



2017: A Year of Resistance

Fighting Republican Attacks on our Communities' Health and Environment

Attacks on the environment by the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress have been relentless and if their legislative efforts pass into law, they will have devastating effects on the health and safety of Americans families. All Americans are entitled to have access to public lands, clean drinking water, good air quality, and protection from toxic chemicals. The Republican assault on these rights must end.

At the start of 2017, Republicans wasted no time in moving their extreme agenda to endanger public lands. The U.S. House of Representatives launched into the 115th Congress by voting to change the House rules to make it easier to sell off America's public lands. This rule change was the first action taken to push the Republican anti-public lands agenda forward and pursue their goal of making it easier for coal, oil, gas, and mining industries to get rich off extracting resources from our federal lands. Since then, the Trump administration has supported the Republican "drill everywhere" agenda by slashing the size of several national monuments, including Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah and Gold Butte in Nevada.

Additionally, there has been an unprecedented number of attacks on our water supply, air quality, ocean health, and clean energy economy. With Republicans in control of the White House and both chambers of Congress, they have been working diligently to tear down Obama-era environmental policies, shut-out respected scientists and research, and eliminate efforts to address the growing effects of climate change. Democrats in Congress, led by Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva, have spent the year fighting these environmental injustices and holding Republicans accountable for their actions.

House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) released a memo earlier this month on the bills passed in 2017.

The text in red represents bills advanced by the Republican Congress and below each bill is a summary explaining why Democrats opposed the bill.

The text in blue highlights bills Democrats introduced and proactive actions they have taken to fight back against Republican anti-environment policies.

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Republican Attacks on America's Public Lands and Waters

Our public lands and waters belong to all Americans, but they are currently under attack by Republicans in the administration and in Congress who are actively working to sell off our lands to big corporate developers. Committee Republicans have been actively working to hand over federal land to the states. This is a dangerous policy because many states have voiced concerns that they do not have the funds needed to properly maintain these vast areas. If states are unable to manage the land, they will be forced to sell it to developers, which will degrade our communities' health and environment. Democrats on the Committee are fighting to ensure our public places are accessible to all people today and America's unique natural beauty is protected for generations to come.

Committee Republicans Promote Legislation to Weaken Protections on Federal Lands

"National Monument Creations and Protection Act" (H.R. 3990)

aka "No New National Monuments Act"

Chairman Bishop introduced a bill that would "reform" the Antiquities Act of 1906, a law that authorizes the president to designate national monuments on existing federal land, including land under federal waters. Bishop's bill aims to give the president less authority to designate land under the Act. Learn more about the Antiquities Act [here](#). **[Passed Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

"Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act of 2017" (H.R. 3668)

aka "Easier Access to Guns Act"

Committee Republicans passed the National Rifle Association (NRA)-backed bill that would weaken rules governing the importation of dangerous firearms, preempt state and local gun safety laws and deregulate silencers and armor-piercing bullets. The bill aims to remove silencers from the National Firearms Act and enable dangerous people to buy silencers without a background check. Due to strong opposition from Democrats and activists, Speaker Ryan has not yet brought the bill to the House floor for a vote. **[Passed Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

- Sept 12** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA) held a [press conference](#) to speak out against the NRA-backed provisions of the SHARE Act.
- Sept 13** Democratic members of the Committee [condemned the markup](#) of the SHARE Act, stating that it weakens public safety, unnecessarily deregulates gun silencers, and makes it harder for federal authorities to regulate armor-piercing bullets.

BILL **“Authorizing Critical Conservation for Sportsmen and Sportswomen (ACCESS) Act” (H.R. 4489)** Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) and Ranking Member Grijalva introduced the ACCESS Act, a bill that expands access for fishing, hunting, and other recreational activities on public lands and addresses numerous priorities of the sporting and conservation communities. The ACCESS Act was introduced after Republicans’ failed attempts to advance the SHARE Act. **[Hearing request refused]**

“Protecting State and Local Input in Federal Land Management” (H.J. Res. 44)

aka **“Eliminate Efforts to Modernize Federal Land Management Act”**

House Republicans voted in favor of a bill to suspend the Bureau of Land Management’s Planning 2.0 initiative that was designed to make government more efficient and responsive to public input, and enhance the role of science in land management decision making. Trump signed the bill into law. **[Passed in the House with little Democratic support and signed into law by President Trump]**

“Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2017” (H.R. 2936)

aka **“Promote Logging on Public Lands Act”**

The bill undermines core provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) intended to ensure forest conservation; expands the use of categorical exclusions under NEPA to allow clear cutting in certain forests without any sort of environmental assessment or review; and limits or prohibits judicial review of certain activities. It is a timber industry wish list dressed up as legislation that will not improve forest health. **[Passed in the House]**

Nov 1 The bill passed in the House, despite the fact that the Trump administration released a Statement of Administration Policy noting its concerns with the bill. The bill has not been voted on in the Senate.

“Minnesota’s Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act” (H.R. 3905)

aka **“Sell our Public Lands to Foreign Interests Act”**

The House voted to advance the Republican-backed bill that would resurrect two expired leases in the Superior National Forest for a Chilean mining conglomerate seeking to build a copper sulfide mine near one of America’s most visited wilderness areas. The bill (H.R. 3905) would overturn a 2016 U.S. Forest Service finding that building a copper sulfide mine near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Northern Minnesota could result in “extreme” and irreparable environmental harm to the region. **[Passed in the House]**

“Amending the Wilderness Act to Ensure Use of Bicycles, Wheelchairs, Strollers and Game Cars” (H.R. 1349)

aka **“Put Wheels in Wilderness Act”**

The bill amends the Wilderness Act to authorize the use of “motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized bicycles, strollers, wheelbarrows, survey wheels, measuring wheels, or game carts.” Despite longstanding agreement over the restriction of mechanized transportation in wilderness areas, select groups have continued to push for statutory changes which would permit

potentially damaging activities, such as mountain biking, in these areas. Today, there are 765 wilderness areas in the U.S., accounting for just 3% of land in the contiguous United States. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

“Washington County, Utah, Public Land Management Implementation Act” (H.R. 2423)

aka *“Pave the Red Cliffs National Conservation Act”*

The bill allows San Juan County to build a road through Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, an area that Congress set aside to protect the threatened Mohave Desert tortoise and promote outdoor recreation. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

Committee Republicans Promote Legislation to Weaken Protections for Oceans and the U.S. Water Supply

“Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act” (H.R. 200)

aka *“Empty Oceans Act”*

Even though the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) works and has helped restore fish populations and the coastal communities that depend on them, Republicans want to “reform” it. If enacted, H.R. 200 would threaten MSA’s successful record and the future of healthy fish populations and sustainable fisheries. It would significantly weaken the law’s conservation provisions by creating loopholes, watering down legal standards, and decreasing accountability. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

“Gaining Responsibility on Water Act of 2017” (H.R. 23)

aka *“Big Ag Giveaway and Environmental Destruction Act”*

The bill would transfer enormous amounts of fresh water to politically-connected agricultural interests in one area of California, at the expense of the rest of the state. The bill poses a dangerous threat to drinking water quality, commercially-important fisheries, and water supplies for people, farms, and fish and wildlife across California. **[Passed in the House with little Democratic support]**

“Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act” (H.R. 1654)

aka *“Eliminating Public Input Act”*

The bill imposes arbitrary, unworkable deadlines for completing key environmental reviews, thereby undermining the management authority of expert federal agencies responsible for implementing our nation’s most important environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act. Taken together, the bill’s many provisions undermine meaningful environmental and public review for new dam projects. The bill passed the House, despite strong opposition from Ranking Member Grijalva. **[Passed in the House with little Democratic support]**

“Water Rights Protection Act of 2017” (H.R. 2939)

aka “Indian Water Rights Eradication Act”

The bill prohibits the federal government from exercising federal reserved water rights. The bill’s provisions undermine long-standing authorities of both the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to establish reasonable conditions on private interests in order to protect federal water rights, public resources, and tribal rights. **[Passed in Committee with slim Democratic support]**

“San Luis Unit Drainage Resolution Act” (H.R. 1769)

aka “Westlands Bailout Act”

The bill would waive more than \$350 million dollars owed to federal taxpayers by the Westlands Water District in California. The Westlands Water District is the largest agricultural water district in the United States and has spent tremendous sums lobbying Congress for its bailout, including to President Trump’s current Deputy Secretary of Interior, David Bernhardt, during his time as a big business lobbyist. **[Passed in Committee with slim Democratic support]**

Democratic Actions to Protect America’s Public Lands and Waters

Defending our National Monuments

- Jan 25-27** Ranking Member Grijalva traveled to New Mexico to meet with key lawmakers, conservationists, sportsmen, and business leaders about the importance of defending the Antiquities Act.
- Feb 26** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Bishop Wants Trump to Do His Bears Ears Dirty Work*.
- Mar 3** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke pressing him to explain his stance on whether presidents can use the Antiquities Act to revoke national monument status at existing monument sites.
- Apr 13** Democrats on the Natural Resources Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee released a memo that shows a years-long record of extensive contact between agency officials and a wide array of federal, state, and local stakeholders leading up to the designation of Bears Ears National Monument—directly contradicting the Republican narrative that Bears Ears and other federal monuments designated using the Antiquities Act were established without adequate consultation or local support.
- May 2** Ranking Member Grijalva held a press conference to speak out against Republican attacks on national monuments.
- May 25** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter along with 85 House Democratic colleagues to Zinke to highlight Congress’ long-established legal authority over national monuments and other federally protected sites.
- May 27** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Step up now to preserve U.S. public lands*.

- June 8** Ranking Member Grijalva held a public forum titled, "A Monumental Mistake: The Implications of President Trump's Executive Order on National Monuments."
- June 13** Ranking Member Grijalva sent Interior Secretary Zinke a letter requesting an account of public comments received thus far through the Trump administration's controversial national monuments "review" process and a description of Zinke's travel and meeting itinerary for trips taken as part of the process.
- July 21** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Congressman: My Colleagues' National Monument Claims are Disingenuous*.
- July 25** 65 House Democrats sent a letter to Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross urging him to protect unique ecosystems and cultural sites throughout U.S. waters.
- Aug 22** Ranking Member Grijalva released a report on the fossil fuel industry's influence on the Trump administration's decision to "review" 27 national monuments: *Fossil Apostles: Fossil Fuels, the GOP, and the Fate of our National Monuments*.
- Oct 11** Ranking Member Grijalva and 30 House Democratic cosponsors used a House resolution (H.Res. 555) to force the Trump administration to be more transparent about its review of national monuments. A few days later, Republicans were forced to hold a markup on the Democratic resolution. Republicans voted to protect the Trump administration from having to provide documents on the monument review process, instead advancing legislation to gut the Antiquities Act and make it more difficult for future presidents to establish national monuments on federal land.
- Nov 2** Ranking Member Grijalva and 19 House Democrats sent a letter to President Trump urging him to release the Department of Commerce report to the White House on Secretary Wilbur Ross' review of 11 National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments.
- Dec 1** Committee Democrats released a memo outlining the illegal actions the Trump administration is taking by shrinking national monuments designated under the Antiquities Act.

BILL: "Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument Act" (H.R. 360)

Ranking Member Grijalva's landmark bill was introduced to create a new national monument to protect the Grand Canyon watershed and honor the region's rich Native American history and culture. It was developed with extensive input from the Grand Canyon-Associated Tribes and would protect approximately 1.7 million acres of federal land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. **[Hearing request refused]**

- Jan 6** Ranking Member Grijalva introduced his bill that would establish the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument in Arizona.
- Jan 13** Ranking Member Grijalva requested a hearing on his Grand Canyon bill, Chairman Bishop ignored the request.
- Oct 3** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a second request to Chairman Bishop for a hearing on his bill, an effort that has new resonance in the wake of a U.S. Forest Service report to the president opening the door to new uranium mining near the Grand Canyon.

- Nov 3** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture about the recommendation to revise a 20-year moratorium on new mining claims on federal land in the Grand Canyon Watershed. On Dec. 15, Ranking Member Grijalva received a response from the Secretary to his questions.
- Nov 3** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Chairman Bishop requesting a hearing on Grand Canyon Uranium Mining.
- Nov 27** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Stop seeing the Grand Canyon as a potential strip mine*.
- Dec 12** The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Obama administration's 20-year withdrawal of more than 1 million acres of land around the Grand Canyon from new uranium mining claims.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)

The MSA is a bipartisan law that aims to foster long-term biological and economic sustainability of our nation's marine fisheries. Reauthorizing MSA is not controversial, but Republicans have failed to bring a truly bipartisan reauthorization bill up for a vote.

- Sept 21** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter on the sentencing hearing for Carlos Rafael, the leader of a notorious illegal fishing operation that has badly damaged the New England fishing economy. In the letter to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, he asked for renewed attention to his case and an investigation of whether federal conflicts of interest allowed his scheme to continue after his wrongdoing first came to light.
- Sept 26** Democrats on the Committee pushed for bipartisan cooperation to reauthorize the law and make updates to improve fisheries science conservation and management practices.
- Oct 26** Ranking Member Grijalva and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) sent a letter to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Department of Justice (DOJ) Attorney General Jeff Sessions, urging them to penalize Carlos Rafael – the notorious ‘Codfather’ of New Bedford, Mass. – for violations of the MSA.

More Democratic Actions to Protect our Natural Resources

- Feb 2** Due to massive protests from public lands supporters, House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) publicly rejected his own bill - H.R. 621 - which would have required the sale of 3.3 million acres of federal land to the highest bidder.
- Feb 14** Ranking Member Grijalva published a corresponding op-ed titled, *When the Power of Protest Works: Organized Dissent Helped Kill Rep. Chaffetz's Public-Lands Transfer Bill*.
- Mar 7** Ranking Member Grijalva released a letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) requesting information about the agencies' plan to permit the construction of two new nuclear reactors at Turkey Point, a site adjacent to Biscayne and Everglades National Parks.

- Mar 16** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to the U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA asking for more information about seafood labor practices.
- May 4** Ranking Member Grijalva invited President Trump on a tour to learn more about the Civil War sites protected by the National Park Service.
- May 16** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *More U.S. action required on New England fishery*.
- June 23** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to NOAA Fisheries, the Commerce Department's fisheries management and regulatory agency, pressing for information on why the agency recently extended the red snapper fishing season in the Gulf of Mexico from three days to 42 days – an approach that the agency's own Federal Register notice admits is potentially perilous for the species.
- Oct 24** Ranking Member Grijalva criticized the NPS announcement regarding increased entrance fees at seventeen highly-visited parks. Secretary Zinke claimed the fee hikes are necessary to address the deferred maintenance backlog, but Grijalva pointed out that the Trump administration's FY2018 budget proposed a 12.9% cut to NPS funding. On Dec. 21, 11 Committee Democrats sent a letter to Secretary Zinke opposing the fee hike.
- Oct 25** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter with six House Democrats calling on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to open a new investigation into the misuse of taxpayer funds by the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation, following revelations that millions of dollars were secretly spent by the federal agency to subsidize private interests and help develop plans for a massive new California water project.
- Dec 19** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Administration eyes tax cuts for the wealthy as it seeks to hike Park Service fees*.

Fighting President Trump's Proposed Border Wall

President Trump has been pushing for the development of a border wall, a project that would harm wildlife, erode tribal sovereignty, disrupt communities and perpetuate a humanitarian crisis.

- Feb 22** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Donald Trump's border wall could cut through your backyard*.
- Apr 12** Ranking Member Grijalva and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly; Kevin McAleenan, acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); and CBP as a whole seeking a court order for a supplemental programmatic environmental impact statement for the U.S.-Mexico border enforcement program. If successful, the suit will force a federal assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of the impacts of the entire program, which – in addition to the Trump administration's proposed border wall – includes regional road construction, off-road vehicle patrols, installation of high-intensity lighting, construction of federal agency base camps and checkpoints, and other activities.

May 7 Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Why I sued to stop Trump's bogus border wall plan*.

Oct 12 The ranking members of six House committees sent a letter to their Republican counterparts and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan urging them to allow H.R. 3548 – the Republican bill authorizing the costly, destructive expansion of the border wall – to be considered for amendment in each of their respective committees before the bill goes to the full House for consideration.

Republicans Prioritizing Corporate Special Interests Over Clean Energy, Climate Change Concerns, and Healthy Communities

Republicans continue to push their “oil above all” agenda which favors the oil and gas industry’s interests ahead of all other uses of our public lands. The Trump administration, with the help of Republicans in Congress, have been working at lightning speed to grant every wish of the fossil fuel industry and roll back common-sense health, safety, and environmental protections while removing all drilling and digging restrictions on public lands. Democrats believe that by giving exclusive rights to big oil and gas companies, they are restricting public access for millions of Americans who want to hike, hunt or fish. In addition, with coal communities throughout the country on the decline, Democrats on the Committee have been focusing on ensuring miners have long-term safeguards in place to protect the mining community if the industry collapses.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) Provision in the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” (H.R. 1)

aka “Tax Scam on Americans Act”

President Trump and Congressional Republicans rammed through a deeply corrupt tax scam to enrich themselves and their donors, while raising taxes on millions of Americans - all without a single hearing. The bill will have devastating consequences on American families while opening Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling and other energy development, lifting a 40-year-ban on development in the area. **[Passed the House without a single Democratic vote and signed into law by President Trump]**

- July 18** Ranking Member Grijalva highlighted the many clear Republican misstatements on oil and gas policy since Trump took office.
- July 19** Ranking Member Grijalva questioned Republican estimates of revenue generated by opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, and touted clean alternative energy development as a more popular and more economically viable option.
- Dec 7** Ranking Member Grijalva, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) and Alan S. Lowenthal (D-Calif.) sent a letter to the Congressional Budget Office requesting a reassessment of the cost estimate for the provisions in the bill that would open ANWR to oil and gas leasing.

“SECURE American Energy Act” (H.R. 4239)

aka “Oil and Gas Giveaway Act”

The bill allows for major oil and gas leasing decisions to be handed to state agencies that may have inadequate staffing or expertise in federal environmental policy; threatens to eliminate public input for oil and gas decisions on public lands; and redistributes oil and gas revenue among states in a way that creates the very winners and losers Republicans claim to oppose, among other measures. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

BILL **“Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act” or “SEDRA Act” (H.R. 4426):** In response to the Republican energy bill, Ranking Member Grijalva introduced the SEDRA Act with 16 House Democratic cosponsors, which aims to protect the Arctic Refuge, allows energy development to co-exist with, rather than dominate, other uses of federal lands, and ensure a fairer return for taxpayers for the extraction of resources on public property. **[Hearing request refused]**

The Stream Protection Rule (H.J. Res. 38) and the Methane Waste Prevention Rule (H.J. Res. 36)

In an attempt to overturn Obama-era regulations that protect human health and taxpayer dollars, Committee Republicans used Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions of disapproval to repeal critical public health and safety protections. One of Congress’ very first acts was to repeal two Obama-era rules, one that restricts coal companies from dumping mining debris in streams and a second that prohibits methane waste on public lands. Despite requests for fair hearings on the bills, Congress voted to repeal the Stream Protection Rule and Methane Waste Rule. Although the Methane Rule CRA did not pass the Senate, Trump signed the repeal of the Stream Protection Rule into law.

Jan 9 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Chairman Bishop requesting a hearing on the effectiveness of the Stream Protection Rule and Methane Waste Prevention Rule before the Republican majority votes for the CRA bills on the House floor. Grijalva never received a response.

Jan 9 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a “Dear Colleague” letter to the entire House Democratic Caucus, urging a united front against House Republican leaders’ plan to eliminate the two environmental standards.

Feb 1 Ranking Member Grijalva held a public forum on “The Health, Environmental, and Economic Risks of the Republican Campaign to Repeal the Bureau of Land Management’s Methane Waste Rule.”

Feb 23 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to the Department of the Interior (DOI), asking why their recent blog post falsely claims the cancellation of the Stream Protection Rule would prevent the loss of 7,000 “clean coal” jobs, when previous DOI estimates had shown the rule would actually add 156 jobs to the workforce. A few days later, DOI removed the false job figure.

“American Soda Ash Competitiveness Act” (H.R. 1399)

aka **“Rob the American Taxpayer of Royalties Act”**

The bill reduces the royalty on soda ash, which is mined only in Wyoming and California, from the current 6 percent to just 2 percent, a move the Congressional Budget Office says will cost approximately \$50 million in lost revenues to taxpayers over five years. In 2011, after a similar five-year royalty cut begun in 2006 expired, the Interior Department reported to Congress that the reduction actually cost approximately \$150 million in royalties and did not significantly contribute to new jobs or increased exports. Soda ash exports grew 13 percent under the lower royalty rate and 18 percent in fiscal years 2012 and 2013, which saw the return of the previous 6 percent royalty rate. The industry consists of four mining companies in Wyoming and one in California. **[Passed in Committee]**

Democratic Actions to Reduce Dirty Energy Resources, Fight Climate Change, and Protect Health

- Jan 25** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *The Keystone pipeline will create just 35 permanent jobs. Don't believe the lies.*
- Feb 28** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter asking the Acting Secretary of the Interior to explain a new rule that allows companies to sell coal at reduced prices to their own subsidiaries, reducing the amount of royalties owed to the American people.
- Feb 28** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to DOI asking for an explanation for the Office of Natural Resources Revenue's (ONRR) decision to stop enforcing a months-old rule that fixed longstanding problems with the valuation of public resources and royalties owed to the public.
- Mar 8** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator, urging him to reissue an Obama-era information request to the oil and gas industry on methane emissions from production operations – a request Pruitt recently canceled one day after receiving a similar request as a favor to industry, despite its importance to climate and air quality.
- Apr 12** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) expressing his deep disappointment in the agency's plans to prioritize leasing and permitting for oil, gas, and coal above all other uses on America's public lands.
- Apr 20** Top Committee Democrats sent a letter to Secretary Zinke, asking him to provide the first set of reports outlined in the Secretarial Order on "American Energy Independence" to all Members of the House Natural Resources Committee.
- May 4** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke pressing him to explain how the Interior Department can "delay" implementation of a rule on the value of federal natural resources that already went into effect.
- June 6** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke pressing for information on Zinke's decision to delay the upcoming meeting of the U.S. advisory committee for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international framework on fighting corruption and increasing transparency in the extractive industries sector.
- July 5** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Dear Secretary Zinke: Being a good neighbor is NOT "un-American."*
- July 6** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke pressing him to explain how "energy dominance" – the administration's name for its vision of heavy corporate favoritism on energy and environmental issues – can be turned into realistic policy given the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to manage public lands "on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield."
- Aug 25** Ranking Member Grijalva and House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.) sent a letter with several colleagues to Secretary Zinke urging him to allow the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NAS) to resume an ongoing study of the health impacts of mountaintop removal mining.

- Sept 6** Ranking Member Grijalva and Subcommittee Ranking Member Lowenthal sent a letter to Secretary Zinke decrying his appointment of a partisan, industry-dominated Royalty Policy Committee (RPC) to make recommendations on federal oil and gas royalty policy. No states with Democratic governors were given primary representation on the new panel, and no public interest groups are represented.
- Oct 17** Ranking Member Grijalva called on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to explain the fate of approximately \$400,000 in funding for a recently canceled study on the public health impacts of mountaintop removal mining, a destructive coal extraction process known to harm residents of Appalachian states.
- Nov 16** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *A Democratic Approach to Energy: Promote the Interests of Citizens, not Industry*.
- Nov 21** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers asking for a full Environmental Impact Statement for the construction and operation of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline project.

Republican Attacks on Wildlife

Republicans in Congress have been actively working to gut bedrock environmental laws that protect endangered and threatened species. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is America's firewall against mass extinction - it ensures that land development and other activities are conducted in a way that protects imperiled species and the habitat they need to survive and recover. Even though 99 percent of the species that receive ESA protection are still with us today, Republicans want to "reform" the law or get rid of it altogether. More on the ESA can be found [here](#).

"Protecting States' Authority to Manage Fish and Game" (H.J. Res. 69)

aka "Kill Baby Bears and Wolves Act"

House Republicans voted to repeal a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) rule that prohibits the slaughter of Alaskan wolf and bear populations on National Wildlife Refuges using methods widely recognized as inhumane and unsportsmanlike by hunters and the general public. Despite [Democratic opposition](#), Trump signed the bill into law. **[Signed into law, passed in the House with slim Democratic support]**

"Gray Wolf State Management Act of 2017" (H.R. 424)

aka "Endanger Gray Wolves Act"

The bill would block federal ESA protections for gray wolves in the Great Lakes states and Wyoming. Specifically, this bill would overturn a federal district court decision and remove existing ESA protections for gray wolves in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. **[Passed in Committee]**

July 19 Ranking Member Grijalva and famed conservationist Jeff Corwin held a [press conference](#) to highlight the Republican assault on the ESA and wildlife conservation. Corwin also [testified](#) at the hearing on the following bills.

"Listing Reform Act" (H.R. 717)

aka "Gut Protections and Put a Price on Endangered Species Act"

The bill would put a price on species conservation by enabling the FWS to determine that a species that would normally be listed as threatened would not receive protections if there are negative economic impacts associated with the listing. It would also completely gut the citizen petition process for listing species by removing all the deadlines that have historically allowed citizens to have their petitions ruled on in a timely fashion. **[Passed in Committee with slim Democratic support]**

"State, Tribal and Local Species Transparency and Recovery Act" (H.R. 1274)

aka "Undermine Sound Science in Protecting Species Act"

The bill would subvert the ESA's science-based listing process by allowing any information provided by states, tribes, or counties to constitute "best available science." H.R. 1274 would direct the federal government to utilize state and local data in its listing decisions, regardless of whether the data is based in science. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

“Saving America’s Endangered Species Act” (H.R. 2603)

aka “Endanger Foreign Species Act”

The bill would eliminate ESA permitting requirements for breeding and transporting exotic animals in the U.S., even if those species are on the brink of extinction. H.R. 2603 would undermine decades of progress toward fighting wildlife trafficking and associated organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

“Endangered Species Litigation Reasonableness Act” (H.R. 3131)

aka “Stop Public Participation in Protecting Species Act”

The bill would undercut citizen engagement and enforcement of the ESA by impeding citizens’ ability to obtain counsel and challenge illegal government actions. H.R. 3131 would render the ESA citizen suit provision, currently used to ensure enforcement of the law, ineffective by restricting citizens’ ability to recover their true litigation costs if they prevail in court. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

“Public Water Supply Invasive Species Compliance Act of 2017” (H.R. 1807)

aka “Allow Illegal Trade of Species Act”

The bill waives the Lacey Act – which prohibits trade in wildlife, fish, and plants that have been illegally taken, possessed, transported, or sold – for certain water transfers between Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana. **[Passed in Committee without a single Democratic vote]**

Democratic Actions to Protect Wildlife

Protecting Endangered Species and Bedrock Environmental Laws

- BILL** “Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act” (H.R. 3894) Ranking Member Grijalva’s bill aims to strengthen conservation standards for grizzly bears and ensure tribal leaders are consulted in all conservation and management efforts. **[Hearing request refused]**
- Mar 15** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *The Endangered Species Act doesn't need "reform."*
- May 18** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke opposing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposal to remove endangered species protections for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bears.
- June 22** Ranking Member Grijalva and several tribal leaders spoke out against the Trump administration’s announcement that it plans to remove Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections from grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

- Oct 2** Ranking Member Grijalva held a press conference to introduce H.R. 3894, the Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act.
- Dec 7** Ranking Member Grijalva released an updated version of a report on trophy hunting and endangered species protection that was initially released in 2016 in response to the tragic killing of Zimbabwe's famed Cecil the Lion.

Republicans' Lack of Leadership and the Democratic Response

Despite having full control of the White House and Congress, Republicans have refused to address crucial issues that need action. This lack of leadership has had grave consequences as we battle natural disasters, sexual harassment, tribal issues, critical funding gaps for conservation programs, corruption, and environmental justice concerns. The following list includes areas Committee Democrats have been focusing on, despite inaction from Committee Republicans.

Puerto Rico's Debt and Humanitarian Crisis

Puerto Rico is in the midst of a financial crisis. Hurricane Maria nearly wiped out the island, leaving many people without access to clean water, medical care or electricity. Democrats are focused on ensuring our fellow Americans living on the island get the help they need to get them back on their feet.

- May 2** Ranking Member Grijalva and Congressional Hispanic Caucus Chairwoman Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) held a public forum on Puerto Rico's fiscal and humanitarian crisis.
- June 16** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) wrote to the Financial Oversight and Management Board of Puerto Rico arguing that the Board should not certify the current Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's (PREPA) Restructuring Support Agreement (RSA), which lawmakers say would benefit wealthy creditors at the expense of the island's residents.
- Sept 28** Committee Democrats sent a letter to Chairman Bishop requesting an oversight hearing on the Trump administration's efforts to address this growing crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).
- Oct 24** Ranking Member Grijalva requested an oversight hearing on the no-bid contract between PREPA and Whitefish Energy Holdings, LLC.

BILL: "To Permanently Reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund" (H.R. 502)

In the more than 50 years since it was first passed with overwhelming support from Republicans and Democrats, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has come to be recognized as America's most important conservation program. **[Hearing request refused]**

- Jan 12** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-Pa.) introduced bipartisan legislation to permanently reauthorize LWCF, America's most important conservation program.
- Feb 13** Ranking Member Grijalva asked Chairman Bishop to hold a hearing on his bipartisan bill to permanently reauthorize LWCF.
- Dec 12** The bipartisan bill reached 218 bipartisan cosponsors, the number needed to pass a bill on the House floor.

Sexual Harassment at National Parks

In response to reports from the Department of the Interior's Office of the Inspector General that it had "found evidence of a long-term pattern of sexual harassment and hostile work environment" in the Grand Canyon's River District, Democrats have been focused on ensuring the administration is taking action that is sufficient to address the problem.

- Oct 13** Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. McEachin requested a congressional hearing on sexual harassment at the National Park Service (NPS) back in June. Ranking Members Grijalva and McEachin followed up with their request when NPS released a survey in which 38 percent of employees reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment.

Republicans Denying Effects of Climate Change

Republicans held multiple hearings that failed to acknowledge climate change as a growing threat. Not one hearing was held to explore the impacts of climate change on our natural resources. For example, Committee Republicans have refused to take into account the impacts our changing climate will have on our water infrastructure. Instead of addressing the need to prepare for climate change impacts, on multiple occasions, Committee Republicans used infrastructure hearings as an opportunity to trample on bedrock environmental laws, like the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and federal land use planning laws by wrongly blaming construction project delays on federal policies. A Congressional Research Service report found that the most likely causes of delay for major infrastructure projects are lack of funding and local and state permitting issues, not NEPA.

Democratic Actions to Fight the Growing Effects of Climate Change

- Jan 24** Ranking Member Grijalva and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) sent a letter to President Trump urging him to remove a notorious climate change denier from his landing team at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- Jan 27** Ranking Member Grijalva requested an oversight hearing on the Trump administration's efforts to suppress information about climate change.
- Jan 31** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Stand Up, Environmentalists — There's More to Fight For Now Than Ever.*
- Feb 22** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Climate Change Tied to Nation's Infrastructure Needs.*
- May 25** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke requesting information on the administration's censoring of a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) press release put out after three USGS scientists and three outside colleagues published new climate change research in the journal Nature Scientific Reports.
- July 13** Ranking Member Grijalva held a public forum titled, "The New Sea Around Us: Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on our Oceans and Coasts."

Federal Oversight and Investigations

Republicans in Congress have failed to hold the Trump administration accountable for their questionable actions. The lack of response from the Committee has pushed Democrats to launch investigations through the Office of Inspector General (IG) and Government Accountability Office (GAO).

- Feb 17** Ranking Member Grijalva asked the GAO to look into the vulnerabilities of BLM's online mineral leasing systems, as well as other financial and operational aspects of the system.
- Mar 30** Committee Ranking Member Grijalva and Subcommittee Ranking Member Lowenthal asked the GAO to review DOI's Office of Natural Resources Revenue compliance program.
- June 30** Ranking Member Grijalva requested a GAO study of the scale of recent threats and attacks on federal land management agency officials and property. The request was part of his ongoing efforts to combat terrorism directed at federal land management agencies, after the Bundy family armed standoff at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.
- July 27** Ranking Member Grijalva and Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Pallone requested a legal opinion from GAO about whether Secretary Zinke misused official funds by threatening Alaska's senators during the health care debate. On Aug. 29, the GAO sent a letter stating that Sens. Murkowski and Sullivan declined to be interviewed.
- July 27** Ranking Members Grijalva and Pallone requested that the Interior's IG investigate whether Secretary Zinke violated laws or standards in contacting Sen. Lisa Murkowski to threaten the state of Alaska over her vote against destroying the Affordable Care Act. On Aug. 3, the Ranking Members received a letter from the Interior Department IG confirming a preliminary investigation. On Aug. 29, the IG sent a letter stating that Sens. Murkowski and Sullivan declined to be interviewed, which prevented the investigation from proceeding.
- Sept 18** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke requesting a copy of the plan to execute an unprecedented reorganization of DOI after DOI rescinded the recently finalized 100-year plan for NPS.
- Sept 21** Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter on the sentencing hearing for Carlos Rafael, the leader of a notorious illegal fishing operation that has badly damaged the New England fishing economy, to the Department of Commerce IG urging renewed attention to his case and an investigation of whether federal conflicts of interest allowed his scheme to continue after his wrongdoing first came to light.
- Oct 12** Ranking Member Grijalva asked the IG to look into Secretary Zinke's use of taxpayer funds for personal or political travel.
- Oct 19** Ranking Member Grijalva requested a GAO investigation of how much public revenue may have been lost due to changes in the way DOI leases parcels for oil extraction in the Gulf of Mexico. The request comes shortly after DOI increased the size and frequency of its lease sales as part of the 2017-2022 oil and gas leasing program.

Oct 27 Ranking Member Grijalva and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR) sent a letter to U.S. Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (IG) John Roth requesting a comprehensive audit and investigation of a \$300 million no-bid contract between the Puerto Rico Electric Power Association (PREPA) and Whitefish Energy Holdings, LLC.

Requiring Justifications for the Department of the Interior's Proposed Budget

The Trump administration's FY18 budget proposed to cut approximately \$400 million from national parks funding, approximately \$370 million from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and \$163 million from the U.S. Geological Survey, among other dramatic cuts. Democrats on the Committee continue to press Secretary Zinke for an explanation on the deep budget cuts.

Mar 22 Democrats outlined the real-world impacts of budget cuts across DOI. Ranking Member Grijalva also sent a letter to Chairman Bishop urging him to call a hearing for Secretary Zinke to testify on the future of the Interior Department, in light of the Trump administration's proposed 12 percent budget cut, and on other issues Zinke has yet to address. He followed up by outlining Secretary Zinke's failed attempts to provide a balanced budget.

June 20 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Chairman Bishop urging a hearing for Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to testify on the Trump administration's proposed fiscal year 2018 budget for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In line with the drastic cuts proposed across natural resources, environmental and science agencies, the administration's budget reduces NOAA funding by 17 percent compared to the FY17 continuing resolution level.

Demands for Transparency

The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress have been actively working to hide information from the public.

Feb 1 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to NOAA's Acting Administrator on the impact of President Trump's hiring freeze at all executive agencies.

Feb 7 The Republican majority on the House Committee on Natural Resources voted down a Democratic proposal to require that hearing witnesses working for the Trump administration disclose financial conflicts of interest before appearing to testify.

Mar 29 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke urging him to reverse a DOI policy of blocking communication between Democratic Congressional staff and the Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs about hearings before the Committee where administration witnesses are not testifying.

- May 2** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. Donald McEachin (D-Va.) sent a pair of letters to Secretary Zinke pressing him for clarification on a recently announced DOI “task force” charged with abolishing DOI regulations and on the role of Acting Deputy Secretary of the Interior James Cason in the awarding of grants and in policy decision-making, which seems to have greatly expanded in recent days. The letters represent Democrats’ latest efforts to increase transparency at the Department, which has faced increasing criticism and media scrutiny for its lack of public engagement under the Trump administration.
- June 29** Ranking Member Grijalva and Rep. McEachin sent a letter to President Trump urging him to appoint an inspector general (IG) at DOI, which has gone more than eight years without a full appointee in the position.
- Sept 18** Ranking Member Grijalva requested that Secretary Zinke provide a copy of DOI’s reorganization plan.
- Dec 7** Ranking Member Grijalva called out Secretary Zinke’s efforts to drastically reorganize DOI without Congressional or public support. Secretary Zinke has been vocal about his plans to shift more department resources and personnel from Washington, D.C. to field offices across the country, but has not shared the scope and details of his plans.
- Dec 19** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled, *Stop trying to militarize Interior, Ryan Zinke*.

Native American Rights

Committee Republicans have aimed to strip away rights from Native American tribes. Republicans have held hearings without input from Native American voices. For example, Committee Republicans failed to invite any Native American witnesses to the hearing on the federal tribal recognition process, and tried to pass a bill that would make Congress the sole arbiter of tribal recognition.

- Jan 24** Ranking Member Grijalva and Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) sent a letter to Speaker Ryan highlighting the damage to Indian Country should Republicans repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and urged the majority to reconsider its plan to eliminate the law.
- Feb 2** Ranking Member Grijalva published an op-ed titled *Making America Sick Again: What a Repeal of the Affordable Care Act Could Mean in Indian Country Today*.
- Feb 2** Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Committee on Natural Resources Democrats sent a letter to President Trump blasting the administration’s approval of a final easement to build the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and the administration’s failure to undertake meaningful consultation with Native American tribes.
- Mar 7** Democrats on the House Committee on Natural Resources called on Chairman Bishop to hold a full Committee hearing on the effects that an Affordable Care Act repeal would have on tribal health and communities.
- June 15** Ranking Member Grijalva introduced the Save Oak Flat Act, which repeals an unjustified congressional giveaway of sacred Native American land to a mining company called Resolution Copper, which is co-owned by multinational mining conglomerates Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

BILL **“Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act” (H.R. 1404)** Ranking Member Grijalva introduced this bill, which conveys 39.65 acres of land to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona as part of an agreement between the Tuscon Unified School District No. 1, the US Interior Department, and the tribe. **[Passed the House in July]**

Environmental Justice and NEPA

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is an important environmental justice statute that gives all Americans a voice in matters where the federal government could potentially allow the pollution of communities’ air, water or land.

Sept 8 Ranking Member Grijalva sent a letter to Secretary Zinke requesting information about the Secretarial Order to “streamline” the NEPA implementation and review process.

Conclusion

Committee Republicans, with support from the Trump administration, have focused their efforts on trying to destroy President Obama’s robust environmental legacy instead of promoting an agenda that moves our country forward. The 2017 Republican Committee report is not a list of accomplishments; rather it is a list of relentless attacks against our country’s foundational environmental laws and public places. These so-called accomplishments threaten our public lands, waters, clean energy supply, and the health and safety of our communities. Republicans have stopped at nothing to move in a partisan fashion to advance an extreme agenda that does not represent a majority of the American people. They are not representing our interests; they only represent industry at the expense of the taxpayer’s health and resources.

Ranking Member Grijalva, along with Democrats in Congress, on the other hand, have spent 2017 challenging the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress through letters to Administration officials, calling for Congressional hearings, requesting GAO and IG investigations, writing op-eds, and informing the public through traditional media and social media channels about the anti-environment actions being taken. In addition, Ranking Member Grijalva has shown proactive leadership by introducing several bipartisan pieces of legislation, and holding Democratic forums and press conferences to ensure local communities still have a voice in the legislative process.

The resistance to the Republican environmental destruction agenda continues. Democrats are dedicated to the fight and will continue to challenge the Trump administration – and its allies in Washington – every step of the way.