

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

March 22, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

It is imperative that you invite Interior Secretary Zinke to appear before our Committee as soon as possible.

Despite the Secretary's statement that he would fight efforts to slash Interior's funding, President Trump's Fiscal Year 2018 request proposes to cut the Department's budget by \$1.5 billion, a twelve percent decrease from the 2017 annualized Continuing Resolution level. Given the lack of detail provided in the President's proposal, it is critical that Secretary Zinke appear before the Committee to explain how the Department plans to fulfill its responsibilities to manage our National Parks and other federal lands, oceans, endangered wildlife, cultural resources, and honor the federal government's trust responsibilities to Native American Tribes using \$1.5 billion less in funding.

The Secretary needs to provide critical information on topics in addition to budgetary matters.

- On February 2nd, Water, Power, and Oceans Subcommittee Ranking Member Huffman and I wrote President Trump seeking clarification regarding how the National Marine Fisheries Service would be able to issue the regulations needed to manage federal fisheries given the requirement that any new regulation requires revocation of two existing regulations.
- On February 23rd, I joined several California Members, including Senator Feinstein, in writing Acting Secretary Haugrud urging the Department to ensure a federal environmental review of the Cadiz water mining project.
- Also on the 23rd, I sent Acting Secretary Haugrud a series of questions regarding widely discredited job loss figures that were nevertheless appearing on the Department's website regarding the Stream Protection Rule.

- On February 28th, I wrote Acting Secretary Haugrud seeking information regarding the Department's decision to attempt to postpone the effective date of the Consolidated Federal Oil and Gas and Federal and Indian Coal Valuation Reform Rule.
- On March 8th, I wrote Secretary Zinke asking him to clarify whether he believes the Antiquities Act grants President Trump the authority to overturn an existing national monument designation.

These are critical issues facing the Department of the Interior. To date, we have not received a response to any of this correspondence.

As Ranking Member of this Committee, I began seeking a meeting with Secretary Zinke on January 5th; I have received no response to my weekly requests.

A period of adjustment at the dawn of a new Administration is to be expected. Months of deliberate silence on each and every significant issue facing the Department is not. A sustained refusal to even acknowledge inquiries from the Congress is not.

As a former member of this Committee, the Secretary understands that open and transparent communication with Congress is essential to good government. It is crucial that the American people understand how the Department will achieve its core missions with limited funding, as well as the science and policy underpinning the Department's public pronouncements.

I look forward to your response, and I hope we can invite the Secretary to discuss these important matters in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources