

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

January 25, 2023

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable Brenda Mallory
Chair
Council on Environmental Quality
730 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Haaland, Secretary Vilsack, Secretary Raimondo, and Chair Mallory,

In his administration’s own words, President Joe Biden believes “results and accountability go hand-in-hand, and that to deliver results for all Americans, the federal government must act – and support appropriate oversight of its activities – in a manner deserving of public trust.”¹ We could not agree more. That is why our Republican majority will be using every available resource at our disposal to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in the departments and offices under your purview. We will rigorously pursue information to best guide our policy decisions, and satisfy our obligations to hold Executive Branch officials accountable for any mismanagement of their delegated authority on behalf of the American public.

Natural Resources Committee Democrats conducted little to no scrutiny of public offices in the 117th Congress, despite our repeated requests. Between 2021 and 2022, Committee Republicans transmitted more than 230 collective document or information requests to your offices. To date, we’ve received responses to a mere 61 of those requests. Nearly 75 percent of our requests for transparency went ignored or unsatisfactorily answered. The Department of the Interior and its subagencies have the most outstanding and delinquent documents and information due to the Committee, with 148 missing or insufficient responses. As the duly elected majority party of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 118th Congress, we expect your full compliance with our oversight and investigatory requests.

While we hope to conduct essential oversight in a cooperative manner with your departments and agencies, we will maintain our ability to employ transcribed interviews,

¹ Fact Sheet, The White House, Biden-Harris Administration Prioritizes Effectiveness, Accountability, and Transparency in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Implementation (Apr. 29, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/29/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-prioritizes-effectiveness-accountability-and-transparency-in-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-implementation>.

depositions, and other compulsory processes as necessary to obtain requested documents and information. Many programs like the 30x30 initiative, the administration's Great American Outdoors Act funding priorities, the unaddressed crisis at the southern border and the humanitarian and environmental harms it creates, extreme policies that limit our ability to address the western drought, efforts to address health and economic security in tribal and insular communities, and administration policies that stifle American energy production, such as the delayed offshore leasing plan, remain a black box to us and to the American people. We intend to pull back the curtain and show how each taxpayer dollar is being spent by this administration and how this administration's failing policies are impacting American families.

Each member of the Republican Conference is committed to conducting robust oversight and ensuring accountability as standard practice in the 118th Congress. We will meet our obligations to hold the Executive Branch accountable and ensure decisions by your offices and those that you oversee are open and transparent. We look forward to your compliance with our oversight efforts to strengthen America's environment and economy, promote access to public lands and natural resources, and enhance conservation through innovation.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



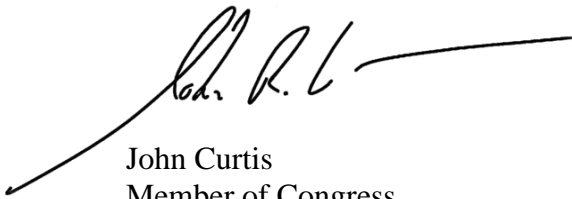
Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress



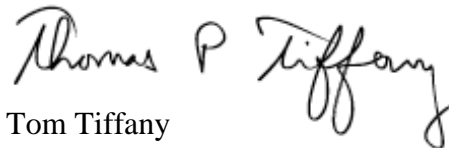
Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



John Curtis
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress



Jerry Carl
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



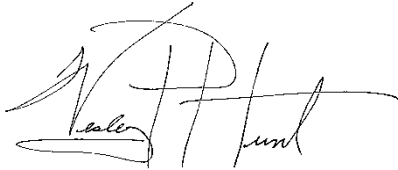
Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



Jen Kiggans
Member of Congress



Jim Moylan
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt
Member of Congress



Mike Collins
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress



John Duarte
Member of Congress



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources