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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop,

We respectfully request that the full House Natural Resources Committee hold an oversight hearing on the recent unlawful armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and related threats of violence that impede Americans' access to our public lands. As members of the Committee on Natural Resources, it is our duty to conduct aggressive oversight to ensure our public lands are protected for all Americans.

The 41-day occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is only the most instance attack by armed militants on our nation's public lands and the communities that neighbor them. Over the past several years, it has become evident that incidents such as the Malheur occupation are not isolated. There are clear connections between the Malheur occupation and the armed standoff at Cliven Bundy's Nevada Ranch in 2014, the illegal ATV ride through Recapture Canyon in 2014, and others.

The occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge came at a great expense to taxpayers. Early estimates by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have identified \$5.7 million in costs resulting from the occupation with "substantial" restoration costs still anticipated. Due to statutory limitations, much of this cost may be impossible to recover from the lawbreakers, leaving taxpayers on the hook. The Committee has jurisdiction and a responsibility to ensure that costs resulting from illicit activities at our wildlife refuges are fully recouped.

Additionally, this Committee should ensure that the law enforcement agencies serving our public lands are properly equipped to ensure safety. A number of the organizations involved in the Malheur occupation have embraced the threat of violence as a viable political tool. While this represents a danger to all users of our public lands, it is particularly troubling for the public servants and law enforcement personnel – as well as their families – whose lives are placed at risk. This Committee should clearly and unequivocally condemn any threat of violence, and stand firmly with our law enforcement personnel to ensure they have the resources and authority they need to protect the public and our shared lands from harm.

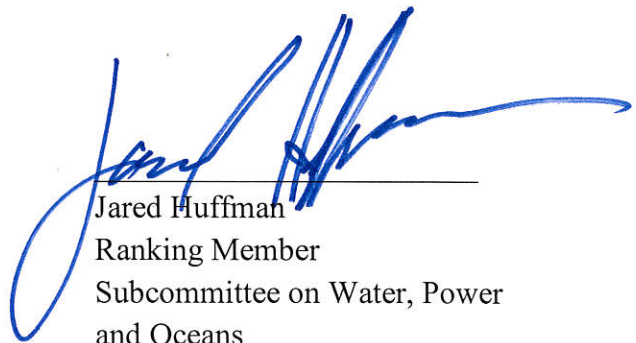
At the beginning of this Congress, this Committee agreed that “through oversight hearings and investigations the Committee and its subcommittees will focus oversight efforts on promoting job creation and economic growth, reducing spending and ensuring responsible use of taxpayer resources, and protecting public access to lands and waters for recreation and economic development.” The Malheur occupation and related events compel this body to conduct aggressive oversight.

The Committee on Natural Resources has an obligation to ensure that our public lands are protected for use by all Americans and future generations. The Malheur occupation is the latest instance of a growing, violent threat to the lands we have pledged to conserve and manage. This Committee should fully investigate this incident and act swiftly to ensure our public lands remain safe for recreation, public servants, cultural use, and nearby communities.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Power  
and Oceans



Niki Tsongas  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands