



**NATURAL
RESOURCES**
COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

UNMASKED

How Republicans Trick Taxpayers and Treat Industry

Throughout the 115th Congress, Natural Resources Committee Republicans have stacked hearings with industry interests

Congressional hearings help Members of Congress collect information from expert witnesses to guide their decisions. In the U.S. House of Representatives, hearings take two forms: legislative and oversight. Legislative hearings inform the drafting, discussion of, and amendments to forthcoming legislation. Oversight hearings typically explore waste, fraud, or abuse in the executive branch.

In the House Committee on Natural Resources, hearings help decide how public land and water agencies—the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—should manage our nation’s prized natural resources. Management of natural resources involves multiple parties, including government, conservation organizations, recreation interests, and industry (e.g., oil and gas drilling, mining, or timber). Committee hearings should therefore include representatives of all these different interests.

The majority party has the authority to invite most of the witnesses who testify at committee hearings. The breakdown of the witnesses’ organizations provides a window into the priorities of the majority and the constituencies they put first.

Under Republican leadership, hearings have disproportionately included witnesses who pad their profits by degrading our public lands.

Minority committee staff conducted an analysis of all 567 hearing witnesses who testified before the Committee on Natural Resources in the 115th Congress (2017-2018) through October 2018. Staff categorized witnesses based on the primary affiliation provided on their witness disclosure. The methodology, category definitions, and aggregate data are provided in the Appendix. Findings about Republican-invited witnesses are shown on the pages that follow.

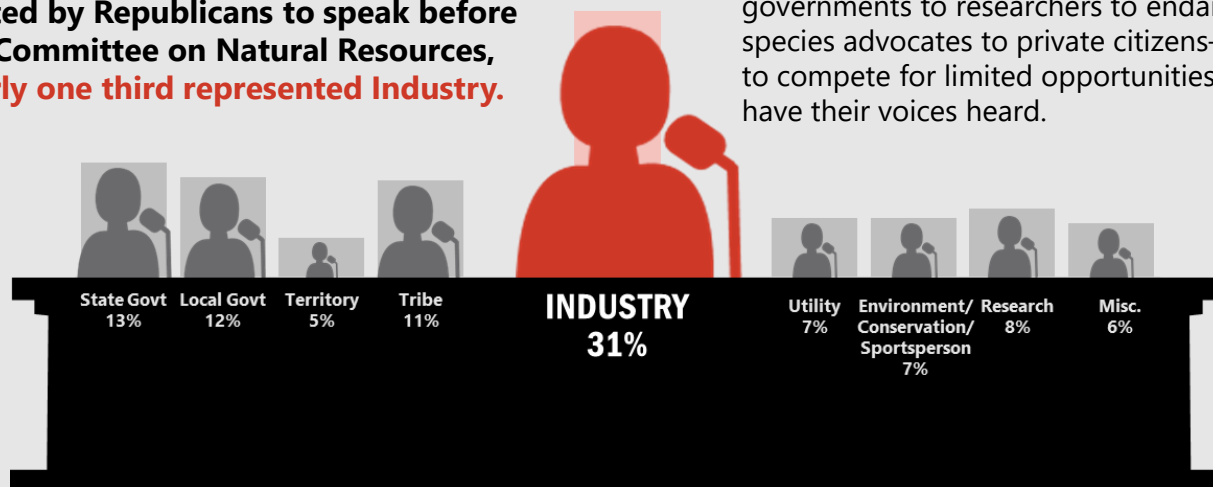
NOTE: This analysis was conducted by Democratic staff of the House Committee on Natural Resources. It has not been officially adopted by the Committee and may not necessarily reflect the views of its members.

Released: October 31, 2018

Republicans' Hearing Witnesses in the 115th Congress

Among the 301 non-federal witnesses* invited by Republicans to speak before the Committee on Natural Resources, nearly one third represented Industry.

Everyone else—from state and local governments to researchers to endangered species advocates to private citizens—had to compete for limited opportunities to have their voices heard.

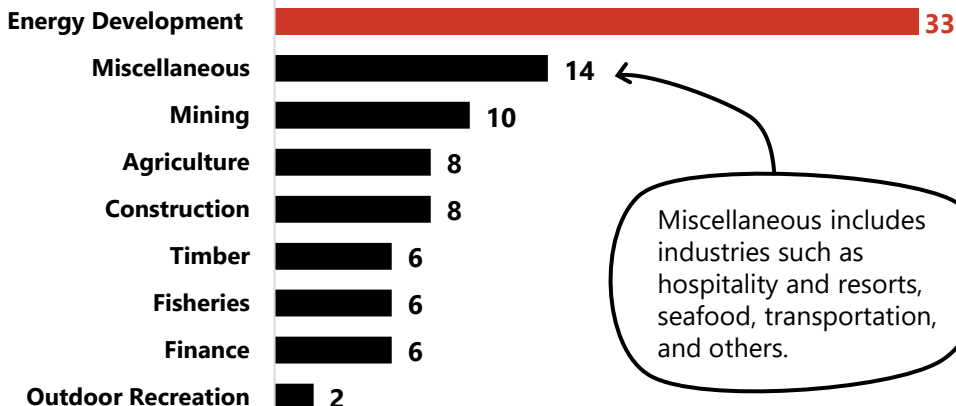


*Excludes witnesses who testified as a member of Congress or on behalf of the federal government.

Which Industries did Republicans invite?

Republicans invited witnesses from a variety of industries that make money off of the use or extraction of our natural resources.

The most frequently invited witnesses were representatives of the **Energy Development** industry.

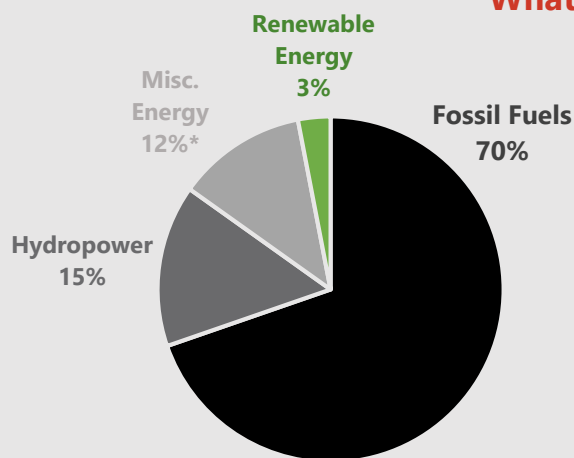


Miscellaneous includes industries such as hospitality and resorts, seafood, transportation, and others.

What types of Energy Development witnesses testified?

More than two-thirds of Republicans' 33 Energy Development witnesses represented **Fossil Fuels**, including oil, gas, and coal.

Republicans only invited a single witness from a **Renewable Energy** organization—a representative from a geothermal energy development company. No one from the solar power industry was invited. Republicans invited two witnesses to speak about offshore wind power, but they both came from companies that primarily represent offshore oil and gas development. As we face increasing risks from climate change, the failure to invite clean energy experts is indefensible.



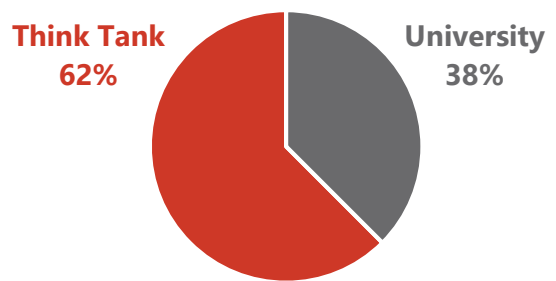
*Misc. Energy includes witnesses from groups that work on more than one type of energy development.

In another nod to industry, **Republicans relied heavily on witnesses from Think Tanks**, rather than **Universities**, as a source of knowledge on natural resources issues.

A particular favorite of Republicans was The Heritage Foundation, a starkly conservative think tank that is largely funded by organizations tied to the Koch Brothers and others.* **Heritage testified more frequently than any other organization or individual.**

*Source: www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Heritage_Foundation

Republicans' Witnesses from Research-based Organizations (n=24)

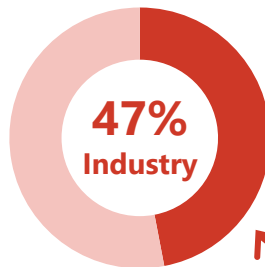


A Closer Look at Witnesses in Each Subcommittee

There are five subcommittees in the Committee on Natural Resources. Four of the subcommittees are responsible for legislation and oversight of a specific set of natural resources issues. The fifth subcommittee is primarily responsible for conducting oversight of and investigations into the federal agencies within the committee's jurisdiction. Information about witnesses specific to each subcommittee's hearings is shown below.

Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee

Among 83 non-federal witnesses, **nearly half were from Industry**, more than any other subcommittee. Most of these Industry representatives came from Fossil Fuels or Mining. These witnesses highlight Republicans' preoccupation with securing short-term financial gains for a few rather than protecting our unique natural heritage for future generations.



Fossil Fuels 16 witnesses	Mining 9 witnesses
Misc. Energy 4 witnesses	Construction 4 witnesses
	Finance 1 witness
Renewables 1 witness	Miscellaneous 4 witnesses

Federal Lands Subcommittee

Hearings in the Federal Lands subcommittee had the smallest percentage of non-federal witnesses from Industry (20%). However, **one-third of those Industry witnesses came from Timber**. Notably, Republicans invited Timber industry representatives to the two subcommittee oversight hearings on wildfire risk and prevention despite the clear conflict of interest.



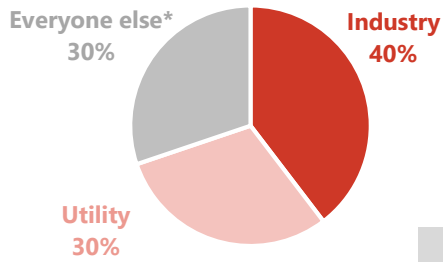
Federal Lands wildfire hearings featuring the Timber industry:

"Seeking Better Management of America's Overgrown, Fire-Prone National Forests"
(May 17, 2017)

"Burdensome Litigation and Federal Bureaucratic Roadblocks to Manage our Nation's Overgrown, Fire-Prone National Forests"
(June 8, 2017)

Water, Power, and Oceans Subcommittee

Republicans' Non-Federal Witnesses in the Water, Power, and Oceans Subcommittee (n=53)



The majority of witnesses in this subcommittee represented **Industry or a Utility** (e.g., water districts, power agencies). Both Industry and Utilities have a financial interest in extracting and/or selling public water resources. Similar to the Energy and Mineral Resources subcommittee, Republicans' choice of witnesses shows that they are more focused on using up resources than serving the millions of Americans who depend on healthy ecosystems that are being threatened by excessive water withdrawal.

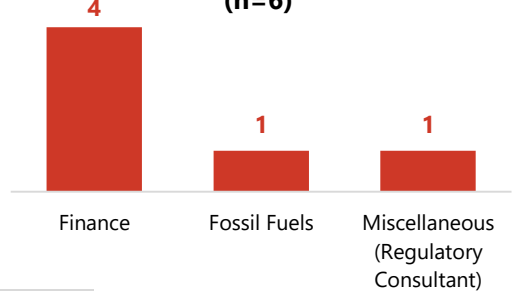
*Includes State/Local Govt, Tribes, Territories, Environmental/Conservation/Sportsperson, Research, and Misc.

Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee

The Committee has jurisdiction over issues related to U.S. tribes and territories. Both the Puerto Rico debt crisis and Hurricane Maria disaster recovery efforts fall within these bounds.

Despite the humanitarian crisis caused by the cumulative effects of the debt crisis and the hurricane, **Republicans failed to invite any disaster recovery, health care, or community development experts to any of the four hearings on Puerto Rico.** Instead, they primarily invited witnesses with a vested interest in the island's debt, showing that their allegiance to bondholders supersedes economic recovery, public health, and safety.

Republicans' Non-Government Witnesses at Puerto Rico Hearings (n=6)



Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee

The Oversight & Investigations subcommittee is responsible for overseeing federal agencies in the Committee's jurisdiction, including the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. However, of the 20 Republican-invited witnesses who testified at the subcommittee's seven hearings, **only one person was from a Federal Agency.** Federal oversight is difficult to accomplish when the relevant agencies aren't at the table. The subcommittee shouldn't be a shield to protect an administration with unprecedented levels of corruption from answering questions from Congress.



What would Natural Resources Democrats do differently?

Natural Resources Democrats recognize that Industry representatives provide a unique perspective in understanding how to best manage our public lands and waters. However, they are only one piece of a large and complex puzzle. Academic researchers, policy and legal experts, conservation and cultural resources experts, climate change scientists, sportsperson's groups, and individuals whose lives are affected by public lands decisions must also have an equally large seat at the witness table.

Natural Resources Democrats also recognize that Industry is made up of more than just dirty energy developers. As we face a changing climate and the profound challenges it brings, we must hear from clean energy experts and other industry innovators so we can explore how to sustainably benefit from our natural resources while still protecting their immeasurable value and worth for generations to come.

Appendix

I. Methodology

Committee staff conducted analyses on all witnesses who were invited to testify and who provided written and oral testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources during the 115th Congress (January 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018). Initial data for each witness were obtained from the House Committee on Natural Resources website (naturalresources.house.gov). Initial data included Hearing Date, Hearing Name, Subcommittee or Full Committee, Name, Organization Name, Title, and City/State.

Committee staff categorized hearing witnesses based on witnesses' titles and organization names only; former employment and financial holdings were not considered. Witness categories were defined using an inductive and iterative process. If a witness provided more than one affiliated organization, he or she was categorized based on the organization that was listed first. If a witness listed former employment only, he or she was considered to represent him/herself, with the exception of Congress. To reduce the potential for bias, staff categorized all witnesses prior to determining whether each witness was invited by the Republican or Democratic committee members.

After completing the initial categorization, witness data and categories were given to subcommittee staff leads to validate witnesses' assigned categories. Subcommittee staff leads also provided determination as to whether each witness was invited by Republicans or Democrats. Findings presented in this report are based on Republican-invited witnesses only. All witness data were maintained and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

II. Category Definitions

Each hearing witness was assigned to one of the following categories:

Congress

A current or former member of Congress.

Federal Government

A current employee of a federal agency or office therein, including federal power administrations (e.g., Bonneville Power Administration).

Organization Examples: Department of the Interior; Government Accountability Office

State Government

An elected official or current employee of a state government or agency.

Organization Examples: Wyoming Governor's Office; Utah Department of Natural Resources

Local Government

An elected official or current employee of a county, city, or other local government.

Organization Examples: Missoula County Commission; City of New Bedford Mayor's Office

Territory

A U.S. territory government official or representative of a U.S. territorial corporation or organization who testified about topics related to that territory. Witnesses in this category were subcategorized into Government or Non-Government.

Organization Examples: Financial Oversight and Management Board of Puerto Rico (Government); Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center (Non-Government)

Tribe

A tribal government official or representative of a tribal corporation or organization who testified about topics related to sovereign tribes or tribal sovereignty. Witnesses in this category were subcategorized into Government or Non-Government.

Organization Examples: Hopi Tribe Chairman (Government); King Cove Native Corporation (Non-Government)

Utility

A current employee or representative of a public or private organization that owns, maintains, and/or manages water or power. Excludes federal power administrations.

Organization Examples: Colorado River District; Southeast Alaska Power Agency

Industry

A current employee or representative of an organization, group, or company that derives revenue from the use or extraction of natural resources. Also includes employees of organizations or groups that represent these industries in legal proceedings or that advocate on behalf of labor in these industries. Witness in this category were subcategorized into Energy Development (Fossil Fuels, Hydropower, Miscellaneous Energy, Renewables), Mining, Timber, Agriculture, Fisheries, Construction, Outdoor Recreation, Finance, and Miscellaneous.

Organization Examples: American Petroleum Institute (Fossil Fuels); Columbia Basin Hydropower (Hydropower); Consumer Energy Alliance (Miscellaneous Energy); U.S. Geothermal Inc. (Renewables); Couer Mining (Mining); American Forest Resource Council (Timber); ZZ Cattle Corporation (Agriculture); Southeastern Fisheries Association (Fisheries); National Association of Home Builders (Construction); Bass Pro Shops (Outdoor Recreation); Pegasus Capital Advisors (Finance); Chico Hot Springs Resort (Miscellaneous)

Environmental/Conservation/Sportsperson

A current employee or representative of an organization or group whose primary mission includes the protection or promotion of wildlife, public lands and waters, monuments and memorials, environmental health, environmental justice, or hunting and angling. Also includes employees of organizations or groups that conduct scientific research in environmental or ecological fields but does not include Think Tanks (see definition below).

Organization Examples: Sierra Club; Mill Springs Battlefield Association; Trout Unlimited

Research - University

A professor or academic professional at a university or university-affiliated research center.

Organization Examples: Colorado School of Mines; Harvard Project on American Indian Development

Research - Think Tank

A current employee or representative of an organization or group that primarily conducts, publishes, and disseminates research on a given topic, often with a policy or advocacy goal. Does not include professors or academic professionals at universities or university-affiliated research centers.

Organization Examples: The Heritage Foundation; Competitive Enterprise Institute

Miscellaneous

An individual or representative of an organization whose affiliation does not qualify him/her to be categorized in one of the groups as defined above.

Organization Examples: Eastmoreland Neighborhood resident; National Border Patrol Council

III. Aggregate Data

	Republican-invited (N=441)	Democrat-invited (N=126)	Total (N=576)
Congress	62	18	80
Federal Government	78	5	83
State Government	40	4	44
Local Government	35	3	38
Territory	14	3	17
Tribe	34	21	55
Utility	21	1	22
Industry	93	15	108
Energy Dev - Fossil Fuels	23	2	25
Energy Dev - Hydropower	5	0	5
Energy Dev - Misc Energy	4	0	4
Energy Dev - Renewables	1	1	2
Mining	10	0	10
Timber	6	0	6
Agriculture	8	0	8
Fisheries	6	3	9
Construction	8	1	9
Outdoor Recreation	2	8	10
Finance	6	0	6
Miscellaneous	14	0	14
Enviro/Cons/Sportsperson	21	29	50
Research - University	9	11	20
Research - Think Tank	15	4	19
Miscellaneous	19	11	30