

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

August 4, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The leadership you are providing in advancing significant, bipartisan infrastructure legislation has been critical to our success so far and will be part of a lasting legacy that lifts people up. Building on this progress, it is now time for Congress and the administration to work together for significant investments in the American people through budget reconciliation.

Early indications are that vital funding for the Department of the Interior (DOI) may be left out of these efforts. We write to express our concern and to ask for your help in meeting this need.

We cannot claim to be taking climate change seriously if our budget does not invest in Interior Department programs aimed at mitigation and resiliency. Likewise, a failure to allocate significant funding for consultation and permitting programs at Interior will undermine our pledge to seek environmental justice and support the rights of Native Americans. And in the midst of one of the most severe droughts in our history, a lack of funding to immediately address water shortages would be a harmful omission.

It is imperative that reconciliation legislation include the following, all of which are DOI programs:

- Significant funding for permitting and consultation with impacted communities so that projects conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and other critical programs can move forward effectively and efficiently.
- Funding for programs to restore habitat, conserve species, create jobs, and ensure climate resiliency.
- At least \$1 billion for hospital repairs and new construction for Americans living in U.S. insular areas.
- Funding for new tribal water settlements and other western water needs.
- Increased funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- Funding for a new program authorized in the infrastructure package to begin to clean up the toxic legacy of hardrock mining on public lands.
- Significant resources for fire management on public lands managed by DOI.
- Funding to restore DOI-managed lands degraded by the impacts of the climate crisis.

We are well aware that the final budget must have limits. However, we respectfully advise that an appropriately balanced deal must not omit significant resources for an entire cabinet department.

It is our understanding that our Senate colleagues support inclusion of DOI funding in the reconciliation process. We stand ready to work with you, Secretary Haaland, and other allies to secure the funding necessary to make good on our promises to respond to the climate crisis, respect indigenous communities, and come to the aid of Americans struggling through drought.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources



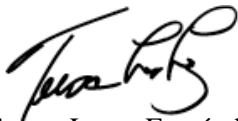
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources



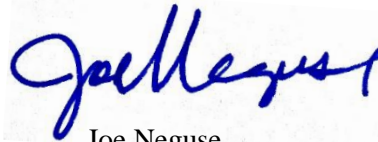
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Vice Chair  
Insular Affairs



Alan S. Lowenthal  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources



Teresa Leger Fernández  
Chair  
Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the  
United States



Joe Neguse  
Chair  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and  
Public Lands



Katie Porter  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



Jared Huffman  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and  
Wildlife

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate