

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

October 8, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Mail Stop 0020  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

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

The Honorable Charles F. Sams, III  
Director, National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Mayorkas, Secretary Haaland, and Director Sams:

The House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) continues to investigate<sup>1</sup> the Biden-Harris administration's decision to house migrants on National Park Service (NPS) land at Floyd Bennett Field (FBF), a portion of Gateway National Recreation Area.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the Committee seeks to understand why the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the NPS knowingly disregarded the Committee's letters dated July 11, 2024, and September 3, 2024, and extended the lease for FBF with the City of New York (NYC).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Committee has sent numerous letters with requests for documents and information to the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the White House, hosted information briefings, coordinated a site visit to FBF, conducted three transcribed interviews, and issued a subpoena during the course of our investigation.

<sup>2</sup> See National Park Service, *Lease Between U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service and the City of New York for the Premises known as Portions of Floyd Bennett Field, in the Jamaica Bay Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area*, DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Sep. 15, 2023), <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/upload/FINAL-Lease-Floyd-Bennet-Field-09-15-2023-2.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Chairman, H. Comm. on Natural Resources et al., to Debra Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, and Charles Sams, Director, National Park Service (July 11, 2024), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2024.07.11\\_hnr\\_fbf\\_lease\\_renewal\\_opposition\\_letter.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2024.07.11_hnr_fbf_lease_renewal_opposition_letter.pdf); Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Chairman, H. Comm. on Natural Resources et al., to Debra Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior et al. (Sept. 3, 2024), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2024.09.03\\_hnr\\_fbf\\_lease\\_termination\\_follow\\_up\\_letter.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2024.09.03_hnr_fbf_lease_termination_follow_up_letter.pdf).

To be clear, the grave consequences of the FBF lease predicted by the Committee,<sup>4</sup> government officials, local stakeholders, and members of the public have come to pass. The community, the Gateway National Recreation Area, and the migrants encamped at the site have suffered from increased crime, inadequate infrastructure, and inappropriate use of NPS lands, impacting public safety and the community's well-being.<sup>5</sup> The Biden-Harris administration chose to ignore countless voices opposed to leasing FBF to NYC for the unprecedented action of turning National Park land into a migrant camp. Now, the administration has chosen to double down on this failed experiment.<sup>6</sup>

The Committee is committed to ensuring proper oversight of our nation's public lands and parks. Particularly given the Biden-Harris White House's expectation that your agencies "work in good faith to accommodate [the Committee's] requests" and "provide [us] documents and information," the Committee expects to receive a responsive production imminently.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the White House encouraged the Committee to continue pressing your departments and agencies to produce documents and information relevant to our requests, stating that these avenues have "not yet been exhausted" and that our requests ought to be "fully addressed" by you.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, failure to timely comply with the Committee's requests, reiterated below, will force us to use the compulsory process—including issuing a subpoena—to ensure transparency for the American people. The Committee requests that you produce the following items in your possession, custody, or control in complete, unredacted, and electronic format as soon as possible, but no later than October 15, 2024:

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *Destroying America's Best Idea: Examining the Biden Administration's Use of National Park Service Lands for Migrant Camps*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Natural Resources, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (Sep. 27, 2023) (Hearing Memorandum from Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations Republican staff), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing\\_memo\\_-\\_fc\\_ov\\_hrg\\_on\\_migrant\\_camps\\_09.27.23.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing_memo_-_fc_ov_hrg_on_migrant_camps_09.27.23.pdf); *Destroying America's Best Idea: Biden's Border Crisis, Desecrating National Park Lands and Damaging Communities*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Natural Resources, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (June 13, 2023) (Hearing Memorandum from Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations Republican staff), [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing\\_memo\\_-\\_sub\\_on\\_o\\_i\\_ov\\_hrg\\_on\\_biden\\_border\\_crisis\\_06.13.24.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing_memo_-_sub_on_o_i_ov_hrg_on_biden_border_crisis_06.13.24.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Georgett Roberts and Emily Crane, *Migrants at NYC's Floyd Bennett Field are begging for money, food at furious locals' doorsteps: 'Invasion,'* NEW YORK POST (Dec. 22, 2023), <https://nypost.com/2023/12/22/metro/migrants-at-nycs-floyd-bennett-field-are-begging-nearby-residents-for-money-food/>; Carl Campanile et al., *Migrants' pricey cars towed outside controversial NYC shelter in same area where they begged door to door*, NEW YORK POST (Jan. 6, 2024), <https://nypost.com/2024/01/06/metro/at-least-five-unregistered-vehicles-used-by-migrants-parked-outside-floyd-bennet-field-shelter-towed/>; Georgia Worrell et al., *Fear and loathing at Brooklyn's Floyd Bennett Field: Neighbors fuming over migrants' 'lawlessness,'* NEW YORK POST (Jan. 13, 2024), <https://nypost.com/2024/01/13/metro/brooklyn-residents-fuming-over-migrants-lawlessness/>; Sarah Goodman et al., *City Hall vows to probe 'lawlessness' following Post report on spike in crime around Floyd Bennett Field migrant shelter*, NEW YORK POST (Jan. 14, 2024), <https://nypost.com/2024/01/14/metro/city-will-probe-any-lawlessness-by-migrants-at-bennett-floyd-field/>; Steven Vago et al., *NYC students forced to go remote as city houses nearly 2K migrants at their school, and one mom goes off: 'Does it feel good?,'* NEW YORK POST (Jan. 9, 2024) <https://nypost.com/2024/01/09/metro/migrants-evacuated-from-floyd-bennett-field-due-to-high-winds/>.

<sup>6</sup> See Charles F. Sams III, *Approval to Amend Lease Between the National Park Service and the City of New York*, DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Sept. 12, 2024), <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/upload/Lease-Determination-Memo-for-Amendment.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Response letter from Rachel F. Cotton, Deputy Counsel to the President, on file with the Committee.

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

1. All documents and communications among or between DOI, NPS, NYC, New York State (NYS), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the White House (WH), or the Executive Office of the President (EOP) related to the expiration, termination, extension, or renewal of the FBF lease.
2. All documents and communications among or between DOI, NPS, NYC, NYS, DHS, WH, or EOP related to planned or ongoing implementation of any FBF demobilization plan.

An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the requests from the Committee on Natural Resources. Please contact the Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee at (202) 225-2761 or [HNRR.Oversight@mail.house.gov](mailto:HNRR.Oversight@mail.house.gov) with any questions. Under House Rule X, the Committee on Natural Resources has "general oversight" over any matter relating to its jurisdiction, including the management of federal lands.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations