

## **CHAIR GRIJALVA OPENING STATEMENT**

I'd like to thank my colleagues on both sides for being here today. I know you don't have a choice, but as my friend Rep. Bishop knows very well, a full room makes you feel nice and important up here in the big chair.

Those of you who know me know I grew up on a ranch in southern Arizona. My father was a bracero. I learned about the outdoors from my father and his friends. He worked hard, and I saw him come home every day after working hard. I'm not big on speeches. Those of you who know me know I like to get down to work.

But that's all over now, and you're going to have to indulge me for a moment.

I've served on this Committee since the day I got to Congress in 2003. For several terms I was the top Democrat at the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, where Mr. Bishop and I spent many happy years together. Those issues are very near and dear to me, and it means a lot to know they're in good hands.

And speaking of transitions. . . when I was ranking member for the past four years, I didn't always agree with Chairman Bishop. I made my disagreement known once or twice. But he treated me fairly. He treated Democrats fairly. And I'd like to take a moment to thank Mr. Bishop for his service and for his collegiality over the years. I look forward to working with him, and with all of you. He's said this is his last term in Congress, and while maybe not everyone here will believe

me, I'm going to miss him. I think we all will. I'm still looking forward to his 2019 line of summer suits. It won't be quite the same place without him.

But okay. We're here for some business, so . . . let's see how long the good vibes last. As some of you may have noticed, it's a new day on this Committee. This Committee acknowledges climate change. We acknowledge what it's doing to our country, what it's doing to our communities, our public lands, our natural resources and our economy. We're not here to sweep the problem under the rug, and we're not here to give polluting industries any cover. We're here to listen to the people whose lives have been changed. We're here to listen to the scientists who understand what's happening. And we're here to work on solutions.

That starts with taking an honest look at the Trump administration. For the past two years, political appointees at the Interior Department and elsewhere have attacked environmental laws, spent public money doing favors for polluting industries, and put fossil fuel lobbyists in charge of environmental laws. All this despite years of stronger hurricanes, more intense droughts, rising sea levels, and more out-of-control wildfires. Those aren't just accidents. They're destroying lives. They're destroying habitats. They're destroying landscapes. They're destroying communities. This is the greatest threat of our lifetimes. As I said a minute ago, we're here to work on solutions.

We're also here to hold administration officials accountable. The Trump administration is obsessed with trying to wipe out the environmental progress made during the Obama administration. Government has to be about more than that. It has to be about more than the president's petty need

for bragging rights. It has to be about leaving this planet better than we found it. We can't do that if we pretend that what's good for fossil fuel lobbyists is good for everyone.

We can only do that when our laws and standards are based on the best science. We can only do that when the public has a meaningful role in environmental decisions. We can only do that when all stakeholders have a voice – including minority, low-income, rural, tribal, and indigenous stakeholders. Those communities are the backbone of this country, and the days of forgetting them and ignoring them are over. The United States and the U.S. territories are home to far too many marginalized communities. On this Committee, they will be heard.

I know that my colleagues here value our country's natural, cultural and historic resources as much as I do. I look forward to working with you all to protect those resources.