

**To:** BLM\_CA\_LeadershipTeam\_StateWide[blm\_ca\_leadershipteam\_statewide@blm.gov]; BLM\_CA\_PAO[blm\_ca\_pao@blm.gov]; BLM\_CA\_SO\_EA[blm\_ca\_so\_ea@blm.gov]; Niebauer, Erica[erica.niebauer@sol.doi.gov]; Martha Maciel[mmaciel@blm.gov]  
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## **CALIFORNIA**

[Senator Feinstein visits Central Valley, criticizes President's decision to dump climate change policies](#)

*ABC 30*, June 1

Farmworkers harvesting garlic at Terra Nova Farm, near Helm got an unexpected visitor-- Senator Dianne Feinstein. She talked to a labor contractor about her bill to allow undocumented farmworkers to become legal and eventually become citizens-- mainly because the farmers need them.

[California Senate Passes Major Clean Energy Bills](#)

*Solar Industry*, June 1

Wow! In a single day, the California State Senate passed three major clean energy bills, including one that would establish a 100% renewable portfolio standard (RPS), one that would mandate solar on most new buildings in the state, and one that would create an energy storage rebate program. All three measures now go to the California Assembly for consideration. In a 25-13 vote on Wednesday, the Senate passed S.B.100, which aims to both accelerate and expand the state's current 50% by 2030 RPS. The bill, sponsored by Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León, D-Los Angeles, would speed up the renewables mandate to 50% by 2026 and establish an ultimate goal of 100% by 2045.

[Bid to renew California's landmark anti-climate change program hits roadblocks](#)

*LA Times*, June 2

Efforts to expand California's primary program to combat climate change have hit a snag. Two bills that aimed to extend the state's cap-and-trade program failed to make it out of the Assembly by this week's deadline. And Senate leader Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) rebuffed Gov. Jerry Brown's plan to lock in cap and trade's future by the June 15 budget deadline, saying that the issue was too complicated to complete by that time. "We have to get it right," de León said this week.

[Winter rains bring new wildfire dangers in Southern California](#)

*LA Times*, May 23

Richard Minnich didn't have to go far on a recent weekday morning to find an immense fire hazard surrounding the resort town of Lake Arrowhead and nearby communities in the San Bernardino Mountains. Standing on a roadside pullout, Minnich eyed the culprit: a dense forest of pines and thickets that gives an alpine look to Lake Arrowhead. The site, historically known as Little Bear Valley, is home to about 12,000 permanent residents and attracts summer crowds of up to 80,000. The unbroken vista of lush green is the result of more than a century of fire suppression. Each time firefighters put out a small blaze, unburned brush and timber was left to fuel future fires.

[Fort Ord marches to a different drum as coastal park](#)

*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 2

As seasonal wildflowers fade and spring stretches into summer, the grassy backcountry hills of Fort Ord National Monument are shifting from green to gold. On this vast former military base just 9 miles from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, wild turkeys wander where soldiers prepared for major 20th century conflicts. Hikers trek through former cavalry fields. Cycling trails wind past retired firing ranges, climbing peaks with views of Santa Cruz and beyond. April marked five years since former President Barack Obama established a national monument on Fort Ord. One of two parks carved from the 28,000-acre post that closed in 1994, it provides an interior counterpart to the coastal Fort Ord Dunes State Park created in 2009. Following the monument's fifth anniversary last month, both parks will commemorate the Fort Ord centennial throughout this year.

[National monument boundaries protect our heritage: Guest commentary](#)

*San Bernardino County Sun*, opinion, June 2

News of the siege on our western heritage echoes throughout the canyons of Bears Ears in Utah, whispers in the winds across Mojave Trails in California, and reverberates fear in the gorges of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico. As a creature of the Southwest, my memories are etched in these landscapes. I remember as a child the awe I felt the first time I set my eyes on the Grand Canyon and the curiosity that coursed through my blood upon first experiencing the Ancestral Pueblo Ruins at Bandelier National Monument. My soul is still nourished when I can escape the day-to-day grind to float the Rio Grande gorge or wander through the desert brush nearly a thousand feet above. This is the heritage I share with my daughters.

[Secretaries Zinke and Perdue Stress Inter-Departmental Collaboration as Wildfire Season Approaches](#)

*Sierra Sun Times*, June 5

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue joined forces in Boise, Idaho, on Friday at the National Incident Fire Command Center (NIFC) for a tour and briefing on the upcoming wildfire season. Following the events, the secretaries sent a memorandum to wildland fire leadership highlighting the

importance of inter-departmental collaboration in protecting communities and managing public lands. In the memorandum, Zinke and Perdue stressed the need for working together as they anticipate the 2017 wildfire season to be “another challenging year.”

[Northern California's Best-Kept Secret: Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in Pictures](#)

*KCET*, June 2

California wasn't always shaped the way it is today. For millions of years it was open ocean. Then, a chain of islands, large ones and small ones, slammed head-on (though painfully slowly) into the continent, adding themselves to the west coast of North America. The result: California is a patchwork of geology from different times and places, which drifted up onto the coast piece by piece to make the state we know today. And nowhere in Northern California is that patchwork more wonderfully expressed than in Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

## **NATIONAL**

[Secretary Zinke slated for hearing on Interior Department budget](#)

*Indianz*, June 5

Secretary Ryan Zinke, the new leader of the Department of the Interior, is making his second appearance on Capitol Hill this week. Zinke is due to testify about his department's budget on Thursday. President Donald Trump has requested \$11.7 billion for fiscal year 2018, an amount that represents a decrease of 10.9 percent from current levels. Within that amount, the Bureau of Indian Affairs would see about \$2.48 billion. That's \$303.2 million less than current levels. The hearing takes place before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies at 9:30am on June 8. It will be webcast.

[Ryan Zinke: Paris Climate Agreement Was Bad for US](#)

*Newsline*, June 2

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke has said he does not believe climate change is a hoax, but on Friday he defended President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate agreement, saying the “deal is bad” for the United States. “It's only 20 pages, but as you read through it, we pay for it,” Zinke told Fox News' “America's Newsroom” program. “We pay billions of dollars up front, more than anyone else.”

[Zinke on why he suspended all Resource Advisory Councils...](#)

*Spokesman*, June 2

The new U.S. secretaries of Interior and Agriculture rolled into Boise today with a strong message of support for collaboration in efforts to solve the nation's public lands issues

even as the Trump Administration has suspended all meetings of local Resource Advisory Councils through September.

[Battle royale looms as Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke mulls overhaul of plans to protect sage grouse habitat](#)

*The Denver Post*, June 4

Western leaders, including Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, are opposing a possible Trump administration push to overhaul federal plans for protecting greater sage grouse across a Texas-sized area in 10 states. Those plans were negotiated over five years by state and federal wildlife officials with private landowners, conservationists and industry groups participating as an alternative to listing the imperiled sage grouse as an endangered species. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke last week stayed mum on whether he'll move ahead on a review of the plans.

[Comments on Interior review heavily favor status quo group](#)

*GREENWIRE*, May 26

Public comments on an Interior Department review of the status of dozens of national monuments is skewing heavily in favor of retaining existing designations, including the Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, according to a new analysis by the Center for Western Priorities. Ahead of tonight's deadline for comments on whether the Trump administration should pursue changes to Bears Ears monument, Interior reported collecting more than 100,000 submissions on the website Regulations.gov. *See PDF for full story.*

[4 energy and environment questions as Congress returns](#)

*E&E Daily*, June 5

As Congress returns for a monthlong legislative stretch, Cabinet members will make long-awaited appearances, lawmakers and the White House will work to avoid financial crises, tax talks will heat up, and midterm election-watchers will seek clues about who's running. Here are four questions on energy and the environment... *See PDF for full story.*

[Bernhardt disputes role in scandals, rejects ethics questions](#)

*E&E Daily*, June 5

President Trump's pick for the second most powerful position at the Interior Department is offering few assurances to Senate Democrats concerned about his potential conflicts of interest, according to documents obtained by E&E News on Friday. The legal services and lobbying that David Bernhardt, a former top George W. Bush administration Interior official, has done for energy and water development companies as the top natural resources lawyer at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP was a

major focus of his confirmation hearing for deputy Interior secretary last month (Greenwire, May 18). *See PDF for full story.*

Where Trump's border rhetoric meets reality

CNN, June 3

"So where would you put a wall?" The question was being posed by a Texas congressman as he gazed out over the crystal blue water, with Mexico a few dozen yards ahead of him and the US a few dozen yards behind. Republican Rep. Will Hurd was floating on a National Park Service boat at the international boundary line on the Rio Grande River. At our backs were the gentle desert hills of Amistad National Recreation Area, a national park that shares 83 miles of border with Mexico. In front of us was more desert, uninhabited land on the Mexico side.

Trump administration posts 'help wanted' signs for government service

LA Times, June 3

Many of the office suites reserved for top civilian officials at the Pentagon sit empty or have temporary fill-ins while Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis worries about North Korea and Iran. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin lacks appointed loyalists in any of the 17 top spots below him as he rewrites the nation's byzantine tax code. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson similarly relies on a skeleton staff to conduct global diplomacy, with dozens of jobs open. And in the White House, President Trump still depends on a communications director who resigned last month because he hasn't found a replacement. More than four months after taking office, the president who built his brand telling people "You're fired!" is having a hard time staffing up.

*Sarah K. Webster*

Lead Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of Communications  
Bureau of Land Management California State Office  
Office: (916) 978 4622

## **NATIONAL**

Comments on Interior review heavily favor status quo — group  
*GREENWIRE*, May 26

Public comments on an Interior Department review of the status of dozens of national monuments is skewing heavily in favor of retaining existing designations, including the Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, according to a new analysis by the Center for Western Priorities.

Ahead of tonight's deadline for comments on whether the Trump administration should pursue changes to Bears Ears monument, Interior reported collecting more than 100,000 submissions on the website Regulations.gov.

According to its analysis, the Center for Western Priorities reported yesterday that 96 percent of those submissions "expressed support for national monument designations," with 3 percent opposing current designations.

At the time of its survey, approximately 90,000 comments had been collected, and the center randomly sampled 500 submissions. The survey had a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

More than half of the submissions examined also specifically referenced the Bears Ears monument, with a similar level of support for maintaining the existing site.

"The overwhelming support for Bears Ears should come as no surprise," said CWP Executive Director Jennifer Rokala. "National monuments are monuments to America's heritage and history. They're wildly popular across the country, and Bears Ears is no exception."

President Trump issued an executive order in late April directing the Interior Department to review the status of dozens of monuments created since 1996, with a particular focus on those sites comprising more than 100,000 acres.

The final review will include an assessment of 27 monuments, with a particular focus on the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears site, which President Obama designated in his final weeks in office.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is set to issue an interim report on the review by June 10, at which time he could make recommendations about whether to reduce the boundaries of the Utah monument or rescind its status entirely.

A final report on all monuments under review is due by late August.

During a recent visit to Utah to tour both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, created during the Clinton administration, Zinke stressed the importance of the comment collection at Regulations.gov as a key indicator of public sentiment about the monuments (*Greenwire*, May 11).

"This is the first time ever a formal comment period has been set up in order to give local communities a voice in Antiquities Act monument designations, and advocates for all sides of the issue took advantage of the opportunity to have their voices heard," said Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift. The Antiquities Act of 1906 is the law under which presidents may designate federal lands as monuments to protect areas of scientific, cultural or historical value.

Swift added: "Advocates can be confident that a team here at the Department will review every single comment that was submitted. The Secretary met with advocates on all sides of the issue and is encouraged by the public's participation in the process."

In a statement, Zinke echoed comments he made during his visit to Utah, in which he said he remains an "optimist" about the review process and its outcome.

"After being on the ground for a few days and talking to people on all sides I think everyone has a lot more in common than previously thought. Everyone wants to preserve the important areas, the question is what vehicle of land management," Zinke said. During his tour of Bears Ears, Zinke told E&E News all options remained on the table but did discount the idea of national park status.

But groups like the Utah Diné Bikéyah, a Native American environmental group that supports the Bears Ears monument, criticized Zinke for failing to hold public forums during his visit, arguing that many Native Americans do not have access to internet or cellular service in the San Juan County area.

"We're really concerned about the lack of sensitivity to what the conditions are in southern San Juan County. There's very little internet down there; there's very little cell service; there's also huge language barriers," Utah Diné Bikéyah Executive Director Gavin Noyes told E&E News. "We feel like this 15-day comment period ... really just leaves out all of the local Native American supporters and the community members that have worked so hard to keep the area protected."

The Utah Diné Bikéyah, which has gathered nearly 20,000 comments for submission, held its own listening session Wednesday night, Noyes said, during which it videotaped submissions from tribal elders that it plans to submit to the Interior Department.

"DOI should have been more sensitive to the structure of how they're doing this," Noyes said.

Dozens of other organizations likewise opted to solicit and bundle feedback about the monument process — the 15-day comment period is shorter than the standard window for public feedback on most regulatory processes — which CWP reported total about 685,000 additional comments.

Among those collecting feedback are Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Earthjustice, NextGen Climate, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Center for American Progress, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Audubon Society, the Outdoor Industry Association and the National Wildlife Federation.

Earthjustice told E&E News that it had collected more than 69,000 comments via its own online action center, including nearly 16,000 personalized missives.

"Though they were only given a brief window to do so, the public has roared its support for Bears Ears National Monument," said Earthjustice managing attorney Heidi McIntosh. "Americans everywhere are urging Secretary Zinke to stand with the Native American tribes with sacred ties to these lands, documenting the economic benefits of national monuments, quoting Teddy Roosevelt, and sharing their experiences exploring this special landscape. By the end of the comment period, we expect Secretary Zinke will receive over a half-million comments in support of Bears Ears National Monument, solidifying its importance as a national treasure."

### **Democratic leaders weigh in**

Democratic leaders in Congress issued their own letter to Zinke yesterday, urging the Interior secretary to "reject efforts" to alter any of the national monuments.

"These treasured landscapes and cultural and historic landmarks are woven into the fabric of our country," wrote Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California and House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland.

"That is why we are deeply troubled by the President's April 26th executive order establishing a process that could lead to the diminishment or outright repeal of national monuments designated by his predecessors," the letter continued. "It is unconscionable to think that this Administration would sell out America's outdoor heritage to benefit corporate interests in the oil, gas, and mining industries."

The missive follows a letter from House Natural Resources Committee ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and 85 other Democrats yesterday that cautioned Zinke that only Congress has the authority to reduce the boundaries or revoke the status of national monuments (Greenwire, May 25).

#### 4 energy and environment questions as Congress returns

*E&E Daily*, June 5

As Congress returns for a monthlong legislative stretch, Cabinet members will make long-awaited appearances, lawmakers and the White House will work to avoid financial crises, tax talks will heat up, and midterm election-watchers will seek clues about who's running.

Here are four questions on energy and the environment:

#### **What will Scott Pruitt say?**

Congress is certain to hear this month from U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke for the first time since their confirmation hearings earlier this year.

All three are due before House and Senate authorizing and appropriations committees to defend President Trump's fiscal 2018 budget. Zinke is already on the agenda for this week (see related story).

Pruitt, a pariah among Democrats for his fierce opposition to the Clean Power Plan, is likely to face bipartisan criticism over a proposal to cut the agency's budget by 31 percent. Both parties have said the plan is dead on arrival.

Pruitt is also likely to get plenty of questions about Trump's decision to exit the Paris climate accord. While Democrats will bash him for his anti-Paris advocacy, conservatives like home-state ally Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) will praise Pruitt.

Zinke will likely face queries, especially from House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah), about whether he will recommend the administration revoke or reduce 27 national monuments, including Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah.

Zinke will have an ally in Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) on a budget proposal to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for energy exploration, but she will likely take issue with other aspects of the spending plan.

Perry, a former Texas governor, has kept a relatively low profile as he has visited DOE sites around the nation hoping to learn about a department he previously admitted to having little knowledge about.

Perry's most pointed questions will come from appropriators over proposals to cut energy research that don't have much political support outside the White House.

Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), ranking member on ENR, will want an update from Perry on nuclear cleanup work at the Hanford Site in her state after a recent leak of radioactive materials there.

### **Is the border adjustment tax dead?**

Congressional Republicans and the White House agree they want to move tax reform legislation. But it remains an open question whether a proposal riling the energy community will be a part of the package.

The administration and congressional leaders are likely to accelerate talks over the shape of their tax bill this month as they press toward what seems like a long-shot August deadline.

Lawmakers are sure to note the six-figure digital advertising campaign launched last week by the Koch brothers-backed American for Prosperity that pushes Republicans to move an overhaul without including what's been its most controversial proposal, a border adjustment tax.

The BAT, championed by House GOP leaders, would create a 20 percent tax on imports while exempting exports. Backers argue the policy shift is vital to raising \$1 trillion in revenue over the

next decade that would allow them to make the deepest cuts in corporate and individual rates since the Reagan years.

Senate Republicans, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, however, have suggested the BAT won't fly in their chamber amid concerns it would unfairly hit oil importers and other manufacturers.

Members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus have also begun warning that the BAT could sink tax reform. The administration has offered reservations, too.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has signaled some openness in recent weeks to BAT "alternatives," but the man to watch for signs of a deal is House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas), who continues to press for the idea.

Will Congress skip energy and enviro spending bills?

The White House and Capitol Hill Republicans will be looking for ways over the next several weeks to avoid a politically treacherous fiscal meltdown this fall.

House Republicans are floating the idea of wrapping all 12 fiscal 2018 spending bills into an omnibus package that they would move before August recess.

The decision could help avoid a possible government shutdown when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. It would also sidestep messy floor fights over attaching riders to individual spending bills, particularly ones covering energy and water and Interior and EPA.

Conservatives could still balk at moving massive spending legislation, and Senate Democrats have the votes to filibuster any omnibus that ignores their funding priorities.

Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin surprised many observers recently by suggesting Congress will need to sign off on a clean increase of the nation's borrowing authority, also known as the debt ceiling, before its August recess.

Without an increase, the U.S. would default on billions in loans and risk starting a global financial crisis. But many lawmakers on Capitol Hill thought the increase would not be needed until fall.

Conservatives, including many members of the Freedom Caucus, have come out against Mnuchin's plan, saying they will require at least a framework for future cuts to go along with any debt increase.

Such sentiments echo Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, a former House hard-liner who directly contradicted Mnuchin in comments last week. He also wants spending adjustments.

If the 30 or so members of the Freedom Caucus hold together, they could force leaders to rely on Democrats to pass a debt ceiling increase.

But House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said Friday that Democrats might not back even a clean raise if the GOP moves ahead with a tax plan that favors the wealthiest Americans.

Will Upton run?

Almost six months into 2017, many questions remain about next year's midterm elections.

Former House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) continues to eye a possible challenge to the Great Lakes State's senior Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D) next year. It would surely be one of the most competitive and expensive races of the upcoming cycle.

Stabenow is already in campaign mode, and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has run pre-emptive online ads against Upton.

The strength of his fundraising numbers for the first half of the year, due on June 30, could offer some hint as to whether he'll pursue the challenge.

So far, no sitting senators have announced they will not seek re-election in 2018, one of the longest stretches in recent history.

The biggest retirement questions surround the future of the longest-serving Republican, Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, the chairman of the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee.

The seven-term senator has danced around the issue, first saying he would retire and then suggesting he was eyeing another run. Hatch, 83, has floated 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney as his possible replacement.

Other potential retirees on the Democratic side are: Sens. Dianne Feinstein of California, 83; Tom Carper of Delaware, 70; and Bill Nelson of Florida, 74.

All three have said they expect to run and would be favorites to win, but they all have been subject to frequent speculation about those plans changing.

One definite retirement is coming at the end of the month, with House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) leaving Congress.

The House Republican Steering Committee will meet this week to pick his replacement, with Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) strongly favored to get the gavel.

[Bernhardt disputes role in scandals, rejects ethics questions](#)  
*E&E Daily*, June 5

President Trump's pick for the second most powerful position at the Interior Department is offering few assurances to Senate Democrats concerned about his potential conflicts of interest, according to documents obtained by E&E News on Friday.

The legal services and lobbying that David Bernhardt, a former top George W. Bush administration Interior official, has done for energy and water development companies as the top natural resources lawyer at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP was a major focus of his confirmation hearing for deputy Interior secretary last month (Greenwire, May 18).

That work — for which he was paid more than \$80,000 last year alone — was also a recurring topic in questions for the hearing record submitted by Democratic members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The panel will vote tomorrow on whether to move his nomination to the Senate floor (see related story).

Bernhardt's responses suggest he isn't concerned about securing broad bipartisan support, Democratic staffers said. Bernhardt can clear committee and — thanks to a change in filibuster rules last Congress — secure confirmation from the full Senate with only the votes of the Republican majority.

The deputy nominee repeatedly declined to commit to taking steps to alleviate concerns about conflicts of interest besides those required by the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). Bernhardt justified his defiant stance by pointing back to ethics agreements struck with top Obama administration Interior officials.

"There is a striking degree of consistency between the ethics agreement that I provided to and that was certified by [OGE General Counsel David] Apol, and the agreements provided by other nominees to positions within the Department of the Interior who also worked in large private law firms representing similar clients, and in some cases the same clients," he wrote.

Bernhardt, who briefly led the Interior transition effort in the immediate aftermath of President Trump's election victory, also declined to provide the committee with records of his communications with lawmakers, the executive branch or the transition team after another former Bush administration official took control of the department's changeover (Greenwire, Nov. 21, 2016). Such disclosures, he argued, were not necessary for the Senate to consider a presidential nominee.

Furthermore, Bernhardt denied that he had any involvement with the appearance of a controversial proposal by Cadiz Inc. — a major client of Brownstein Hyatt — to build a 43-mile-long water pipeline in southern California on the "President-Elect's Priority List of Emergency and National Security Projects."

"I do not know if that is a document developed by the Presidential transition," he added.

### **Abramoff ties**

Bernhardt's responses to questions about his Bush administration service at Interior may cost him Democratic votes as well. For instance, he claimed to "have no relationship" with Jack Abramoff and said he does "not believe I ever met him."

But Abramoff emails posted ahead of Bernhardt's confirmation hearing by the Center for Western Priorities, a progressive nonprofit group, suggest that Bernhardt attended at least one intimate dinner in September 2001 with the disgraced super lobbyist and his clients.

In one message, Abramoff told colleagues he and a client would be sitting at a table with former Interior Secretary Gale Norton and Bernhardt. Abramoff then asked his co-workers to "confirm that you can be at this very important dinner."

Bernhardt, in his responses, also suggested he had little to do with erroneous testimony that Norton submitted to the Senate Energy panel that lent support for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"A whole host of entities" at Interior were involved in creating that testimony, which his office ultimately submitted to the committee. Bernhardt added that "at the time I was just learning about ANWR and I was not then serving as the Secretary's primary policy counselor on the issue."

### **Few policy promises**

On policy issues, Bernhardt didn't make many firm commitments. He claimed that Interior isn't required to combat climate change. Bernhardt also declined to support fully funding and making permanent the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal and state land-buying program that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke strongly backed during his time in Congress.

LWCF is set to expire after September 2018. It is currently authorized to receive up to \$900 million per year from offshore oil and gas royalties, although the administration's budget request only asked for it to get \$64 million in fiscal 2018 (E&E Daily, May 24).

Bernhardt hinted at supporting reforms to how the conservation and recreation program is funded. "Should I be confirmed, I would look forward to working with Secretary Zinke, you, and your colleagues to reauthorize the program, including identifying stable, diverse and long-term funding mechanisms to keep the fund viable for generations to come," he said.

One notable promise Bernhardt made was to work with Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) on a long-term solution for a rural schools grant program. During the Bush administration, Wyden filibustered Bernhardt's nomination for Interior solicitor over the issue (E&E Daily, Sept. 11, 2006).