necessary for United States to open up additional public land for oil and gas production? If so, why?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will fully review the oil and gas leasing program at BLM and evaluate whether the acreage levels are appropriate.

**Question 8:** The United States has been chronically underfunding our National Parks for years. As you know, the parks currently face a more than \$12 billion backlog in deferred maintenance, including \$47 million in Minnesota. I appreciate that you have committed to working with Congress to solve this unacceptable deferred maintenance backlog.

- a. What do you feel would be the best way to approach this issue?
- b. Will you advocate including deferred maintenance in any infrastructure package the new administration is planning?

**Response:** As I said yesterday, I want to work to make our park system great again. In doing so, I look forward to working with you to find ways to address the maintenance backlog and enhance our parks’ infrastructure.

**Question 9:** Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about increasing coal production in the United States. Much of this discussion has centered around a supposed “war on coal” being launched by the Obama administration. However, rather than regulation, the decrease in coal jobs has been largely due to the steady progression of automation technology in coal mining, and that fact natural gas is now cheaper than coal due to innovations in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling. One industry expert was quoted in the Wall Street Journal in December saying, “the truth is, gas has already made coal uneconomic.”

- a. If you are confirmed, you will be tasked with oversight of energy production on federal lands—including about 40 percent of our nation’s coal production. Given the current economic reality of energy what do you see as the future of coal?

**Response:** The Energy Information Administration has projected that coal will remain an important part of the American fuel mix for decades.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**a.b.** The Obama Administration put a moratorium on new coal leasing on public lands while it assessed whether taxpayers were receiving a fair return for publically-owned resources. If you are confirmed, will you continue this process?

**Response:** I have not personally reviewed the Federal Coal Programmatic EIS scoping report published by the Bureau of Land Management, which I believe is the document you are referencing. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that decisions are based on objective science and transparency. I will examine the scoping document and visit with the Bureau of Land Management and determine the appropriate next steps to be taken as part of the NEPA process.

**b.c.** For a century DOI has managed all aspects of oil and gas development on federal lands. Do you believe it should exercise the same authority involving wells that are hydraulically fractured? For example, do you support the current requirement that wells on federal lands capture methane—rather than waste a valuable public resource by releasing a potent greenhouse gas?

**Response:** I have not been fully briefed on all the regulatory regimes for coal or for oil and natural gas development on federal lands. If I am confirmed, I will review both of these programs in order to determine what changes may be appropriate in the oil and natural gas leasing program.

**Question 10:** If confirmed, you will oversee the National Parks which currently has a major problem with sexual harassment in its workforce. As I understand it, Park Service employees with sexual harassment claims are forced to deal with a complex and opaque complaint process and are often afraid to come forward for fear of retaliation. How will you address the culture at the National Park Service that deters abused workers from coming forward with their claims? What steps will you take to ensure our national parks are safe for visitors and workers alike?

**Response:** If confirmed, as I described in yesterday's hearing, I will work to ensure we have zero tolerance policy for the sexual harassment in the workforce. In addition, if confirmed, I will need to learn more about the specific problems that exist and then address them in the context of a zero tolerance policy.

**Question 11:** With a changing climate, we are seeing longer wildfire seasons and more extreme fires. At the same time, more and more people in the United States are living in and around forests, grasslands, shrublands, and other vegetated natural areas – places commonly referred to as the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Approximately 70,000 communities nationwide are considered to be at

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

high risk from wildland fire, including some in Minnesota. Defense of private property – much of which is located in the WUI – accounts for a large percentage of fire suppression costs. How will you work with the United States Forest Service to mitigate the costs of these fires while ensuring the safety of vulnerable communities?

**Response:** The issues surrounding the prevention of forest fires and funding for fire suppression efforts are tremendously important. If I am confirmed, I will fully evaluate the Department's current role in fire prevention and suppression and work closely with USDA, the Forest Service, the States and Congress to ensure that these programs are appropriately funded and managed.

**Question 12:** Do you believe that climate change impacts should be included in environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

**Response:** I have been informed that the Council on Environmental Quality has published guidance for all federal agencies, which requires them to include climate change impacts in environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act. I have not studied the issue.

**Question 13:** Do you believe that climate change has a cost to society and that this social cost of carbon should be used in regulatory analyses?

**Response:** I have been informed that the Council on Environmental Quality has published guidance for all federal agencies which requires them to include the social cost of carbon in environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act and other major federal rulemaking analyses.

**Question 14:** If confirmed, what will do you do to promote renewable electricity generation—including wind and solar—on public lands?

**Response:** Senator, I am a supporter of an all-of-the-above energy policy, and that includes the development of renewable energy projects and transmission projects on federal lands. That development should be conducted in accordance with the principles of multiple use and fully consider and preserve hunting, fishing and recreating on federal lands.

**Question 15:** One of the many impacts of climate change has been the increasingly difficult problem of invasive species. Large areas of public lands and waters managed by the Department of the Interior have been damaged by invasions of non-native plants and wildlife. This problem both significantly threatens our most valued ecosystems and places a difficult financial burden on federal and state wildlife management programs, which detracts from their other important duties. Minnesotans are on the frontlines of this problem with the onset

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

harmful invasive species in our state such as emerald ash borer, zebra mussels, Asian carp, and Eurasian watermilfoil.

- a. What actions would you take to enhance effectiveness of invasive species control programs on public lands?
- b. The Lacey Act is the most important federal statute in addressing the spread of invasive species. If confirmed, would you enforce the Lacey Act in its current form and list potential invaders as injurious? Additionally, would you call for any legislative changes to be made to the Lacey Act?

**Response:** I share your concern, especially since my home state of Montana also has significant and numerous invasive species problems; most recently with a very worrisome invasion by zebra mussels. I think it is critical that federal land managers be encouraged and empowered to be good neighbors in controlling invasive species in cooperation with adjacent private land owners. We all need to work together if we are to succeed in defending our ecosystems, economy, and public health from the threats posed by invasive species. I will most definitely enforce the Lacey Act if confirmed, and I am aware that there is broad bipartisan frustration with the lack of an efficient process for listing injurious species under the Act. I will ask the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide me recommendations on how the Act's implementation may be approved, and if it seems that legislative changes may be helpful, I would be pleased to have that conversation with the Congress.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Steve Daines**

**Question 1:** You have been a strong partner in the House on improving treatment of our National Forests. As you know, in many ways, Montana is ground zero for obstructionist litigation which hold up common sense, collaboratively developed forest health projects. In the House, you introduced counterpart legislation to my *Litigation Relief for Forest Management Projects Act*. Senator Tester joined us in this effort as well as a cosponsor. This bill would avoid the effects of a disastrous 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court decision in *Cottonwood Environmental Law Center v. United States Forest Service (Cottonwood)* by codifying the Obama Administration's position into law.

In 2015, the Ninth Circuit Court ruled in *Cottonwood* that the U.S. Forest Service (FS) needed to reinitiate consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at the programmatic (plan) level following the 2009 designation of critical habitat for the Canada lynx. As a result of this ruling, courts have stopped projects during the consultation process throughout the 18 national forests inhabited by lynx. The Department of Justice (DOJ), advocating a view shared by the FS and FWS, argued that the Endangered Species Act does not require re-initiation of consultation on completed forest plans and that only project-level analysis is needed. The Tenth Circuit in 2007 ruled in favor of the FS/FWS' position in a similar case, *Forest Guardians v. Forsgren*.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

In May 2016, DOJ filed a writ of certiorari petition to the U.S. Supreme Court to ask for review of the Cottonwood ruling and resolve the conflicting circuit opinions. On October 11, 2016, the Supreme Court denied this request, allowing the Ninth Circuit's *Cottonwood* decision to stand. As such, federal lands in the states of Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, and Arizona must operate according to the *Cottonwood* ruling, and the impacts could spread to other circuits as well. According to the Obama Administration, the *Cottonwood* ruling could “shutdown land management,” substantially increases unnecessary paperwork requirements without conservation benefits, delays much-needed management projects, and encourages more litigation against important management projects. At least two forest management projects in Montana have been held up in Court as a result of the *Cottonwood* ruling.

Congress must act to reverse this disastrous ruling. Congressional action will require leadership from your Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other land management agencies.

Will you commit to work with me and other colleagues to enact a legislative solution and protect worthwhile land management projects?

**Response:** I share your concerns about this issue. You have my commitment that, if confirmed, we will work together to address this.

**Question 2:** If it was not for your personal attention to shepherding the *Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act* through the House of Representatives, we would not have succeeded in enacting that historic legislation last Congress. As you know, our work is not finished for the Blackfeet people. In order to effectively implement the Compact and uphold our commitments to the Tribe, our state, and other water users in the Golden Triangle of our state—we need to fully-fund this water settlement.

Will you work with me through the Budget and Appropriations process to ensure robust funding for the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement?

**Response:** Whether in Congress or the Administration, I am and will remain dedicated to ensuring that our commitments to the Blackfeet are met.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Joe Manchin III**

**Question 1:** Addressing invasive species

Controlling and managing Invasive species is a wide-ranging and constantly evolving challenge. As you know, Congressman Zinke, invasive species decrease biodiversity, damage infrastructure and negatively impact ecosystems. Congress has not been able to address this issue in a meaningful way, as no comprehensive legislation to address the

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

treatment, management, and repair of invasive species has been signed into law. However there is a patchwork of laws, regulations, policies and programs in place to mitigate the damage of invasive species. One of the reasons managing invasive species is challenging in a state like West Virginia is because we are a heavily forested state, with considerable amounts of public lands and many large private landowners, including Timber Investment Management Organizations, Real Estate Investments Trusts, coal companies, forest products companies, and family forest owners. This patchwork of Federal, state and private lands makes for a challenging landscape, however it is obvious to me that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the Federal government. If you are confirmed as Secretary, you will co-chair the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) along with the Secretaries of the Agriculture and Commerce.

What measures do you intend to undertake to prevent, eradicate, and control invasive species?

What steps can Congress take to help you address the issue legislatively?

**Response:** I share your concern, especially since my home state of Montana also has significant and numerous invasive species problems; including a number of forest pests that threaten the health of our forests. I think it is critical that federal land managers be encouraged and empowered to be good neighbors in controlling invasive species in cooperation with adjacent private land owners. We all need to work together if we are to succeed in defending our ecosystems, economy, and public health from the threats posed by invasive species. If confirmed, I will explore ways to improve the operations of the National Invasive Species Council, and actively engage with the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture to get off to a strong start on this issue. One place to start will be to explore how we may work with the States to cooperatively implement the recent framework for early detection and rapid response to new invasive species introductions. Eliminating new invasive species introductions before they become firmly established is the most effective and efficient way to avoid serious and expensive long-term problems from invasive species. Once I have undertaken a review of this issue, I would be pleased to explore with the Congress any legislative changes that might be helpful to better protect our environment, economy, and public health.

**Question 2:** Developing energy infrastructure

I am a longtime supporter of our nation's sportsmen and sportswomen. West Virginia's natural resources provide us with incredible vistas and outdoor recreational opportunities. I believe in protecting these resources for future generations of West Virginians and for our guests from around the nation and the globe. But, I am also a pragmatist and I believe that we must balance the economy and the environment. West Virginia has a long tradition of being an energy exporting state. That's a tradition that we are determined to continue but – in order to do so - our nation's energy infrastructure must be modernized and expanded in an environmentally responsible way. I want to

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

make sure that, when these projects cross public lands, federal agencies with permitting authority are doing their part. I'm sure you are aware that the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies are engaged in permitting several pipeline projects in my state. And I'm sure you know that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the lead federal agency on these matters. The Department of the Interior is a big agency and while you have stated that you are supportive of responsible energy production, I'd like to get a better understanding of how you plan to manage infrastructure permitting and clarify duplications in the permitting process for pipelines.

What specifically will you do to ensure that your agencies' regional offices are being responsive to and transparent with project developers?

**Response:** As someone who has led the development of an EIS, I know how frustrating it can be to have another federal agency fail to participate as a cooperating agency. I will work to ensure consistency within the bureaus.

**Question 3:** The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a critical tool to ensuring environmental reviews are comprehensive; our natural resources are preserved; and the mitigation of environmental impacts are minimal. There is certainly room for improvement but energy companies rely on the NEPA process to provide them certainty and a "roadmap" for their projects. And, yet there seems to be increasing uncertainty when it comes to these projects - particularly when a federal agency does not participate as a "cooperating agency".

How will you work to encourage agencies like the National Park Service to act as a cooperating agency on a NEPA review in order to prevent duplication? Because I believe that would ensure that the Park Service is using its financial and staffing resources prudently in a manner that is not redundant.

**Response:** I have not been fully briefed on the cooperation between all of the Department's agencies on NEPA reviews. If I am confirmed, I will review these procedures and ensure that coordination is appropriate.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Cory Gardner**

**Question 1:** Senator Shaheen and I passed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act in December 2016, and President Obama signed it into law. The law requires the Secretary of the Interior to work with the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture to measure the outdoor recreation economy. This marks the first time that the federal government will measure the outdoor recreation industry's contribution to our economy.

Should you be confirmed to be Secretary of the Interior, will you commit to supporting an ongoing, annual report on the economic impact of the outdoor recreation economy?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** It is my understanding that the Secretary of Commerce is required to submit the referenced report. I will work with the Secretary of Commerce to support his efforts as appropriate.

**Question 2:** Will you commit to providing at least \$3 million in funding in the President's budget request for FY18 to the Arkansas Valley Conduit in Southeast Colorado and look for all opportunities to direct additional discretionary funding in FY17 to the Conduit?

**Response:** Senator, as we discussed in your office, I understand the importance of the Arkansas Valley Conduit, but I cannot make a commitment on behalf of the President-elect about his future budget requests. The most I can do is pledge to work with you on this, and I am committed to do that.

**Question 3:** As Secretary of the Interior, will you make a renewed effort to work with Tribes no matter what kind of energy resources they have, or potential resources, so they can make their own decisions to develop their own resources for the benefit of their members and the country?

**Response:** If confirmed, this will be one of my highest priorities. As I said at yesterday's hearing on my designation, tribal sovereignty is meaningful and important. I believe tribes should be able to make their own resource decisions for the benefit of their members.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Martin Heinrich**

**Question 1:** Will you work with western senators to make sure that renewable energy development and associated transmission projects will remain a priority on public lands, while protecting the places where we all love to hunt, hike, and fish?

**Response:** Senator, I am a supporter of an all-of-the-above energy policy, and that includes the development of renewable energy projects and transmission projects on federal lands. That development should be conducted in accordance with the principles of multiple use and fully consider and preserve hunting, fishing and recreating on federal lands.

**Question 2:** As the new administration looks at hiring freezes or budget cuts, will you commit to protecting critical functions at Interior agencies, including fire management, law enforcement, realty, and permit processing?

**Response:** I agree with you that those are critical DOI responsibilities, and I will work to ensure funding for those programs are adequate.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 3:** Congress enacted the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 to help restore homelands for tribal governments. Interior Secretaries of both parties worked to move tribal fee lands into trust for nearly 75 years before the Supreme Court struck down a portion of this law in 2009. Since 2009, the Interior Solicitor's office has worked to ensure that the Administrative land to trust process will continue to work for tribes. Can you please share your thoughts for continuing the Administrative Indian land to trust process?

**Response:** I understand that the land into trust process is very important to the tribes. I will meet with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to gain a greater appreciation of the specific administrative challenges caused by the referenced 2009 decision and the efforts taken by the Solicitor's office.

**Question 4:** As you know, many national forests, parks, and lands were carved out of the ancestral homelands of Indian tribes. Many tribes retain their connections to these sacred lands and places. What are your views about ensuring that these lands remain under federal control, and the need for the Interior Department and other federal land managers to protect tribal sacred places and access to these places for Native Americans?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at the hearing on my designation, I believe federal lands should remain under federal control, and I deeply respect the rights and heritage of Indian tribes. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department of Interior's management practices respect sacred places and Native Americans.

**Question 5:** Tribal water rights settlements like the Taos and Aamodt Settlement Agreements promise to resolve long-standing conflicts and reduce uncertainty over water rights. Will you commit to transparently implementing water rights settlements in a way that protects water rights and the environment while ensuring adequate future water supplies?

**Response:** I appreciate how important these tribal water rights settlements are throughout the western states and to the tribes. I am not aware of the specific issues regarding a lack of transparency in the area of water rights, but as a general matter I believe Interior should act in a transparent manner.

**Question 6:** Across the West, our quality of life, tourism, and outdoor recreation are driving an economic resurgence and sustainable, healthy rivers and streams, lakes, and reservoirs are foundational to this economic growth. How do we protect and promote these resources while ensuring we have reliable water supplies for farms, industry and municipal use?

**Response:** I believe we need to recognize that everything needs to be on the table when it comes to our water resources from increased conservation to additional infrastructure. If

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

confirmed, I believe the executive branch and congress need to work together to address the issue of water supply and reliability for the next century.

**Question 7:** Facing persistent drought in the West, Congress has boosted support for the WaterSmart program, the Bureau of Reclamation's primary tool in promoting water conservation and modern, efficient water infrastructure in agricultural and municipal uses. Will you work with us on increased funding and capacity for WaterSmart and federal leadership on efficient water infrastructure?

**Response:** In the West, water infrastructure is the backbone of local and regional economies, including the infrastructure on Indian Reservations. If confirmed I think it will be important for the Department of the Interior to explore many ways in which it can provide assistance to local and regional efforts to improve water certainty. I look forward to learning more about the WaterSmart Program and how it can be used to improve local economies in the West.

**Question 8:** You have talked about working with states on Antiquities Act monument proclamations and policies, but you have not mentioned collaboration with affected tribes. Will you commit to meeting with and working with tribes and tribal communities whose ancestral lands and sacred sites are protected by Antiquities Act proclamations before making any decisions about them?

**Response:** Yes, if confirmed.

**Question 9:** The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service just finalized revisions to the eagle conservation/take permit program in December. Will you commit to work with industry to ensure a practical and workable implementation, including incorporating the latest data and an appropriate consideration of low-risk projects?

**Response:** I am not familiar with the specifics of this program. As a general matter, any program needs to be workable and practical to be successful. If it is not, it needs to be improved.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Mazie Hirono**

**Question 1:** In Hawaii and the Pacific Region, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works closely with the Department of Defense (DoD) in ensuring that they meet their environmental obligations including requirements under the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This work is critical as our nation continues to strengthen our strategic interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Yet, this coordination takes up a large part of Fish and Wildlife Service's resources in the Pacific Island Office.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

As Secretary of Interior, you will be responsible for managing the Fish and Wildlife Service and as such, I want to make sure you are aware of this engagement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the DoD. I want to work with you to both ensure that this important work can continue as well as to address other important resource management issues under the responsibility of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii and the Pacific Region.

**Response:** Senator, I do not know much about the relationship between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Defense on these issues. Thank you for bringing this to my attention, and I look forward to learning more about this important issue as we work together.

**Question 2:** While in the House you voted in favor of an amendment that would have blocked funding for any listed species for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has failed to complete a 5-year review as required by the Endangered Species Act even though the Fish and Wildlife Service failure to do so is due to insufficient appropriations by Congress. This amendment would have devastated conservation and recovery efforts for as many as 850 species across the country, 137 of which are in Hawaii.

As Secretary, will you work with Congress to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to Fish and Wildlife Service so that they can fulfill their duties, including completing 5-year reviews, to protect and recover our nation's endangered species?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Congress to ensure that conservation and recovery programs are appropriately funded.

**Question 3:** Despite Hawaii and the Pacific Islands being home to a large percentage of endangered species, we have suffered from a lack of funding. For example, in FY 16 the Fish and Wildlife Service's Recovery Fund was \$17.8 million for Region 1. The Pacific Islands received only 37% of the funding, despite being home to over 90% of Region 1's endangered species.

Can you commit to working with me to provide more federal resources to Hawaii and the Pacific Islands in recovery funding for our endangered species?

**Response:** Senator, I recognize that Hawaii is a special place with unique needs. If I am confirmed, I will work with you to ensure that funding for recovery and conservation programs in Hawaii are appropriate.

**Question 4:** Funding for Fish and Wildlife Service's State Wildlife Grants is based on a formula that takes into account human population and land area, with the added caveat that no state receives less than 1% of funding. As Hawaii does not have a large land area or large human population, we receive the minimum amount of funding, despite having a disproportionately large need to protect our threatened and endangered species.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

If confirmed, can I count on working with you to either adjust the formula to account for need (including number of endangered species) or raise the minimum amount of funding that states shall receive?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will commit to fully review the funding formulas for the Fish and Wildlife Service's State Wildlife Grant program to determine whether adjustments to the program are appropriate. I will also work with you and Congress to ensure that funding levels for the program are appropriate.

**Question 5:** As you know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a priority for Hawaii. It drives local economies and is the cornerstone federal program that provides access to public lands for all Americans, and helps protect our incredible diversity of plants and wildlife that make Hawaii so unique and special, as previously mentioned.

Getting into specifics, I understand you supported legislation that reflected the Senate energy bill compromise language that permanently reauthorized the LWCF. Will you carry over that support into your role as Secretary? Will you work to ensure that annual full funding for LWCF is provided in your budget proposal including robust funding for critical federal land acquisition priorities? Along those same lines, will you work with me and other members of Congress to find a reliable long-term funding solution for LWCF?

**Response:** LWCF has my full support. I have cosponsored two bipartisan pieces of legislation to permanently reauthorize the program, have opposed my own Chairman's reform proposals, and was the only member of the Montana delegation to vote in support of the program's reauthorization and funding. As a Montanan, I have personally witnessed the good work LWCF does for local communities, the sportsmen and recreation community, and conservation. As the budget process moves forward, I look forward to working the President-elect and Congress to support LWCF's critical work. That includes identifying stable, diverse and long-term funding mechanisms to keep the fund viable for generations to come.

**Question 6:** Water security is becoming increasingly important across the nation. As an island state, we in Hawaii are in a unique situation where we must be self-reliant for our freshwater needs. Just this past fall I hosted a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee field hearing to examine opportunities for federal and non-federal partnerships in watershed protection and efforts to improve water security in Hawaii.

During the field hearing a couple of Federally-funded projects that target specific geographic locations, including the Forest Service's Watershed Improvement Program and the Bureau of Reclamation's Western Watershed Enhancement Partnership, were mentioned. Due to Hawaii's limited endangered species resources and invasive species threat, coupled with the importance of maintaining the health of our forested watersheds,

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

can I count on working with you to identify opportunities for similar DOI initiatives to focus on the Pacific Islands?

**Response:** Water security is important. I will work with you on opportunities for initiatives that could benefit the Pacific Islands.

**Question 7:** DOI's stated mission is as follows: "The Department of Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities."

As Secretary, how do you plan to carry out the Department's mission? What will the Department look like in, say 2 years, compared to now? What parts of the Department do you seek to change or enhance?

**Response:** If confirmed, I intend to restore trust and strong management to America's public lands and resources. In our meeting in your office and at the hearing this week, I shared the impact that attending the ceremony at Yellowstone National Park commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the National Park Service had on me. I believe we need to ensure that our approach to responsibly managing America's public lands will make our children's children proud in the next century. If confirmed, I will review agency policies, resources, and priorities and look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss areas that would benefit from changes or enhancements.

**Question 8:** In an op-ed that you wrote last spring you noted that it's our responsibility to "ensure our children and grandchildren's children enjoy the same outdoor opportunities that we have." In Hawaii a lot of our native species are found only in Hawaii and are under constant threat from invasive species, climate change, development, etc.

As Secretary of Interior, what will you do to ensure that our grandchildren's children in Hawaii get to enjoy our native species?

**Response:** Senator, during the hearing on my designation, you know that I referred on several occasions to my two granddaughters sitting behind me. I am committed to looking at issues facing the Department with a 100-year perspective. I want to ensure that our grandchildren's children look back and think, "They did right by us." Frankly, I don't know all that can be done to address the threat of non-native species, but, if confirmed, I will consult with you and Hawaiian officials, and we will work together to find the best possible solutions.

**Question 9:** The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a successful bipartisan hearing last year on the issue of marine debris. The Fish and Wildlife Service testified on how marine debris is harming wildlife and fouling coastal National Wildlife Refuges.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

Coming from a non-coastal state, what steps will you take to familiarize yourself with this global problem? Will you support the Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement to continue their participation in the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee? What other steps could the DOI take to help find global solutions to this growing problem?

**Response:** I am familiar with marine debris, given my 23 years in the Navy and I recognize that it is a serious problem. However, I will need to learn more about the specific role the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement have with the interagency committee.

**Question 10:** Many of our National parks are suffering severe damage by invasive species. Examples include pythons and other invasive wildlife in Everglades, wild boars and tree-killing insects in Great Smoky Mountains, and saltcedar and invasive grasses in Joshua Tree National Park. The parks in Hawai`i are particularly invaded. The forests of Hawai`i Volcanoes are under threat from many invasive plants, feral pigs, and the plant disease rapid o`hia death. The Park's unique birds are being decimated by mongooses, rats, and avian malaria.

What steps will you take to protect our National parks from invasive species?

**Response:** I share your concern, especially since my home state of Montana also has significant and numerous invasive species problems in our national parks. I think it is critical that federal land managers be encouraged and empowered to be good neighbors in controlling invasive species in cooperation with adjacent private land owners. We all need to work together if we are to succeed in defending our ecosystems, economy, and public health from the threats posed by invasive species. I am especially concerned that Hawaii's unique flora and fauna are vulnerable to invasive species. I would not want to see invasive species push any of these unique plants and animals onto the Endangered Species list. Once confirmed, I will ask the National Park Service to present me with options for better protecting our national parks from invasive species.

**Question 11:** I'm sure you are familiar with visitor concerns about noise from park overflights. I understand Glacier National Park deals with issue. Since the passage of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 every national park unit with significant air tour operations (50 or more air tours annually) has been required to prepare an air tour management plan or agreement. This is a joint responsibility of the National Park Service and Federal Aviation Administration. There are 27 national park units that qualify for plans including two in my state, Haleakala and Hawai`i Volcanoes national parks. Yet only two parks have had plans completed thus far (Biscayne and Big Cypress) and both of those just last year.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

What will you do to protect the environment and visitor experience at our national parks from air tour noise?

**Response:** I hope to work to enhance the visitor experience in our Nation's National Parks across the board. Frankly, I have not given a lot of thought to the issue of air tour noise, but, if confirmed, I will, and I would appreciate your recommendations on how best to address the issue.

**Question 12:** Last Congress I cosponsored a bill introduced by Senators Murkowski and Cantwell called the "National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring Program Act." As you know, we have a number of volcanoes in Hawaii and this bill would provide important updates as well as unify the monitoring systems of volcano observatories, including the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

As Secretary will you support this bill? Will you make volcano monitoring a priority for the Department and commit to working with myself and other members of Congress to advance this legislation?

**Response:** If confirmed as Secretary, I will fully support the mission and intent of the "National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring Program Act". Advancing our technological capabilities in this area is important. Volcanos are an important applied science focus of USGS' Natural Hazards Mission Area. As a geologist, I am aware and fully appreciative of the natural hazards that we face, and will continue to support USGS's efforts to address these risks.

**Question 13:** When we had our courtesy meeting you said that what is important to me is important to you. In Hawaii there are a number of priorities affecting the state that are important to me and that fall within the purview of the Department. These include:

- securing our freshwater resources,
- Compact of Free Association,
- permanent reauthorization of and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund,
- protecting and recovering endangered species, and
- preventing and eradicating invasive species.

As Secretary of Interior, will you commit to working with me on these issues?

**Response:** Senator, I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me prior to the hearing on my designation. What is important to you is important to me. If confirmed, I look forward to working together to address these issues.

**Question 14:** Hawaii is the state most impacted by the three compacts of free association that the United States has entered into with the Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. I have worked in the past on a

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

number of items, including fulfilling our financial commitments to Palau, working to restore Medicaid reimbursements for citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS), and establishing a one-stop resource center to facilitate the resettlement needs of FAS citizens residing in Hawaii.

If confirmed, can Hawaii, Guam, the Northern Marianas, and American Samoa continue counting on your department—and enlist your assistance in dealing with other departments as well—to assist us in working to support U.S. states and territories with large FAS citizen populations?

**Response:** This is an important issue to me. The relationship between the US, our territories, and the Freely Associated States is significant and deserves special focused attention. If I am confirmed, I look forward to learning more and working with you on finding appropriate solutions to the issues they face.

**Question 15:** Protecting our freshwater resources is becoming increasingly important across the nation as well as to our national security. As an island state, we in Hawaii are in a unique situation where we must be self-reliant for our freshwater needs. Just this past fall I hosted a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee field hearing to examine opportunities for federal and non-federal partnerships in watershed protection and efforts to improve water security in Hawaii.

During this Congress I will be working to identify and provide federal resources to address water security both in Hawaii and across the nation. Will you make finding solutions to protect our water resources a priority at the department? How will you prioritize funding resources for USGS streamgages and other observational equipment that we rely on? Can I count on you as Secretary to work with me on this issue?

**Response:** As I mentioned in my opening testimony at my confirmation hearing, water resource security is of critical importance to our nation. I understand and appreciate your concerns related to the complex interaction between fresh groundwater “lens” and saltwater and the critical need to prioritize self-reliance and freshwater security for Hawaii and the country as a whole. I support your efforts to identify potential opportunities for federal and non-federal partnerships related to watershed protection and water security, and look forward to working with Congress in developing its funding priorities for developing and protecting our freshwater resources.

**Question 16:** As our military focuses on the strategic importance of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, we expect an increase in traffic throughout the Pacific region. With that traffic comes an increased threat of invasive species in Hawaii, which is the gateway to the mainland U.S. from Asia.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

As Secretary, what resources will your department provide to assist the Pacific island communities in protecting against this threat? Do you agree with the proverb that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?” If so, can I count on working with you to protect our environment from existing and anticipated threats?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will work to enhance coordination with the Department of Defense and the Pacific island communities to reduce the risks posed by invasive species. I definitely agree that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” One place to start will be to explore how we may implement the recent framework for early detection and rapid response to new invasive species introductions. Eliminating new invasive species introductions before they become firmly established is the most effective and efficient way to avoid serious and expensive long-term problems from invasive species.

**Question 17:** As Secretary, you will be responsible for managing over 500 million acres of public lands.

What are your priorities for utilization of these lands for the public good?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at the hearing on my designation, I am inspired by the inscription on the Roosevelt Arch in the Yosemite National Park that reads, “For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People.” I believe the public good is best met if we keep both of those goals in mind. That means that different portions of our federal lands will be managed differently; that our priorities will vary depending on the land. In some cases, we should honor the Muir model in which man has a light footprint and simply observes nature. In other areas, lands should be managed in accordance with the Pinchot principles of best-practices and allow for greater impact and management by man including the production of resources to benefit our lives and the economy.

**Question 18:** As Secretary, you will be making decisions that impact our water, air, land, and oceans. You have a record of questioning the scientific consensus on climate change and have alluded to our nation’s energy independence being more important than addressing climate change.

Energy independence does not necessarily have to come at the cost of our nation’s environment. Do you see opportunities for advancing our nation’s energy independence in tandem with mitigating climate change?

**Response:** Yes. From my years in the Navy, when I observed energy production around the world, I know that energy production in accordance with reasonable regulation here in the United States is preferable to energy production with little or no regulation elsewhere. As a result, I believe the production of domestic energy can both reduce our Nation’s dependence on energy imports and benefit the environment.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 19:** The Department of Energy, Department of Interior, and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released their 2016 National Offshore Wind Strategy Report and discussed several important improvements to BOEM’s regulatory review process. The report recommended that BOEM’s existing regulatory process could be improved and made more efficient. This may include establishing more predictable review timelines and maintaining a reasonable level of flexibility given the early stage of the industry’s development.

Do you agree to work with the DOE to ensure the regulations and process that govern offshore wind development should be both efficient and fair to help facilitate the growth of infrastructure projects under the DOI’s jurisdiction?

**Response:** Yes, if confirmed.

**Question 20:** With the first offshore wind turbines currently spinning off the coast of Rhode Island, the potential for offshore wind development in the United States is finally starting to be realized. Part of the reason for the Block Island Wind Farm’s success is the extensive ocean planning process and corresponding stakeholder engagement process that helped identify an area for the wind farm that provided the least conflict with other users, and kept the broader ocean community well-informed of the project as it developed.

Do you agree ocean planning on a broader regional and national scale could also support other offshore renewable energy projects? Other areas that are also being considered for offshore wind energy development have not benefited from this level of community involvement and conflict identification prior to being bid. How will you direct BOEM to take into consideration the concerns of the fishing, shipping, and other pertinent industries early on in the lease sale process?

**Response:** President Obama issued an Executive Order entitled Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes in June 2010. If I am confirmed, I will review the Department’s compliance with this Executive Order and determine what steps the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is taking to address the concerns of the fishing, shipping and other pertinent industries within the lease sale process.

**Question 21:** The Department of Interior is charged with managing the nation’s wildlife, natural resources, and public lands. All of these are threatened by climate change. Whether it be sea level rise stealing protected land from coastal National Wildlife Refuges, increased drought threatening migratory bird habitat, or milder winters allowing parasites, like ticks, to overburden large game animals like moose – the wildlife and habitats under the Department of Interior’s charge are at the frontline of the negative consequences of climate change. USGS, FWS, National Park Service, and other DOI agencies have all concluded that the science behind climate change is well established and have for years issued rules and followed policies consistent with this position. In 2014 you stated climate change “[is not a hoax, but it’s not proven science either.](#)”

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

Will you direct DOI agencies to reconsider their decisions to act in accordance with climate science?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at the hearing, the Department's decisions in the past and future should be based on sound science. As I review past decisions and make new decisions, I will keep sound science in mind.

**Question 22:** The U.S. Geological Survey is an agency wholly dedicated to scientific research and advancement. Its talented and well-respected researchers have authored more than 130,000 publications since the agency's founding in 1879 and are looked to as national experts in the natural sciences.

Do you accept the scientific research and other products that have been produced by USGS? Further, the top mission area listed on [USGS's website](#) is currently "climate and land use change." Will you in any way try to limit USGS's work on climate change issues?

**Response:** As a student of geology, the USGS has a rich history and a proud tradition. I have been told various, sometimes inconsistent, things about the current work at the USGS labs, and I need to learn more. If confirmed, I will look at those issues. I will try to ensure that priorities are appropriately addressed. I anticipate that I will learn more about the USGS's role in climate change research versus the other the role of other agencies and departments if I am confirmed.

**Question 23:** How will you navigate the dual responsibilities of overseeing the protection of the nation's environment (including working to mitigate the effects of human-driven climate change) with managing extractive energy projects that are producing the fuel that is driving climate change?

**Response:** Managing these responsibilities in a balanced and appropriate manner is an essential duty for the Secretary of the Interior. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with the officers of the Department, the public, stakeholders and Congress to develop and execute Departmental policies in an appropriate manner.

**Question 24:** The Obama Administration was a leader in accelerating the deployment of clean energy on federal lands. Powering Our Future, through the Department of Interior, looks to permit gigawatts of renewable energy on public lands by 2020.

Do you support siting renewable energy projects on public lands? What will you do, if confirmed, to keep in place existing programs like Powering our Future?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will review these programs and work closely with Congress to ensure the appropriate funding levels for the Powering our Future program.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 25:** Some examples of invasive species that threaten our native habitat include mammals, birds, reptiles, plants, insects, and worms. These bioinvaders threaten all kinds of ecosystems across the country, ranging from swamps to deserts, seacoasts to mountain tops. Countering these threats would seem to require coordination across many players – federal and state agencies, Tribes, landowners, and other private entities. The National Invasive Species Council was created to facilitate this coordination. As you know, the Secretary of the Interior co-chairs the Council, and provides its staff.

How would you strengthen the Council’s leadership in these areas?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will explore ways to improve the operations of the National Invasive Species Council, and actively engage with the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture to get off to a strong start on this issue. I agree that we need to cooperatively engage with States, tribes, local governments, and private landowners to make progress on invasive species. One place to start will be to explore how we may work with the States and others to cooperatively implement the recent framework for early detection and rapid response to new invasive species introductions. We also need to create a more effective linkage between the National Invasive Species Council policy operation in Washington DC and the on-the-ground federal land managers across the country who deal with invasive species on a daily basis.

**Question 26:** Many people think that detecting invasive species as soon as possible and taking effective action to eradicate or contain them is a crucial component of an effective invasive species program. The Department (of Interior) and Council recently published a national “early detection and rapid response” strategy.

What steps would you take to implement this strategy?

**Response:** I agree that early detection and rapid response to new invasive species introductions is the most effective and cost-efficient way to protect our environment, and economy and public health from invasive species. If confirmed, I will direct my staff to quickly analyze the new framework for early detection and rapid response to new invasive species introductions, and provide me with recommendations on how we might work cooperatively with the States and others to more effectively and efficiently deal with new invasive species introductions.

**Question 27:** When President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) into law on December 28, 1973, it had already passed the U.S. House of Representatives by an overwhelmingly vote of 355 to four. Over the last 42 years, the ESA has become one of our bedrock environmental laws. Among other things, it helped to save the American bald eagle, the whooping crane, and the black-footed ferret from extinction. The ESA has prevented the extinction of 99% of species placed under its protection and remains the most important law our nation has ever passed to protect imperiled species.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

Polling shows that the ESA continues to have overwhelming support from the American public (90% of Americans support the ESA).

Will you continue to enforce and strengthen this law that has proved so vital in preventing species extinction?

**Response:** If confirmed, I will swear an oath to uphold all of the laws of the United States, which includes the implementation of the Endangered Species Act.

**Question 28:** During our courtesy meeting you mentioned that one of your top priorities as Secretary will be to build trust. In the past you have come out on different sides of some very important issues. For example, in 2010 you sent a letter to President Obama urging him to take action on climate change but then later questioned the science that supports climate change. You also support keeping public lands public but just recently voted in favor of a rule that allows the House to consider federal land transfers cost-free and budget-neutral.

When you talk about building trust what do you mean? Do you mean within the Department of Interior, between the Department and the public, or between the Department and Members of Congress? Also, given your support for conflicting actions in the past, how do you specifically plan for people within the Department, the public, and Members of Congress trust you to maintain the priorities you note today throughout your term as Secretary?

**Response:** If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, I intend to be a listening advocate and promote openness and transparency within the Department and its 70,000 talented employees as well as with local, state and federal elected officials, other experts and organizations, and the American public. 20 percent of U.S. land is managed by the Department and, if confirmed, I intend to work with Congress throughout my tenure to meet the priorities of the Trump Administration and those outlined for you today.

**Question 29:** During our meeting you mentioned that your three priorities for the Department are establishing trust, addressing DOI's infrastructure needs, and reorganizing the Department. Along the lines of infrastructure, you had mentioned not wanting to use the Land and Water Conservation fund to pay for the \$12.5 billion maintenance backlog within the National Park Service.

What specifically will you do as Secretary to address our infrastructure needs and how will you pay for it? What specific steps are needed to "grow our economy?"

**Response:** Senator, if confirmed, I am going to work with and on behalf of President-elect Trump to include funding to address our national parks' infrastructure backlog in

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

infrastructure legislation. That package is envisioned to address national needs of which the backlog in the national parks is only a part, and I do not know how the administration will propose to pay for the entire package.

As to growing the economy, there are many steps that need to be taken, but a sound energy policy is one of the underpinnings of a strong and growing economy, and I am dedicated to ensuring that our federal resources are available in accordance with best management practices to support that goal.

**Question 30:** During our meeting you mentioned that one of your three priorities for the Department is to reorganize.

How would you go about reorganizing the Department? Can you elaborate on the specific steps you will take in reorganizing and the expertise you will take into consideration during the process?

**Response:** Senator, if confirmed, I intend to undertake a 100-year review of the Department's structure and management. I don't know what conclusions that review will reach, but I can imagine they will touch on fundamental issues about the manner in which the Department is structured, where its functions are located, and changes that should be made in resource allocation.

**Question 31:** If confirmed as Secretary, what would your top three policy objectives be for the Department? For example, one of Secretary Jewell's priorities for the Department was "ensuring healthy watersheds and sustainable, secure water supplies." In carrying out those three policy objectives how much consideration would you give to public and community input? What resources do you intend to rely upon to inform these policy objectives?

**Response:** Senator, as I said at the hearing on my designation, if confirmed, my three highest priorities are:

1. Restoring trust by working with rather than against local communities and states;
2. Prioritize the estimated \$12.5 billion backlog in maintenance at our national parks, and;
3. To ensure that the professionals on the front line, our rangers and field managers, have the right tools, right resources, and flexibility to make the right decisions that give a voice to the people they serve.

As to the amount of public and community input I will consider, I will say that public and community input is key to my highest priority of restoring trust. The Department must be a good listener.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 32:** During our courtesy meeting you mentioned the issue of sexual harassment within the National Park Service (NPS), that you have discussed it with Secretary Jewell, and that you have a zero tolerance policy.

What specifically will you do to prevent further occurrence of this within NPS? What steps will you take to hold employees accountable for reports of sexual harassment? How will you address retaliation? Will you institute reporting mechanisms that make it easier for victims to come forward with reports?

**Response:** Senator, I have zero tolerance for sexual harassment. If confirmed, I will ensure that the leadership at all levels of the Department understands how seriously I take the issue, and the issue will be addressed. In fact, I take this issue so seriously that, rather than give you a complete answer today, I would ask for you to give me some time, if confirmed, to better understand exactly what needs to be done and then to discuss with you my findings and the steps I will take to address the issue.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Bill Cassidy**

**Question 1:** Congressman, the President-Elect has talked many times about his desire to create jobs—a message well received in my state. In fact, he’s talked about “big league” jobs and establishing American energy dominance. The outgoing Administration will point to the declining unemployment rate (4.7 percent in December). Yet the Labor Participation Rate, now at 62.7 percent, has also steadily declined since President Obama took office, and that is not a positive trend. The Labor Participation Rate when President Obama took office in January 2009, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was 65.7 percent. As I just mentioned, it has steadily declined and has remained at 62 percent since April 2014.

In my state, the oil and gas industry is one of our largest employers. The industry not only employs thousands of hard working men and women but the dollars my home state of Louisiana receives from energy development goes towards rebuilding our coastline. Due to the Obama Administration’s regulatory tactic of “death by one thousand cuts” as well as the decline in the price of oil, folks in my state have been losing their jobs and struggling to find adequate employment to

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

provide for themselves and their families. Just last week there was a headline in one of my state's local newspapers that read "Baker Hughes to close Crowley facility." Another headline last month read "Shreveport near top for U.S. job losses".

According to the website 24/7WallStreet.com which analyzed data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lafayette, Houma and Shreveport, Louisiana all rank at or near the top for job loss in 2016.

While I recognize that oil prices are one of the key drivers for development, regulations also play a pivotal role for the industry.

Congressman, how will you, if confirmed, work to fulfill the President-Elect's commitment to create a regulatory climate that encourages both American energy dominance and job creation while at the same time honoring the Department's mission to protect natural resources?

The departing Interior Department leadership repeatedly used oil prices and lack of industry interest as rationale for rescinding planned lease sales in the Atlantic and Artic.

- i. Do you believe that the current regulatory environment contributed to "lack of interest" in the prospect of OCS lease sales?
- ii. Considering these leases take several years to develop, do you believe temporary low oil and gas prices are an adequate reason to withhold lease acreage?

**Response:** Senator, I believe that an uncertain regulatory environment in which companies have reason to doubt whether permits will be issued causes potential lease bidders to reduce the price they are willing to pay. Regulatory uncertainty is reflected in bid prices. I believe reforms are necessary if we want to ensure both that production will be done in accordance with reasonable regulation and our taxpayers will receive true fair value for lease sales.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke  
to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Question 2:** Last Congress, the committee passed my legislation that opened up access to the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and expanded the scope of Outer Continental Shelf state revenue sharing. At the end of last Congress, a majority of Senators, with a bi-partisan vote, supported a later iteration of my legislation that would expand revenue sharing for Gulf and Mid-Atlantic States as well as Alaska. In my opening statement, I mentioned that federal revenues from energy developed in the Gulf go to rebuild Louisiana's coast, which is vital to my state's future.

Unfortunately, the Obama Administration's 5-year OCS plan and aggressive effort to name new or expand current national monument areas means that states such as mine or Virginia where they have large budget deficits are missing out on additional or new dollars that could flow to states.

- iii. What are your thoughts on the most recent 5-year OCS plan proposed by the Interior Department, and will you pledge to work with myself and others in Congress to ensure the next five year plan pursues the goals of energy independence and robust job growth?
- iv. What are your thoughts on increasing and expanding the ability for coastal states to receive revenue payments from the federal leases on the OCS?

**Response:** If I am confirmed, I will work to implement President-elect Trump's energy independence policy. That will certainly require a require a review of our OCS lease plans, and I commit to working closely with Congress, the States, local governments and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive policy towards OCS leasing.

**Questions for the Record from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto**

**Question 1:** Minute 319 provides important guidelines for both Western States and Mexico regarding the management of the Colorado River's water, but expires at the end of 2017. The Upper and Lower Basin states have been working on a new agreement with Mexico, Minute 3 2X, which has been proposed based on Minute 319 and evolving basin conditions. What steps can the Department take to ensure the process is smooth and timely? Can you commit to working closely with the Western States to ensure their concerns are addressed before Minute 319 expires?

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**January 17, 2017 Hearing: Nomination of the Hon. Ryan Zinke**  
**to be the Secretary of the Interior**

**Response:** I understand there is a longstanding tradition of collaboration on Colorado River between the Secretary of the Interior and the Colorado River basin states. That's a tradition I intend to maintain. I will ensure that we work closely with basin states over the course of the year.

**Question 2:** Will you commit to strong tribal consultation when it comes to decisions, activities, and land management on Bureau of Land Management land?

**Response:** I have proudly represented the tribes of Montana in Congress. I appreciate the importance of tribal consultation and will work to implement a culture that ensures opportunities for consultation.

**Question 3:** In 2014, Department of Interior employees were under threat in Nevada during a standoff over BLM land use. As you are aware, the danger facing Interior employees has increased over the past several years, and we have seen an rise in similar incidents. If you are confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, you have an obligation to protect your employees from harm. What are your plans to protect the health and welfare of your employees? How will the Department provide the training and resources necessary to handle these kinds of situations in the future?

**Response:** If confirmed, and as someone who has spent 23 years in the Navy, nothing will be more important than ensuring Interior's employees have a safe place to work. I will learn more about the specific challenges the agency faces. If confirmed, I will work to free up some of the decision-making on the front lines and collaborate with local law enforcement, which I believe will foster greater trust.

## ZINKE'S RECORD ON CONSERVATION AND PUBLIC LANDS

### Op-eds & LTE

- [October 9, 2015](#): Op-ed in Montana papers about the previous day's markup, entitled 'LWCF foes need to take a hike,' was published.
- [November 22, 2015](#): LTE to the Washington Post about the importance of LWCF.
- [December 2, 2015](#): Billings Gazette op-ed urges Republicans to return to their conservation roots to support LWCF.

### Leading Conservation Legislation

- [January 26, 2015](#): Became an original cosponsor of H.R.528, the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act.
- [February 24, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.845, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act.
- [April 30, 2015](#): Voted against S.Con.Res. 11 – FY2016 Budget, which included a provision to sell federal lands.
- [June 15, 2015](#): Introduced H.R.2787, the East Rosebud Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- [July 14, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.1814, to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- [October 8, 2015](#): In a full Committee markup, voted in support of Rep. Huffman's amendment to H.R.2406, the SHARE Act, which would have permanently authorized LWCF. Rep. Zinke was the only Republican to support.
- [April 15, 2016](#): Cosponsored H.R.3173, the Sportsmen's Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Enhancement Act.
- [April 29, 2016](#): Cosponsored H.R.5114, the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act of 2016.
- [July 8, 2016](#): Cosponsored H.R.4151, to amend chapter 2003 of title 54, United States Code, to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provide for the use of such funds, and for other purposes.
- [July 13, 2016](#): Introduced H.R.5778, the Alex Diekmann Peak Designation Act of 2016.

### Congressman Zinke on public lands ownership

- In July, 2016, Zinke [resigned as a delegate](#) to the RNC because of a platform plank to sell public lands.

- In June 2016, Zinke [voted against a bill](#) offered by former Committee Chairman Don Young (R-AK), H.R. 3650, the State National Forest Management Act of 2015. This bill would permit up to two million acres of public lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service to be transferred to state ownership.
- In July of 2015, Zinke [again voted](#) for a Polis amendment to the Department of Interior Appropriations bill that would have prohibited the Department from using funding in violation of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Zinke was one of eight Republicans joining Democrats in support.
- In May 2015, Zinke [voted against the GOP budget](#) because it included vaguely-written language that would allow the sale of public lands.

**Congressman Zinke has been a loyal and fierce advocate of LWCF since entering Congress:**

- March 23, 2015: Signed appropriations request, led by Reps. Thompson and Meehan, advocating for ‘robust funding’ of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016.
- [April 15, 2015](#): First challenged Chairman Bishop’s concerns about LWCF at a hearing focused on LWCF and land acquisition, also reiterated our federal lands are not for sale.
- [July 14, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.1814, to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- September 22, 2015: Signed a bipartisan letter to Speaker John Boehner urging immediate reauthorization of the LWCF prior to its expiration on September 30.
- [October 8, 2015](#): In a full Committee markup, voted in support of Rep. Huffman’s amendment to H.R.2406, the SHARE Act, which would have permanently reauthorized LWCF. Rep. Zinke was the only Republican to support.
- [October 9, 2015](#): Op-ed about the previous day’s markup, entitled ‘LWCF foes need to take a hike,’ was published.
- [November 18, 2015](#): Directly challenged Chairman Bishop’s LWCF reform discussion draft, entered into the official Committee record over 19 letters from Montana groups about why this bill won’t work for the state.
- [November 22, 2015](#): Submitted an LTE to the Washington Post about the importance of LWCF.
- [December 2, 2015](#): Crafted Billings Gazette op-ed urging Republicans to return to their conservation roots to support LWCF.
- December 12, 2015: Sent letter to Chairman Hal Rogers urging funding of the Holland Ranch and Little Sheep properties in Beaverhead County.
- [December 18, 2015](#): Was the only Member of the Montana delegation to vote in support of the H.R.2029, the omnibus package, which included a three year

reauthorization of the program (after the program had lapsed in September) and an increase in funding, up to \$450 million, for FY2016.

- March 22, 2016: Signed appropriations request, led by Reps. Thompson and Meehan, advocating for 'robust funding' of LWCF in FY2017.
- May 20, 2016: Joined the Montana delegation in sending a letter to Director Dan Ashe, USFWS, in support of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project.
- [May 25, 2016](#): Voted with Democrats on the House floor on a Motion to Instruct Conferees to include permanent reauthorization of LWCF in the conference of the House and Senate energy bills.
- [July 8, 2016](#): Cosponsored H.R.4151, to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund

### **Conservation & Sportsmen support Zinke**

- "We applaud Rep. Zinke's leadership on behalf of Montana's sportsmen and women and thank him." – **Land Tawney, President and CEO Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**
- "We appreciate Congressman Zinke's commitment to hunting and fishing through his support of the SCORE Act." – **Joel Webster, Director of Western Lands, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**
- "Montana Outfitters and Guides Association thanks Congressman Zinke for his vote and willingness to stand behind Montana's prized conservation and recreation values." – **Mac Minard, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association**
- "RMEF has learned Congressman Ryan Zinke (R-MT) is meeting with President-elect Trump today about possible appointment as Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Energy or Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Congressman Zinke's appointment to any of these cabinet posts would of course be important for Montana, but we'd really like to see him at Interior, given his understanding of and support for sportsmen, public lands and natural resource issues." - **David Allen, President and CEO of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**
- "Montana is fortunate to have a representative like Ryan Zinke in Congress," **said K.C. Walsh, president and owner of Bozeman-based Simms Fishing Products.** "Whether in Washington, D.C., or here at home, he fights for our land, water and people and supports Montana's thriving outdoor recreation economy. I am proud to join Outdoor Industry Association in support of Congressman Zinke's reelection."

- “Congressman Zinke understands the importance of Montana’s and our nation’s public lands and knows the benefits that outdoor recreation businesses bring to the economy of one of the most naturally beautiful states in the country,” said **OIA Executive Director Amy Roberts**. “His ability to find common sense solutions to protect our lands and waters and growing Montana’s outdoor recreation economy is why we are supporting his reelection this year.”

## ZINKE'S RECORD ON ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

### Op-eds

- [April 10, 2015](#): Don't let Gateway Pacific become next Keystone
- [July 10, 2015](#): Montana coal workers deserve a fighting chance

### Oil, coal and gas legislation

- [January 6, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.161, the Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act
- [January 6, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act
- [January 13, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.287, the American Job Creation and Strategic Alliances LNG Act
- [February 4, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.702, to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions.
- [March 25, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.1616, the Natural Gas Gathering Enhancement Act
- [March 26, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.1644, the Supporting Transparent Regulatory and Environmental Actions in Mining Act
- [October 9, 2015](#): Cosponsored H.R.3734, the Mining Schools Enhancement Act
- [December 3, 2015](#): Voted for H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, which included Zinke's H.R. 2358, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act
- [December 18, 2015](#): Zinke Makes History: Lifts the Ban on Crude Oil Exports
- [May 17, 2016](#): Daines, Zinke Introduce Legislation to Give States & Tribes Say in Energy Development
- [September 8, 2016](#): In Historic Vote, House Committee Passes Two Zinke Bills: Recognition of Little Shell and Certainty for States and Tribes Act

### Congressman Zinke is a vocal and active supporter for coal, oil, and gas development

- [February 10, 2015](#): Zinke: The EPA Is Causing Montana to Bleed Jobs
- [February 24, 2015](#): Ryan Zinke Blasts Obama Veto of the bipartisan Keystone CL Pipeline
- [March 15, 2015](#): Zinke Calls for DoD Investigation into Col. Buck of Army Corps of Engineers
- [April 9, 2015](#): Rep Zinke presses BLM on fracking inexperience

- [July 28, 2015](#): Ryan Zinke and Bipartisan Coalition Urges Army Corps of Engineers to Complete Environmental Study on Gateway Pacific Terminal
- [August 3, 2015](#): Zinke on EPA Plan: Montana Knows Best
- [September 22, 2015](#): Zinke to DOI: "Sage Grouse Listing Clearly 'Not Warranted'"
- [October 23, 2015](#): Rep Zinke Supports AG Fox's Challenge of EPA
- [January 29, 2016](#): Zinke Urges President Obama to Meet Montanans And Understand What's At Stake
- [February 5, 2016](#): Zinke Statement on Obama's Oil Tax
- [March 16, 2015](#): Rep. Ryan Zinke Announces Permanent Indian Coal Production Tax Credit
- [April 20, 2016](#): Rep. Ryan Zinke's Statement on the Senate Energy Bill
- [May 9, 2016](#): Zinke: Crow Coal Terminal Killed by Army Corps of Engineers Political Actions
- [June 14, 2016](#): Rep. Zinke & Billing's Union Leader, Mike Johnson, hold hearing fighting for Montana coal jobs
- [June 30, 2016](#): Zinke & Daines Defend Montana Coal Country, Blast DOI Regulations
- [July 14, 2016](#): Zinke Applauds Passage of Department of Interior Appropriations, which includes Zinke's provisions to end Obama's federal coal moratorium and blocks new coal, gas and oil regulations
- [November 15, 2016](#): Zinke weighs in on new BLM rule against oil and gas development on federal and tribal land

### **Pro-Energy Groups and Tribal leaders support Zinke and his Certainty for States and Tribes Act**

- "Tribes have long been cut out of the conversation when it comes to our own land. We want and need to develop our coal in order to provide jobs, services, and education to our people, but the federal government is making it near impossible. Congressman Zinke's leadership has been critical for the Crow to develop our coal," – **Dana Wilson, Vice Chairman of the Crow Tribe**
- "As a Montanan it makes me proud to know that Senator Daines and Representative Zinke are working for a better relationship with the Department of the Interior. I hope that this will save coal towns like mine, and give us the opportunity to prosper and keep Montana an energy exporter for many years to come." – **Ashley Dennehy, Colstrip United Co-Founder**
- "The State of Montana and the Musselshell County's fiscal health and stability are directly tied to the coal industry. Musselshell County is very dependent on the

health and vitality of the coal industry. The legislation Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke are proposing will ensure the voices of our communities, state and industry are being heard and good policy is being made.” –

**Musselshell County Commissioners**

- “The legislation introduced by Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke brings fairness, stakeholder input, and transparency to the Department of the Interior’s activities related to the Mineral Leasing Act. Balancing the use of our natural resources with environmental protections that are second to none is a far better approach than simply keeping valuable resources in the ground.” – **National Mining Association President and CEO, Hal Quinn**

## ZINKE'S RECORD ON TRIBAL ISSUES

### Legislation

- [January 12, 2015](#): Introduced H.R. 286, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians Restoration Act of 2015
- [January 14, 2015](#): Was an original co-sponsor for H.R. 360, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2015
- [January 22, 2015](#): Co-sponsored H.R. 511, the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2015
- [March 19, 2015](#): Introduced H.R. 1522, the Indian Coal Production Tax Credit
- [April 16, 2015](#): Co-sponsored H.R. 1842, the Indian Health Service Health Professions Tax Fairness Act of 2015
- [July 15, 2015](#): Co-sponsored H.R. 3080, the Tribal Employment and Jobs Protection Act
- [March 2, 2016](#): Co-sponsored H.Con.Res122, the PROTECT Patrimony Resolution
- [May 17, 2016](#): Introduced H.R. 5259, the Certainty for States and Tribes Act
- [June 12, 2016](#): Was an original co-sponsor for H.R. 2760, the American Indian Trust Responsibility Review Act of 2015
- [July 5, 2016](#): Introduced H.Res.807, Expressing support for designation of May 5, 2017, as "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls"
- [July 6, 2016](#): Introduced H.R. 5633, the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act, which was signed into law by President Obama on December 16, 2016, as part of the S.612, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation.

### Letters

- [March 2, 2015](#): Sent a letter in support of funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.
- [April 21, 2015](#): Strongly urged the Department of the Interior and Department of Justice to work expeditiously within the confines of Chairman Rob Bishop's new tribal water compact requirements to review, assess, and advance the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement.
- [October 14, 2015](#): Requested Chairman Bishop include of H.R.286, the Little Shell Federal Recognition Bill, in a future markup following a successful subcommittee hearing vetting the legislation.
- [December 4, 2015](#): Following up with the Department of the Interior about ensuring the Blackfeet Water Settlement continues to include important language and funding as established in the Birch Creek Agreement.

- [March 24, 2016](#): Sent a support letter on behalf of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe to assist in accessing grant funding to revise their tribal constitution.
- [April 7, 2016](#): Sent a follow up letter to Deputy Secretary Connor of the Department of the Interior, urging the agency to finish work on the Blackfeet Water Settlement so the bill could be considered in a subcommittee hearing.
- [April 7, 2016](#): Advised the Department of the Interior and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to engage in sufficient government-to-government consultation about new regulatory standards, which was previously not occurring.
- [April 18, 2016](#): Joined the Montana delegation in sending a letter of support for the Montana Attorney General's application for the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative competitive grant.
- [July 6, 2016](#): Engaged the Department of the Interior and Department of Justice about following through on meeting Chairman Bishop's tribal water compact criteria in order to allow the bill to be passed out of Committee.
- [August 5, 2016](#): Joined the Montana delegation's efforts urging FEMA to grant the Fort Peck Tribes' request for a major disaster declaration.
- [September 30, 2016](#): Urged House Leadership to allow the Blackfeet Water Compact to continue to be included in a final conference Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) package.
- [November 28, 2016](#): Joined Western Members in urging the President-elect to continue to maintain the Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs position.

## Press Releases

- [January 1, 2015](#): Zinke Introduces Legislation to Extend Federal Recognition to the Little Shell Tribe
- [March 16, 2015](#): Rep. Ryan Zinke Announces Permanent Indian Coal Production Tax Credit
- [March 18, 2015](#): Zinke Calls on House to Advance Little Shell Recognition
- [September 29, 2015](#): House Holds First Hearing for Little Shell Federal Recognition in Years
- [November 17, 2015](#): Ryan Zinke votes to return sovereignty to tribes
- [April 26, 2016](#): Zinke Announces More than a Million Dollars in Grants for Montana Tribes
- [May 9, 2016](#): Crow Coal Terminal Killed by Army Corps of Engineers Political Actions
- [May 17, 2016](#): Daines, Zinke Introduce Legislation to Give States & Tribes Say in Energy Development

- [May 24, 2016](#): Zinke, Barnes & House of Reps. Hold First Ever Hearing on Blackfeet Water Compact
- [June 14, 2016](#): Video: Rep. Zinke & Billing's Union Leader, Mike Johnson, hold hearing fighting for Montana coal jobs
- [June 30, 2016](#): Zinke & Daines Defend Montana Coal Country, Blast DOI Regulations
- [July 6, 2016](#): Zinke Introduces Blackfeet Water Compact
- [July 14, 2016](#): Zinke Applauds Passage of Department of Interior Appropriations
- [September 8, 2016](#): In Historic Vote, House Committee Passes Two Zinke Bills: Recognition of Little Shell and Certainty for States and Tribes Act
- [September 26, 2016](#): Rep. Zinke Announces More Than \$520,000 in Grants for Montana Tribes
- [September 26, 2016](#): Zinke Announces \$1.1 million in Funding for Tribal Law Enforcement
- [December 8, 2016](#): Zinke-led U.S. House Passes Blackfeet Water Compact, Calls on Daines & Tester to whip Senate Democrats
- [December 13, 2016](#): Zinke & Daines Hail Passage of Blackfeet Water Compact

### **Tribal leaders support Zinke Legislation**

"Tribes have long been cut out of the conversation when it comes to our own land. We want and need to develop our coal in order to provide jobs, services, and education to our people, but the federal government is making it near impossible. Congressman Zinke's leadership has been critical for the Crow to develop our coal," – **Dana Wilson, Vice Chairman of the Crow Tribe**

"We appreciate all that Congressman Zinke has done to support us by introducing H.R. 286. He has tirelessly fought for our people and to restore our federal recognition. We hope that Congress will listen to the strong voices in the State of Montana and pass Mr. Zinke's legislation." – **Gerald Gray, Chairman of the Little Shell Tribal Council.**

"What a truly historic day for the Blackfeet Nation and the entire state of Montana. Congressman Zinke has proven himself to be a true champion of the Blackfeet Nation, and thanks to his leadership in the House, we are closer than ever before to victory." – **Chairman Harry Barnes of the Blackfeet Nation.**