



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members  
**From:** Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Staff,  
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**Date:** Monday, June 9, 2025  
**Subject:** Oversight Hearing on “*Examining the President’s FY 2026 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior*”

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The Committee on Natural Resources will hold an oversight hearing on “*Examining the President’s FY 2026 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior*” on **Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Sophia Varnasidis ([Sophia.Varnasidis@mail.house.gov](mailto:Sophia.Varnasidis@mail.house.gov)) or Madeline Kelley ([Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov](mailto:Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

**I. KEY MESSAGES**

- House Committee on Natural Resources Republicans are working with the Trump administration to unleash American energy, strengthen domestic mineral supply chains, and promote access to our natural resources.
- Committee Republicans are working to codify President Trump’s vision to unleash American energy in Alaska, revive American seafood competitiveness, and restore names that honor American greatness.
- Committee Republicans are unleashing American energy dominance, ensuring affordable energy and creating jobs across the country.
- With the Trump administration, we are increasing domestic mining activities and lessening America’s dependence on China and foreign adversaries for critical minerals and rare earth elements.
- Committee Republicans are finding ways to reduce government waste by eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse while cutting red tape that prevents innovation and investments in America.
- Republicans are committed to improving access to our beautiful public lands and waters for all Americans to enjoy.

## II. WITNESSES

- **The Hon. Doug Burgum**, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

## III. BACKGROUND

The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages a vast array of resources across the United States and its territories, including over 480 million acres of surface land, 750 million acres of subsurface and mineral estate, and more than 2.5 billion offshore acres.<sup>1</sup> DOI collects revenues from various authorized activities on federal lands, including energy production, mineral extraction, grazing, and timber sales.<sup>2</sup> In 2025, such revenues are projected to total approximately \$20.1 billion.<sup>3</sup> DOI also serves as both the largest supplier and manager of water in seventeen western states.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, DOI-managed resources, which include 41 percent of the country's coal supplies, produce approximately 18 percent of America's energy output. More than 570 million visits are made to DOI lands each year, including trips to national parks, wildlife refuges, and other sites.<sup>5</sup> Finally, DOI is responsible for providing services ranging from education to law enforcement and energy development to federally recognized tribes across the country.

DOI's fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget requests \$14.4 billion, which "supports the establishment of a new centralized U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)."<sup>6</sup> Excluding the new USWFS, DOI's FY 2026 budget request is \$11.9 billion in current authority, or \$11.7 billion in net discretionary authority.<sup>7</sup> DOI's FY 2026 budget also "includes resources to cover fixed-cost increases, such as rent to maintain Interior's core operations carried out by employees living and working in every corner of the country."<sup>8</sup>

Select agency breakdowns follow (note: only main accounts are included, for a full breakdown of the DOI budget, please contact Committee staff):<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Data compiled by Cong. Rsch. Serv. using information from *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf). Amounts include only regular discretionary appropriations. Amounts shown exclude disaster relief supplemental appropriations for FY 2025 appropriations in Division B, Pub. L. No. 118-158; advance appropriations in Division J, Appropriations, of Pub. L. No. 117-58, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act; and mandatory appropriations under authorizing statutes, such as under Pub. L. No. 116-152, the Great American Outdoors Act, which provided mandatory appropriations for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and deferred maintenance of federal land management agencies. Only select accounts are included. For further information, please contact Committee staff.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>FY 2024 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2025 Notional<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>FY 2026 Request</b>	<b>Change From FY 2025 Full-Year CR to FY 2026 Request</b>
<b>Bureau of Land Management (BLM)</b>	\$1.45 billion	\$1.45 billion	\$936.1 million	- \$513.6 million
<b>Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)<sup>11</sup></b>	\$211.2 million	\$211.2 million	\$148.2 million	- \$62.9 million
<b>Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)<sup>12</sup></b>	\$220.4 million	\$220.4 million	\$143.4 million	- \$77.0 million
<b>Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE)</b>	\$278.7 million	\$278.7 million	\$261.7 million	- \$17.0 million
<b>U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)</b>	\$1.46 billion	\$1.45 billion	\$891.6 million	- \$558.6 million
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)</b>	\$1.72 billion	\$1.68 billion	\$1.14 billion	- \$538 million
<b>National Park Service (NPS)</b>	\$3.35 billion	\$3.34 billion	\$2.12 billion	- \$1.22 billion
<b>Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)</b>	\$2.41 billion	\$2.50 billion	\$1.71 billion	- \$781.4 million
<b>Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA)</b>	\$100 million	\$100 million	\$100 million	—
<b>Office of Insular Affairs (OIA)</b>	\$123.6 million	\$123.6 million	\$103.0 million	- \$20.6 million
<b>Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)<sup>13</sup></b>	\$1.87 billion	\$1.87 billion	\$1.27 billion	- \$651 million
<b><u>Table Total<sup>14</sup></u></b>	<b><u>\$13.19 billion</u></b>	<b><u>\$13.21 billion</u></b>	<b><u>\$11.9 billion</u></b>	<b><u>- \$1.31 billion</u></b>

This memo discusses DOI’s FY 2026 proposed budget within the context of four fundamental Republican policy themes: 1) unleashing American energy dominance and securing mineral supply chains; 2) bolstering America’s national security; 3) expanding outdoor access and supporting responsible land management practices; and 4) maximizing government efficiency.

<sup>10</sup> Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025, Pub. L. No. 119-4. DOI’s Budget in Brief states that the FY 2025 appropriations listed in the Budget in Brief are “[n]otional,” and that “[t]he President reserves his authority under the ‘Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025’ (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.”

<sup>11</sup> BOEM appropriations include both discretionary appropriations and offsetting collections derived from a portion of outer continental shelf rental receipts and cost-recovery fees.

<sup>12</sup> BSEE appropriations include both discretionary appropriations and offsetting collections derived from a portion of outer continental shelf rental receipts, cost-recovery fees, and inspection fees.

<sup>13</sup> Reclamation appropriations include both discretionary appropriations and offsetting collections derived from Central Valley Project Restoration Fund receipts.

<sup>14</sup> Totals include only the selected agencies shown in the table, and do not represent overall totals for all agencies and offices funded in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

## *Unleashing American Energy Dominance and Securing Mineral Supply Chains*

*Coal*—On April 8, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order (EO) 14261, “Reinvigorating America’s Beautiful Clean Coal Industry and Amending Executive Order 14241,” which aimed to increase coal production in the U.S.<sup>15</sup> This is the first of many steps to bring domestic coal production back online so that the U.S. can remain an energy superpower. DOI built upon this EO by removing regulatory burdens for coal mining, reopening federal lands for coal leasing, and ending the coal leasing moratorium instituted under the Biden administration.<sup>16</sup> Complementing those efforts, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed multiple provisions regarding coal production on federal lands in its reconciliation title, including providing long-term coal leasing certainty.

*Hardrock Mining* – Secretary Burgum has emphasized the role of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), saying that the agency has “got a job to actually go out and map those resources to find out how many trillions or hundreds of trillions of dollars of assets belong to all of you, the public.” Burgum went on to add, “we’re going to map, baby, map. And then we’re also going to mine, baby, mine.”<sup>17</sup>

Secretary Burgum has been adamant about revamping domestic hardrock mineral production, warning that reliance on China puts the United States in an incredibly precarious position. In a DOI budget hearing before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, the Secretary expressed specific concerns over Chinese restrictions on mineral exports and flooding the market with certain minerals to crush U.S. competition.<sup>18</sup> To combat these concerns, President Trump and Secretary Burgum are taking critical steps to restore American mineral dominance. Contrary to the Biden administration, which approved fewer than five new hardrock mines and restricted development across hundreds of thousands of acres of federal lands, the Trump administration is moving quickly to streamline cumbersome permitting processes and authorize projects vital to US economic and national security.

In the first 100 days of this administration, DOI has approved two mine expansions, greenlit several mineral exploration proposals, secured access roads for existing facilities, and advanced mineral projects across Alaska, Arizona, California, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.<sup>19</sup> In accordance with EO 14241, “Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production,” more than 20 DOI-managed mining projects have also been added to the Permitting

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<sup>15</sup> Executive Order No. 14261, 90 Fed. Reg. 15517 (Apr. 8, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> Clark Mindock, *Judge reinstates Obama-era coal-leasing ban*, REUTERS (Aug. 15, 2022), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/judge-reinstates-obama-era-coal-leasing-ban-2022-08-13/>; *The Department of the Interior Moves to Restore Coal Industry*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/departement-interior-moves-restore-coal-industry>.

<sup>17</sup> Jennifer A. Dlouhy, *Trump’s Energy Czar Has Plan to ‘Map, Baby, Map’ US Oil Bounty*, FINANCIAL POST (Feb 22, 2025), <https://financialpost.com/pmn/business-pmn/trumps-energy-czar-has-plan-to-map-baby-map-us-oil-bounty>.

<sup>18</sup> *A Review of the President’s Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior: Hearing before the Subcomm. on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the Senate Comm. on Appropriations*, 119th Cong. (May 21, 2025), <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2026-budget-request-for-the-department-of-the-interior>.

<sup>19</sup> *First 100 days: BLM drives energy expansion and national strength*, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (Apr. 30, 2025), <https://www.blm.gov/blog/2025-04-30/first-100-days-blm-drives-energy-expansion-and-national-strength>.

Council’s Dashboard as FAST-41 Transparency Projects, ensuring a more efficient permitting process and greater federal accountability.<sup>20</sup>

DOI has led the way in responding to President Trump’s National Energy Emergency declaration<sup>21</sup> by implementing accelerated permitting procedures for domestic mines. On May 23, 2025, DOI completed its first 14-day environmental review under these emergency procedures, greenlighting the Velvet-Wood uranium and vanadium mine in San Juan County, Utah.<sup>22</sup> This is a groundbreaking milestone in shortening U.S. mine development timelines, which currently take an average of 29 years from discovery to production.<sup>23</sup>

*Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Onshore Oil and Gas* – In FY 2024, energy production on federal lands produced over 605 million barrels of oil and roughly 4.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, accounting for over \$8 billion in revenue.<sup>24</sup> BLM oversees oil and gas leasing and production on federal land in accordance with the principles of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).<sup>25</sup> BLM’s regulatory jurisdiction is limited to federal lands, including minerals.

For oil and gas production on federal lands, the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA) explicitly states that “lease sales shall be held for each State where eligible lands are available at least quarterly and more frequently if the Secretary of the Interior determines such sales are necessary.”<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the Biden administration did not hold a lease sale until June 2022, going a full year and a half without one. This lack of leasing not only threatened long-term U.S. energy security but also significantly reduced federal revenues. For example, during President Trump’s first term, BLM held 104 lease sales, comprising roughly 4.2 million acres and bringing in \$1.77 billion.<sup>27</sup> However, the Biden administration held only 32 lease sales, comprising 309,027 acres and bringing in roughly \$345 million.<sup>28</sup>

In his first days in office, President Trump issued EO 14154, “Unleashing American Energy.”<sup>29</sup> To meet the goals of EO 14154, Secretary Burgum directed DOI to restart quarterly onshore oil and gas leasing, which would restore compliance with the MLA’s statutory mandate. In the first quarter of FY 2025, BLM held oil and gas lease sales in Montana, North Dakota, New

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<sup>20</sup> *Mining Sector Projects*, FAST-41 PERMITTING DASHBOARD, [https://www.permits.performance.gov/projects?title=&term\\_node\\_tid\\_depth=All&term\\_node\\_tid\\_depth\\_1=7341&field\\_permitting\\_project\\_adpoint\\_administrative\\_area=All&field\\_project\\_status\\_target\\_id=All&field\\_project\\_category\\_target\\_id=All](https://www.permits.performance.gov/projects?title=&term_node_tid_depth=All&term_node_tid_depth_1=7341&field_permitting_project_adpoint_administrative_area=All&field_project_status_target_id=All&field_project_category_target_id=All).

<sup>21</sup> Executive Order No. 14156, 90 Fed. Reg. 8433 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> *Interior Department approves Utah uranium-vanadium mine to strengthen U.S. mineral security*, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (May 23, 2025), <https://www.blm.gov/press-release/interior-department-approves-utah-uranium-vanadium-mine-strengthen-us-mineral>.

<sup>23</sup> Mohsen Bonakdarpour et al., *Mine development times: The US in perspective*, S&P GLOBAL (June 2024), [https://cdn.ihsmarkit.com/www/pdf/0724/SPGlobal\\_NMA\\_DevelopmentTimesUSinPerspective\\_June\\_2024.pdf](https://cdn.ihsmarkit.com/www/pdf/0724/SPGlobal_NMA_DevelopmentTimesUSinPerspective_June_2024.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> *Natural Resources Revenue Data*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, <https://revenue.data.doi.gov/?tab=tab-revenue>.

<sup>25</sup> Adam Vann, *Energy Production on Federal Lands: Leasing and Authorization*, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (July 19, 2024), <https://crs.gov/Reports/R48130?source=search>.

<sup>26</sup> 30 U.S.C. § 226.

<sup>27</sup> *State Oil and Gas Lease Sales*, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> Executive Order No. 14154, 90 Fed. Reg. 8353 (Jan. 20, 2025).

Mexico, Wyoming, and Nevada, leasing 34 parcels comprising roughly 25,000 acres and exceeding \$39 million in revenue in the first quarter of FY 2025.<sup>30</sup>

Once a lease is secured, BLM requires operators to submit an Application for a Permit to Drill (APD) for each well they plan to drill during exploration or production.<sup>31</sup> Efficiently approving APDs increases near-term production on federal lands, which boosts revenues and supply and, ultimately, drives down energy prices for all Americans. The Biden administration failed to efficiently process APDs, creating unnecessary delays and producing higher energy costs for American families.

To combat this issue, DOI recently announced emergency permitting procedures to accelerate the development of domestic energy resources.<sup>32</sup> These measures are designed to expedite the review and approval of projects related to the identification, leasing, siting, production, transportation, refining, or generation of energy within the United States.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, BLM issued an Instruction Memorandum to increase the lands offered for onshore oil and gas lease sales, decrease leasing timeframes, and ensure that oil and gas lease sales are held per the MLA.<sup>34</sup>

*Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM): Offshore Oil and Gas* – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) manages the development of the nation’s offshore energy and mineral resources. BOEM conducts offshore energy leasing, maintains inventories of oil and gas reserves, approves and issues drilling and production permits, and oversees risk management and financial assurance for energy development.<sup>35</sup>

Under Secretary Burgum, DOI has reaffirmed its commitment to a robust and balanced offshore energy portfolio that supports American energy independence, resource conservation, and responsible development. The Secretary has accomplished this by committing to hold Gulf of America Lease Sale 262 in 2025, rejecting the Biden administration’s decision to defer the sale until 2026.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, Secretary Burgum announced on April 18, 2025, that BOEM is initiating a revision to improve the current 2024 – 2029 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Leasing Program.<sup>37</sup> A revised plan could lead to a new schedule from 2026 through 2030. Labeled by stakeholders as the most restrictive 5-year plan in history, the current program, authored by the Biden administration, offers only three lease sales over 5 years, confined to the central and western Gulf of America. Secretary Burgum has directed BOEM to begin work to

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<sup>30</sup> *Interior’s First Oil and Gas Lease Sales of 2025 Bring in Over \$39 Million*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Mar. 27, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interiors-first-oil-and-gas-lease-sales-2025-bring-over-39-million>.

<sup>31</sup> Adam Vann, *Energy Production on Federal Lands: Leasing and Authorization*, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (July 19, 2024), <https://crs.gov/Reports/R48130?source=search>.

<sup>32</sup> *Department of the Interior Implements Emergency Permitting Procedures to Strengthen Domestic Energy Supply*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/department-interior-implements-emergency-permitting-procedures-strengthen-domestic>.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> *Oil and Gas Leasing – Land Use Planning and Lease Parcel Reviews*, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (May 8, 2025), <https://www.blm.gov/policy/im-2025-028>.

<sup>35</sup> *Our Mission*, BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT, <https://www.boem.gov/about-boem>.

<sup>36</sup> *Department of the Interior announces new 2025 lease sale in the Gulf of America*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, (Apr. 4, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/department-interior-announces-new-2025-lease-sale-gulf-america>.

<sup>37</sup> *Interior announces eleventh National Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leasing program*, U.S. Dept. of the Interior (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-announces-eleventh-national-outer-continental-shelf-oil-and-gas-leasing>.



develop a more comprehensive schedule that better aligns with the nation's economic, energy security, and conservation needs.

In a major policy breakthrough, Secretary Burgum announced updated parameters for downhole commingling in the Gulf of America's Paleogene (Wilcox) reservoirs, increasing the allowable pressure differential from 200 to 1500 pounds per square inch. This modernization, rooted in rigorous technical evaluation and industry engagement, reflects President Trump's EO to Unleash American Energy and could boost offshore production by an estimated 10 percent, or over 100,000 barrels per day, across the next decade.<sup>38</sup> The new guidance ensures responsible, safe extraction, while reducing per-barrel costs, maximizing returns from existing infrastructure, and increasing national energy output without expanding the industrial footprint.

*Advancing Deep-Sea Critical Minerals Exploration* – On April 24, 2025, President Trump issued EO 14285, “Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources.”<sup>39</sup> EO 14285 directs DOI and other agencies to expedite permitting, leasing, and development of seabed mineral resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. Supporting President Trump's strategic vision for critical minerals and supply chain security, Secretary Burgum is advancing plans to hold the first-ever critical minerals lease sale in American Samoa. As its geopolitical rivals dominate, often through exploitative practices,<sup>40</sup> critical minerals extraction, the United States is reclaiming leadership in resource development with high environmental and labor standards. Secretary Burgum's initiative marks a significant step in responsibly developing our offshore mineral wealth while securing materials essential for energy, defense, and manufacturing.

*Accelerating Permitting to Unleash American Energy* – In a bold step toward restoring American energy dominance, Secretary Burgum has issued a sweeping order to expedite National Environmental Policy Act permitting for domestic energy and critical mineral projects. Responding to President Trump's declaration of a National Energy Emergency,<sup>41</sup> DOI has reduced permitting timelines from years to just weeks, accelerating approvals for oil, gas, coal, critical minerals, geothermal, and other essential mineral resources. This decisive action reaffirms Secretary Burgum's commitment to cutting red tape, unleashing American energy, and ensuring that bureaucratic delays no longer stand in the way of national security, economic growth, and energy dominance.<sup>42</sup>

*Renewable Energy* – Under the Biden administration, DOI's preferential treatment of intermittent wind and solar energy projects created unfair advantages compared to other energy sources on federal lands. For example, the Biden administration's BLM final rule titled “Rights-of-Way, Leasing, and Operations for Renewable Energy” granted a base 80 percent reduction in capacity fees to all wind and solar energy projects on federal lands through 2036,<sup>43</sup> effectively setting

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<sup>38</sup> *Interior boosts offshore oil production with new commingling policy*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-boosts-offshore-oil-production-new-commingling-policy>.

<sup>39</sup> Executive Order No. 14285, 90 Fed. Reg. 17735 (Apr. 24, 2025).

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Garrun, *China's appalling mining death rate – dealing with 'disorderly' management*, MINING TECHNOLOGY (Oct. 30, 2012), <https://www.mining-technology.com/features/featurechina-mine-death-rate-coal-safety/?cf-view>.

<sup>41</sup> Executive Order No. 14156, 90 Fed. Reg. 8433 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>42</sup> *Department of the Interior implements emergency permitting procedures to strengthen domestic energy supply*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/department-interior-implements-emergency-permitting-procedures-strengthen-domestic>.

<sup>43</sup> Rights-of-Way, Leasing, and Operations for Renewable Energy, 89 Fed. Reg. 35634 (May 1, 2024) (codified at 43 C.F.R. Part 2800).

rates far lower than those paid by other energy developers, including geothermal plants.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, BLM's final Western Solar Plan prioritized solar energy development on over 31 million acres of public lands across 11 western states.<sup>45</sup> This was heavily criticized by House<sup>46</sup> and Senate Republicans,<sup>47</sup> who argued that the plan would weaken grid resilience, threaten valuable grazing areas, and limit development of mineral and baseload energy resources.

The Trump administration is moving to reverse these actions and ensure a balanced approach to energy development on federal lands. On May 14, 2025, DOI announced its proposed rescission of the Biden administration's renewable energy rule.<sup>48</sup> When finalized, this rescission will end imbalanced rate reductions granted to federal wind and solar projects, ensure greater returns to taxpayers for using public lands, and level the playing field between different energy sources—in line with a true all-of-the-above approach to energy development.

### ***Bolstering America's National Security***

*Addressing the Southern Border Crisis* – Immediately upon taking office, President Trump acted to secure America's southern border and halt the devastating environmental consequences of illegal immigration.<sup>49</sup> On the first day of his second term, President Trump issued four EOs and proclamations that directly addressed America's border crisis: "Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States," "Securing Our Borders," "Guaranteeing the States Protection Against Invasion," and "Protecting the American People Against Invasion."<sup>50</sup> Within the first 100 days of the Trump administration, illegal migrant crossings were down by 99.99 percent, encounters with "getaways" were down by 95 percent, and daily border encounters were down by 93 percent compared to the Biden administration.<sup>51</sup>

Under the Biden administration, the U.S. was in the grips of a catastrophic immigration crisis. Astonishingly, U.S. Customs and Border Protection recorded approximately 8.72 million unauthorized border encounters from fiscal years 2021-2024.<sup>52</sup> The environmental consequences of this crisis were severe, with much devastation occurring along the estimated 693 miles, or

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<sup>44</sup> Memorandum: Markup of Committee Print providing for reconciliation pursuant to H. Con. Res. 14, Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, H. COMM. ON NATURAL RESOURCES (May 4, 2025), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/memo\\_-\\_fc\\_markup\\_of\\_committee\\_print\\_05.06.25.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/memo_-_fc_markup_of_committee_print_05.06.25.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> Bureau of Land Management releases proposed Western Solar Plan, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (Aug. 29, 2024), <https://www.blm.gov/press-release/bureau-land-management-releases-proposed-western-solar-plan>.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Rep. Harriet Hageman et al. to Tracy Stone-Manning (May 15, 2024), [https://westerncaucus.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final\\_western\\_solar\\_plan\\_peis\\_hh\\_letter.pdf](https://westerncaucus.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_western_solar_plan_peis_hh_letter.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Sen. James Risch et al. to Tracy Stone-Manning (May 2, 2024), <https://www.risch.senate.gov/public/cache/files/6/a/6af78775-fe51-4973-b2a3-325f9ce6043e/8C6B045807369C5785A65780979F9273.240502---letter-to-blm-re-western-solar.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Interior to Initiate Action to Rescind BLM's Intermittent Energy Rule, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 14, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-initiate-action-rescind-blms-intermittent-energy-rule>.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Proclamation No. 10886, 90 Fed. Reg. 8327 (Jan. 20, 2025); Executive Order No. 14165, 90 Fed. Reg. 8467 (Jan. 20, 2025); Proclamation No. 10888, 90 Fed. Reg. 8333 (Jan. 20, 2025); Executive Order No. 14159, 90 Fed. Reg. 8443 (Jan. 20, 2025). See also Executive Order No. 14287, 90 Fed. Reg. 18761 (Apr. 28, 2025).

<sup>50</sup> See Proclamation No. 10886, 90 Fed. Reg. 8327 (Jan. 20, 2025); Executive Order No. 14165, 90 Fed. Reg. 8467 (Jan. 20, 2025); Proclamation No. 10888, 90 Fed. Reg. 8333 (Jan. 20, 2025); Executive Order No. 14159, 90 Fed. Reg. 8443 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*; see also Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Declares a National Emergency at the Southern Border, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 22, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/01/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-declares-a-national-emergency-at-the-southern-border/>.



roughly 35 percent, of the U.S.-Mexico border that abuts federal land.<sup>53</sup> There, illegal immigrants left behind mountains of trash, including human waste, medical products, abandoned vehicles, and other refuse. The illegal dumping of trash threatened wildlife, destroyed sensitive habitat, and attracted disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes and flies. Human waste contaminated the drinking water of nearby residents. Illegal trails and wildfires sparked by cross-border violators' campfires contributed to the destruction of wildlife habitat throughout federal borderlands.

Securing the border, reducing illegal immigration, and protecting the environment across federal border lands require a government-wide approach. Recognizing this, DOI's FY 2026 proposed budget commits \$175 billion to fully secure our southern border.<sup>54</sup> This includes investments in enhanced border security and drug enforcement efforts.<sup>55</sup> The budget also highlights the recent emergency withdrawal and transfer of 110,000 acres along the border to the Department of the Army to "safeguard sensitive natural resources" and enable "Department of Defense support to U.S. Border Patrol operations" to prevent illegal immigration.<sup>56</sup> Republicans in Congress look forward to continuing to work with DOI and the Trump administration to keep America's border secure.

*Cartels Targeting Federal Lands and Indian Country* – On the first day of his second term, President Trump issued EO 14157, "Designating Cartels and Other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists," to combat the havoc wreaked by these criminal organization on federal lands, Indian country, and other communities throughout the United States.<sup>57</sup>

Criminal cartels, like the Sinaloa and the Jalisco New Generation cartels, and other criminal organizations, like Tren de Aragua, MS-13, and 18th Street Gang, often target federal lands and Indian country along the southern border—but also as far north as Montana and Wyoming—to expand their criminal enterprises. These areas are targeted due to the higher prices for drugs compared to other parts of the U.S.,<sup>58</sup> the vast expanses of rural and often unpatrolled lands, and ongoing jurisdictional challenges that complicate law enforcement responses.<sup>59</sup> Along the border, the smuggling activities and violence associated with the cartels' presence deprive the public of access to federal lands and cause significant damage to local environments. Dangerous criminal cartels also cultivate illegal marijuana on federal lands to help fund their other illicit activities.<sup>60</sup> In rural Indian country, drugs can be sold for "20 times the price they get in urban centers closer

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<sup>53</sup> The estimate of federal land on the southern border ranges from 632 miles to 820 miles. See *Federal and Indian Lands on the U.S.-Mexico Border*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (Feb. 21, 2018), <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IF10832>.

<sup>54</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bible-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bible-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> See Executive Order No. 14157, 90 Fed. Reg. 8439 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>58</sup> Lisa Cavazuti et al., *Mexican drug cartels are targeting America's 'last best place'*, NBC NEWS (Feb. 10, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-are-targeting-americas-last-great-place-rcna130822>.

<sup>59</sup> *Methamphetamine in Indian Country: An American Problem Uniquely Affecting Indian Country*, The National Congress of American Indians (Nov. 2006), [https://www.justice.gov/archive/tribal/docs/fv\\_tjs/session\\_1/session1\\_presentations/Meth\\_Overview.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/archive/tribal/docs/fv_tjs/session_1/session1_presentations/Meth_Overview.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> Noel King and Eric Westervelt, *Illegal Pot Operations In Public Forests Are Poisoning Wildlife And Water*, NPR (Nov. 12, 2019), <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/773122043>.

to the border.”<sup>61</sup> These high prices contribute to increased crime on Indian reservations, as opioid addicts often turn to dealing drugs themselves or committing other harmful crimes in their communities to support their expensive habits.<sup>62</sup>

Under President Trump, fentanyl trafficking at the southern border fell by 54 percent, as 1,500 kilograms of the drug have been seized.<sup>63</sup> More than 6,000 drug traffickers and 151,000 illegal aliens have been arrested,<sup>64</sup> while more than 135,000 illegal aliens have been deported.<sup>65</sup> These numbers include at least 600 arrested or deported members of Tren De Aragua and thousands of MS-13 and 18th Street Gang members who have fled the United States.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, President Trump’s first 100 days in office have seen a 317 percent increase in cross-jurisdiction partnership agreements to help fight the cartels.<sup>67</sup>

Alongside the \$175 billion pledged to secure the southern border, the FY 2026 proposed budget “re-prioritizes resources” to target illegal firearms and drug traffickers, like MS-13 gang and other cartel members, and preserves federal funding for core programs that benefit tribal communities.<sup>68</sup> The budget proposes a \$10 million *increase* in funds for technical support for U.S.-Mexico public safety border issues, which marks a significant shift in priorities from the previous administration’s proposed \$11 million *decrease* for the same account.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Expanding Outdoor Access and Supporting Responsible Land Management Practices***

President Trump has taken significant steps to roll back the regulatory excesses of the Biden administration that hindered access to our nation’s federal lands, constrained water resources, and frustrated the recovery of federally listed species. The President’s agenda consists of regulatory reforms to tackle those issues and promote greater access for sportsmen and women.

*U.S. Wildland Fire Service* – DOI’s budget requests \$6.55 billion for a new U.S. Wildland Fire Service, which would serve as “an integrated, cost-efficient, and operationally more effective organization that meets unified and coordinated response needs and resource and safety objectives.”<sup>70</sup> Under this new structure, all wildland firefighting responsibilities would be

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<sup>61</sup> Lisa Cavazuti et al., *Mexican drug cartels are targeting America’s ‘last best place’*, NBC NEWS (Feb. 10, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-are-targeting-americas-last-great-place-rcna130822>.

<sup>62</sup> See *Fentanyl in Native Communities: Native Perspective on Addressing the Growing Crisis: Hearing before the Senate Comm. on Indian Affairs, 118th Cong.* (2023) (Statement of Bryce Kirk, Councilman, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation).

<sup>63</sup> *100 Days of The Most Secure Border in American History*, U.S. DEPT. OF HOMELAND SECURITY (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/04/28/100-days-most-secure-border-american-history>.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*

<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> *Id.*

<sup>68</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>; see also *President Trump’s Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Funding Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/President-Trump’s-Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Funding-Request-Overview.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf); *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf); *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary*

transferred from the U.S. Forest Service and individual DOI bureaus into a single, unified structure at DOI. To facilitate this new organization, the budget proposes a substantial increase of more than \$1 billion for fire preparedness and suppression operations and a \$555.6 million increase in fuels management. Across the United States, as of June 6, 2025, more than 1.2 million acres of land have burned in wildfires during year-to-date, while more than 75.5 million acres have burned over the past decade.<sup>71</sup>

Innovative and disruptive proposals, especially those that would reform forest management and wildfire suppression policies, are necessary to address a crisis of this scale. In January of 2025, the House passed H.R. 471, the Fix our Forests Act (FOFA). The comprehensive, bipartisan legislation restores forest health, increases resiliency to catastrophic wildfires, and protects our communities by expediting environmental analyses, reducing frivolous lawsuits, and increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration projects. More information on FOFA is available [here](#).

*Expanding Access and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities* – The FY 2026 DOI budget supports expanded access to our public lands “for both recreational enjoyment and improving the economic benefit for gateway communities.”<sup>72</sup> DOI-managed lands annually receive more than 570 million visits, and the President’s budget ensures that those lands remain open and accessible to hunting, fishing, hiking, climbing, boating, and various other motorized and non-motorized recreation activities.<sup>73</sup> House Committee on Natural Resources Republicans will continue to work with the administration to fully implement the “Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act” to ensure that the full recreational potential of our nation’s lands and waters is realized ahead of America’s 250th anniversary in 2026.<sup>74</sup>

*Affordable Housing* – DOI manages over 480 million acres, or approximately 20 percent, of the U.S. land area.<sup>75</sup> Many western communities, particularly those surrounded by BLM lands or near national parks, struggle to attract and retain workers due to a lack of affordable housing.<sup>76</sup> This shortage undermines local economies, disrupts park operations, and strains essential services. To help address this issue, DOI and the Department of Housing and Urban Development launched a Joint Task Force on Federal Land for Housing.<sup>77</sup> The FY 2026 budget supports this initiative, which aims to identify underutilized federal lands in high-need areas that are suitable for housing development and to streamline the process for repurposing those lands. The Task Force will work in partnership with State, Tribal, and local governments to expand housing supply, improve workforce stability, and prioritize affordability, especially in communities supporting public lands and critical infrastructure. Together, the agencies will

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*Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>.

<sup>71</sup> *Wildfires and Acres*, NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER, <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics/wildfires>; *Statistics*, NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER, <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics>.

<sup>72</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> *Id.*

<sup>74</sup> Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act, Pub. L. No. 118-234 (Jan. 4, 2025).

<sup>75</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> ICYMI - Secretary Burgum, HUD Secretary Turner Announce Joint Task Force to Reduce Housing Costs and Open Access to Underutilized Federal Lands Suitable for Residential Development, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/icymi-secretary-burgum-hud-secretary-turner-announce-joint-task-force-reduce-housing>.

inventory underused federal properties, pursue transfers or leases to local entities, and support the infrastructure investments needed to make affordable housing developments viable.<sup>78</sup>

*Great American Outdoors Act Reauthorization* – In 2020, Congress passed, and President Trump signed into law, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). GAOA marked an unprecedented investment in our national parks and public lands to ensure that our nation’s treasures continue to be source of pride for future generations. Despite this historic investment, the previous administration’s mismanagement of GAOA caused DOI’s deferred maintenance backlog to balloon from \$16.4 billion in 2019 to \$33.2 billion today, a 102 percent increase.<sup>79</sup> The FY 2026 DOI budget proposes reauthorizing GAOA’s Legacy Restoration Fund at current levels (\$1.9 billion annually) for five years.<sup>80</sup> As part of this proposal, the administration is proposing to repurpose \$276.1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to address the deferred maintenance backlog instead of funding further federal land acquisitions.<sup>81</sup> The budget also proposes establishing a surcharge for foreign visitors to national parks that is estimated to generate \$90 million “to keep national parks beautiful.”<sup>82</sup> Committee Republicans intend to work closely with the administration to ensure that national parks and public lands have sustainable sources of funding to address deferred maintenance and that there is greater accountability and oversight concerning the expenditure of GAOA funds.

*Western Water* – President Trump and Secretary Burgum have made water delivery in California and the western United States a major priority. Their actions include issuing both an EO and a Secretarial Memorandum to remove barriers to delivering water to California’s Central Valley.

At the start of his second term, President Trump issued a Presidential Memorandum to Secretary Burgum and the Secretary of Commerce entitled “Putting People over Fish: Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Provide Water to Southern California.”<sup>83</sup> This was quickly followed by EO 14181, “Emergency Measures to Provide Water Resources in California and Improve Disaster Response in Certain Areas,” which President Trump signed on January 24, 2025.<sup>84</sup> These actions directed DOI and other federal departments to direct more water to southern California through the Central Valley Project (CVP) in response to the Los Angeles wildfires.

To do this, the Secretarial Memorandum and the EO authorized numerous federal departments to “expeditiously take all measures, consistent with applicable authorities, to ensure adequate water resources in [s]outhern California.”<sup>85</sup> It also authorized the Bureau of Reclamation to use its discretion to deliver more water and create additional hydropower in the CVP.<sup>86</sup> This EO has

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<sup>78</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> *Deferred Maintenance and Repair*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, <https://www.doi.gov/deferred-maintenance-and-repair>.

<sup>80</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*

<sup>82</sup> *Id.*

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum, Putting People Over Fish: Stopping Radical Environmentalism To Provide Water to Southern California, 90 Fed. Reg. 8479 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>84</sup> Executive Order No. 14181, 90 Fed. Reg. 8747 (Jan. 24, 2025).

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*

already resulted in increased water deliveries to California communities, as highlighted by a recently announced increase in CVP’s water allocations.<sup>87</sup>

*Endangered Species Act (ESA)* – The Trump administration has also focused on undoing harmful actions that the Biden administration took to implement the ESA. On February 3, 2025, Secretary Burgum issued Secretarial Order (SO) 3418, “Unleashing American Energy.”<sup>88</sup> SO 3418 mandates assistant secretaries within DOI to take the necessary steps to “suspend, revise, or rescind” certain actions by the Biden administration. Included in the list are three rulemakings related to the implementation of the ESA that were finalized in 2024.<sup>89</sup> The Committee repeatedly highlighted how these rules harmed species recovery by eliminating beneficial incentives and creating regulatory uncertainty.

Further, on April 17, 2025, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively, the Services) proposed to remove the definition of “harm” as it relates to the implementation of the ESA from the Code of Federal Regulations.<sup>90</sup> The word “harm” is included in the statutory definition of “take” in the ESA and has been used by the Services to limit otherwise lawful activities.<sup>91</sup> The current definition encompasses many actions, including “habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering.”<sup>92</sup> This broad definition gave the Services undue discretion to limit or block activities essential to the economic livelihoods of landowners and rural communities.

Additional ESA reforms came on April 23, 2025, when Secretary Burgum announced “emergency permitting procedures to accelerate the development of domestic energy resources and critical minerals.”<sup>93</sup> Included in these accelerated procedures is an expedited process for ESA Section 7 consultations. The process can only be used for projects that address President Trump’s National Energy Emergency<sup>94</sup> by strengthening America’s domestic energy and critical mineral supply. This expedited process requires both the relevant DOI bureau and the project applicant to notify the FWS that they wish to use emergency consultation procedures.<sup>95</sup> Once notified, the DOI bureau may decide whether to approve the project. These emergency procedures are in place only until the National Energy Emergency has been lifted.

*Expanding Access to Hunting and Fishing* – On May 15, 2025, the FWS announced an update to its 2025-2026 Hunting and Sport Fishing Rule that included 42 new hunting and sport fishing opportunities on FWS lands. These expansions include opening and expanding opportunities for

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<sup>87</sup> *Reclamation boosts California’s 2025 Central Valley Project water supply allocations*, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/5143>.

<sup>88</sup> *Unleashing American Energy*, Secretary Order No. 3418 (Feb. 3, 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_secretarys\\_orders/so-3418-signed.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/document_secretarys_orders/so-3418-signed.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> *Id.*

<sup>90</sup> *Rescinding the Definition of “Harm” Under the Endangered Species Act*, 90 Fed. Reg. 16102 (Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>91</sup> 16 U.S.C. § 1532.

<sup>92</sup> 50 C.F.R. Part 17.

<sup>93</sup> *Department of the Interior Implements Emergency Permitting Procedures to Strengthen Domestic Energy Supply*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/department-interior-implements-emergency-permitting-procedures-strengthen-domestic>.

<sup>94</sup> Executive Order No. 14156, 90 Fed. Reg. 8433 (Jan. 20, 2025).

<sup>95</sup> Adam Suess, *Alternative Procedures for Informal Section 7 Consultation*, U.S. Dept. of the Interior (Apr. 23, 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-04/alternative-procedures-section-7-consultation-2025-04-23-signed\\_1.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-04/alternative-procedures-section-7-consultation-2025-04-23-signed_1.pdf).



hunting and fishing on 16 National Wildlife Refuges and one National Fish Hatchery across more than 87,000 acres total.<sup>96</sup> Secretary Burgum has signaled in budget hearings to both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that DOI is exploring further expansions for the benefit of sportsmen and women, as well as rural economies.

*Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge* – On March 4, 2025, President Trump signed EO 14229, which directed Secretary Burgum to change the name of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge to the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge.”<sup>97</sup> Jocelyn Nungaray was a 12-year-old girl from Houston, Texas, who was murdered on June 16, 2024, by two Venezuelan nationals.<sup>98</sup> Given that the suspects entered the U.S. illegally and are allegedly members of the notoriously brutal Tren de Aragua gang, Jocelyn’s death quickly garnered national attention and renewed calls for more stringent immigration policies.<sup>99</sup> In May 2025, the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held a hearing to consider legislation from Congressman Brian Babin (R-TX-36) that would codify this EO. Jocelyn’s mother, Alexis, testified at the hearing and spoke of her daughter’s love for animals and the outdoors, which makes renaming this refuge a fitting tribute to Jocelyn’s life and memory.

### ***Maximizing Government Efficiencies***

President Trump and Secretary Burgum have repeatedly emphasized the need for maximizing government efficiency by eliminating federal waste and streamlining core business operations to save taxpayer dollars. The FY 2026 proposed budget seeks to cement these priorities.<sup>100</sup> Specifically, the budget eliminates wasteful programs that “focus on social agendas.”<sup>101</sup> The budget also reduces “funds given to left-wing environmental nonprofits that work against development of energy and mineral resources and have other sources of funding for their projects.”<sup>102</sup> Similarly, the budget eliminates support for “Green New Scam technologies that facilitate unreliable, intermittent energy to the detriment of American consumers, businesses, and communities.”<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, as part of the Trump Administration’s ongoing efforts to maximize government efficiencies that will result in taxpayer savings, Secretary Bergum signed SO 3429, “Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions.”<sup>104</sup> The purpose of SO 3429 is to unify and consolidate a number of the functions across DOI within the Office of the Secretary, including, but not limited to, items such as human resources, international affairs,

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<sup>96</sup> National Wildlife Refuge System; 2025-2026 Station-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations, 90 Fed. Reg. 20600 (May 15, 2025).

<sup>97</sup> Executive Order No. 14229, 90 Fed. Reg. 11585 (Mar. 4, 2025).

<sup>98</sup> Renaming the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge to Honor Jocelyn Nungaray, Secretary Order No. 3425 (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order/so-3425-renaming-anahuac-national-wildlife-refuge-honor-jocelyn>.

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf); *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>.

<sup>101</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, THE WHITE HOUSE (May 2, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Fiscal Year 2026 The Interior Budget in Brief*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibentire-book508060125_0.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Consolidation, Unification and Optimization of Administrative Functions, Secretary Order No. 3429 (Apr. 17, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order/so-3429-consolidation-unification-and-optimization-administrative>.



contracting, and communications.<sup>105</sup> This effort will include streamlining technology advancement and innovations across DOI which will “enhance the Department’s ability to deliver on [its] core mission.”<sup>106</sup>

During the Biden presidency, Committee Republicans investigated and spotlighted DOI’s glaring misuse of taxpayer dollars to engage outside contractors in leading “eco-grief” trainings and other “social change initiatives.”<sup>107</sup> Committee Republicans also led an oversight effort examining DOI’s close and likely improper relationships with radical nonprofit organizations, which included undisclosed ex parte communications and off-the-record meetings.<sup>108</sup> Now, the Committee’s Majority is eager to continue working with President Trump and Secretary Burgum to eliminate remaining wasteful programs at DOI and maximize federal government efficiency.

### ***Supporting Tribal Nations and Insular Areas***

*Tribal Government* – The President’s budget promotes the sovereignty of federally recognized tribes by requesting \$17.7 million to help them develop and maintain strong and stable governments capable of administering quality programs and developing economies. The Committee supports the Trump administration’s goal to unleash American energy dominance, especially by recognizing a tribe’s right, consistent with self-determination, to select the energy sources that work best for its members. Tribal governments know which energy projects are best to pursue because they are the closest to their people and know their local communities. An all-of-the-above energy approach supports tribal self-determination and places decision-making where it belongs: in the local community.

*U.S. Insular Areas* – The President’s budget request includes \$14 million to energize the Insular communities, which includes energy sources like liquefied natural gas (LNG), biomass, and other generation options that are often more reliable and affordable than intermittent renewable energy sources. These sources can help provide reliable energy sources in the U.S. territories. The President’s budget also maintains current funding at \$27.7 million for capital infrastructure improvement<sup>109</sup>, which will focus on high-priority needs in the U.S. Territories.

*Freely Associated States* – Consistent with the Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024, the President has included \$813,000 in the FY 2026 budget request for financial assistance for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. DOI’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) is charged with managing federal relations with the Freely Associated States, and it is crucial that the U.S. government fulfill its national security obligations by countering the activities of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the Pacific.

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<sup>105</sup> *Id.*

<sup>106</sup> *Id.*

<sup>107</sup> See Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Chairman, H. Comm. on Natural Resources, et al. to Martha Williams, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv. (May 19, 2023); Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Chairman, H. Comm. on Natural Resources, et al. to Martha Williams, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv. (Mar. 14, 2023).

<sup>108</sup> See, e.g., *Examining the Influence of Extreme Environmental Activist Groups in the Department of the Interior: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations of the H. Comm. on Natural Resources*, 118th Cong. (Apr. 30, 2024) (hearing memorandum), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing\\_memo\\_-\\_sub\\_on\\_oi\\_ov\\_hrg\\_on\\_nonprofits\\_influencing\\_doi\\_04.30.24.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing_memo_-_sub_on_oi_ov_hrg_on_nonprofits_influencing_doi_04.30.24.pdf).

<sup>109</sup> *DOI Bureau Highlights, Office of Insular Affairs, OIA-4*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, (May 2025), [https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26biboia508\\_0.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26biboia508_0.pdf)