



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

**To:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands Republican Members  
**From:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands; Aniela Butler, Brandon Miller, Taylor Wiseman, and Colen Morrow – [Aniela@mail.house.gov](mailto:Aniela@mail.house.gov), [Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov](mailto:Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov), [Taylor.Wiseman@mail.house.gov](mailto:Taylor.Wiseman@mail.house.gov), and [Colen.Morrow@mail.house.gov](mailto:Colen.Morrow@mail.house.gov); x6-7736  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024  
**Subject:** Legislative Hearing on 9 Grazing and Public Lands Bills

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The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a legislative hearing on 9 grazing and public lands bills:

- H.R. 6441 (Rep. Vasquez), “*Ranching Without Red Tape Act of 2023*”;
- H.R. 7666 (Rep. LaMalfa), To require the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a means of wildfire risk reduction;
- H.R. 8182 (Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia), “*Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act*”;
- H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar), “*La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act*”;
- H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis), “*Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act*”;
- H.R. 9165 (Rep. Maloy), “*Public Land Search and Rescue Act*”;
- H.R. 9528 (Rep. Pallone), To redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.;
- H.R. 10082 (Rep. Bentz), “*Oregon Owyhee Wilderness and Community Protection Act*”;
- and
- H.R. 10084 (Rep. Clyburn), “*Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act*”.

The hearing will take place on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.** in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.

Member offices are requested to notify Will Rodriguez ([Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov](mailto:Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, November 18, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

## **I. KEY MESSAGES**

- Grazing on public lands provides important conservation, ecosystemic, and economic benefits to the American people and federal land management agencies. H.R. 6441 (Rep. Vasquez), H.R. 7666 (Rep. LaMalfa), H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis), and H.R. 10082 (Rep. Bentz) each offer unique and innovative reforms to grazing policy to increase flexibility for Western ranchers and help support rural economies.

- H.R. 8182 (Rep. Austin Scott of GA) would create Georgia’s first national park and elevate a unique area with rich archeologic, historic, and natural resources to a crown jewel of the National Park System.
- H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar) is a win-win solution that would reduce the federal estate while supporting more domestic energy production. This legislation helps support an all-of-the-above energy strategy and rural economies.
- H.R. 9165 (Rep. Maloy) would support local law enforcement efforts by addressing the rising costs of search and rescue operations on federal lands, ultimately enhancing public safety.
- H.R. 10082 (Rep. Bentz) is a thoughtful solution to address land management issues in Oregon in a collaborative approach, avoiding a unilateral national monument designation.

## II. WITNESSES

### Panel I (Members of Congress):

- *To Be Announced*

### Panel II (Administration Officials):

- **The Honorable Deb Haaland**, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. [*Declined to testify*]
- **Mr. Steven Lohr**, Director of Natural Resources, National Forest System, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

### Panel III (Outside Experts):

- **The Honorable Tracy Glover**, President, Utah Sheriffs’ Association, Kanab, Utah, [*H.R. 9165*]
- **Ms. Sherri Brennan**, Member, Public Lands Council, Sonora, California [*H.R. 7666*]
- **Mr. Jeff Young**, President, Utah Cattlemen’s Association, Henefer, Utah [*H.R. 9062*]
- **Mr. Seth C. Clark**, Executive Director, Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative, Macon, Georgia [*H.R. 8182*]
- **Mr. Elias Eiguren**, Treasurer, Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition, Jordan Valley, Oregon [*H.R. 10082*]
- **Mr. D.L. Wilson**, Solar Projects Manager, La Paz County, Parker, Arizona [*H.R. 8517*]
- **Mr. Ryan Houston**, Executive Director, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Bend, Oregon [*H.R. 10082*] [*Minority Witness*]
- **Dr. Bobby Donaldson**, Executive Director, Center for Civil Rights History and Research, Columbia, South Carolina [*H.R. 10084*] [*Minority Witness*]

## III. BACKGROUND

### *Overview of Federal Grazing Policy*

Several of the bills on today’s hearing affect ranching and grazing, including H.R. 6441 (Rep. Vasquez), H.R. 7666 (Rep. LaMalfa), H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis), and H.R. 10082 (Rep. Bentz).

This overview provides general background information on federal grazing policy, while the subsequent sections provide detailed analysis on the individual grazing bills under consideration.

Grazing on public lands provides important conservation, ecosystemic, and economic benefits to the American people and federal land management agencies, alike. This is especially true in the Western states, where roughly half the land is federally owned.<sup>1</sup> The majority of grazing on federal land occurs on parcels managed by either the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The BLM administers roughly 18,000 grazing permits and leases on nearly 155 million acres of public land in almost 22,000 grazing allotments.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, more than 95 million of the total 193 million acres managed by USFS are available for grazing, and nearly 6,000 permits for livestock and horses cover USFS land.<sup>3</sup> In total, roughly 92 percent of the available grazing land managed by these agencies is utilized to graze livestock.<sup>4</sup>

Both agencies operate under multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates which explicitly acknowledge livestock grazing as an approved activity.<sup>5</sup> Because BLM and USFS are multiple-use agencies, lands available for livestock grazing are also generally available for, and compatible with, other purposes, like recreation and energy development. Science continues to demonstrate that grazing is not only compatible with rangeland management but also is vital to rangeland health. Earlier this year, for example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released a study showing livestock grazing can limit both wildfire risk and invasive annual grasses.<sup>6</sup> Livestock grazing can modify the range to make it more fire resilient and the presence of livestock on federal land decreases fire probability and severity.<sup>7</sup>

Public lands grazing delivers considerable cost-savings to federal land management agencies while adding economic value to rural economies. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, on USFS land alone, the forage utilized by the permitted livestock contributed \$598,000 to the nation's gross domestic product and supported approximately 13,700 jobs.<sup>8</sup> Researchers found the ecological value of cattle grazing on federal lands is \$1,043.35 of ecosystem services per beef cow, including benefits to wildlife and forage production.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, apart from serving as great partners to the federal government, ranchers who engage in public lands grazing provide significant cost benefits. These ranchers pay a grazing fee and for land maintenance costs. They also frequently clear public trails, monitor recreation trends, observe wildlife movements, and respond first to

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Hardy Vincent, "Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data," Congressional Research Service, February 21, 2020, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R42346>.

<sup>2</sup> FY 2025 Bureau of Land Management Greenbook, U.S. Department of the Interior, accessed November 11, 2024, <https://www.doi.gov/media/document/fy-2025-bureau-land-management-greenbook>.

<sup>3</sup> Carol Hardy Vincent, "Grazing Fees: Overview and Issues," Congressional Research Service, March 4, 2019, <https://crs.gov/Reports/RS21232>. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Justification, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, accessed November 12, 2024, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs-fy25-congressional-budget-justification.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Anna T. Maher et al., "An economic valuation of federal and private grazing land ecosystem services supported by beef cattle ranching in the United States," <https://doi.org/10.1093/tas/txab054>.

<sup>5</sup> Carol Hardy Vincent, "Federal Lands and Related Resources: Overview and Selected Issues for the 118th Congress," Congressional Research Service, February 24, 2023, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R43429>.

<sup>6</sup> Kirk W. Davies et al., "Ecological benefits of strategically applied livestock grazing in sagebrush communities," *Ecosphere*, May 22, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.4859>.

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

<sup>8</sup> Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Justification, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, accessed November 12, 2024, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs-fy25-congressional-budget-justification.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Anna T. Maher et al., "An economic valuation of federal and private grazing land ecosystem services supported by beef cattle ranching in the United States," <https://doi.org/10.1093/tas/txab054>.

wildfires and other natural disasters.<sup>10</sup> Their activity provides substantial assistance to agency field staff who are responsible for monitoring millions of acres of public land.

Despite the many proven benefits of grazing on public lands, BLM and USFS are often delayed in approving the permits necessary for grazing to occur. For example, as of November 2023, BLM had 10,845 unprocessed grazing permits.<sup>11</sup> BLM also processes permits at a rate slower than that at which they expire, meaning that BLM will never clear the backlog without policy changes.<sup>12</sup> In FY 2025, for instance, the BLM expects to process only 1,100 grazing permits and leases while about 1,445 permits are scheduled to expire.<sup>13</sup> To allow for continuity in grazing operations, Congress, in 2014, made permanent the automatic renewal of permits and leases that expire or are transferred while they are waiting for the evaluation process to be formally reissued.<sup>14</sup> The law provided that the issuance of a grazing permit “may” be categorically excluded from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when certain conditions apply.<sup>15</sup> Several of the bills featured in today’s hearing provide BLM and USFS with additional flexibility in administering grazing permits and leases.

### **[H.R. 6441 \(Rep. Vasquez\), “Ranching Without Red Tape Act of 2023”](#)**

Ever-expanding regulatory requirements have increased the cost and complexity of ranching on federal lands. For example, if a rancher wants to make improvements to existing fences and fence lines, wells, water pipelines, or stock tanks, they will encounter a lengthy approval process from the authorizing federal agency. Many minor improvements ranchers want to make would benefit the wellbeing of their livestock and improve the rangeland, yet they are unable to do so due to bureaucratic red tape. To address this problem, Representatives Vasquez (D-NM-02) and Curtis (R-UT-03) introduced H.R. 6441 to minimize the disruptions of grazing livestock on federal land. H.R. 6441 would require BLM and USFS to streamline the procedures for authorizing minor range improvements carried out by grazing permittees. If BLM or USFS do not respond to a request to undertake minor improvements under a grazing permit within 30 days, the bill provides the permittee authority to move forward on those minor improvements. S. 3322, sponsored by Senator Barrasso (R-WY), is the companion bill in the Senate.<sup>16</sup>

### **[H.R. 7666 \(Rep. LaMalfa\), To require the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a means of wildfire risk reduction.](#)**

Federal agencies must be equipped with all available tools to reduce wildfire risk, improve forest health, and minimize the vulnerability of communities in the wildland-urban interface. Targeted grazing is a proven method of reducing hazardous fuels and decreasing the speed and severity with which wildfires would otherwise rip through our forests and put vulnerable communities at risk. USFS consistently recognizes grazing as an effective tool for wildfire management and has

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<sup>10</sup> Dave Daley, California Cattlemen’s Association, Testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, August 11, 2023, [https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Testimony\\_Daley.pdf](https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Testimony_Daley.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> FY 2025 Bureau of Land Management Greenbook, U.S. Department of the Interior, accessed November 11, 2024, <https://www.doi.gov/media/document/fy-2025-bureau-land-management-greenbook>.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

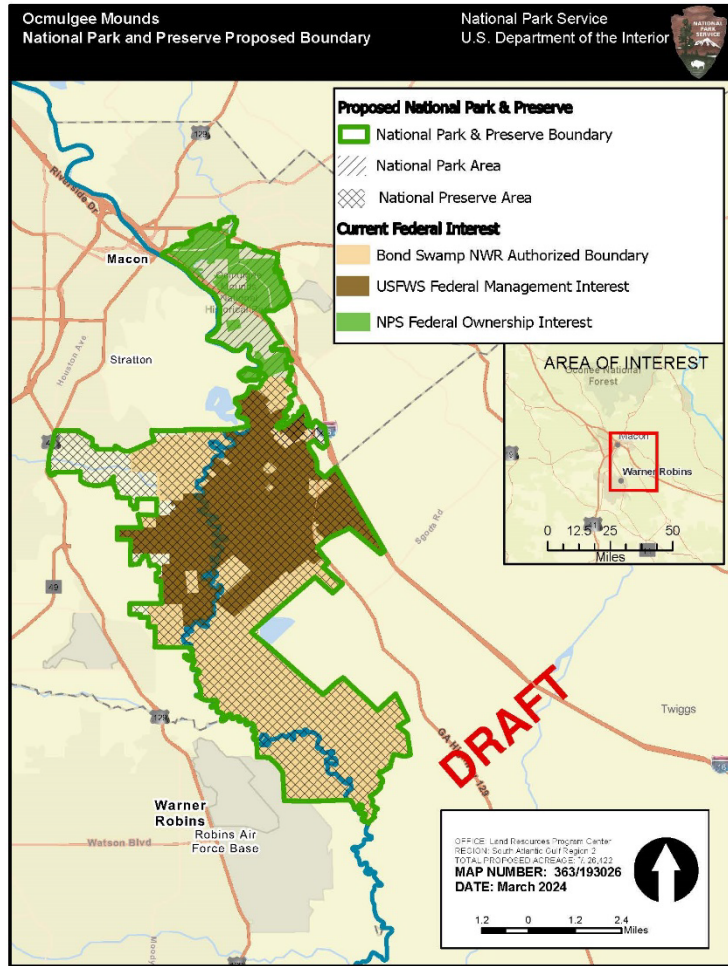
<sup>14</sup> Public Law 113-291, Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> S. 3322; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/3322>.

listed grazing as a key aspect of the agency’s Wildfire Crisis Strategy.<sup>17</sup> Building on this progress, H.R. 7666 would direct USFS to expand the use of proactive, targeted grazing in fuels management programs to lower wildfire risk. Specifically, the bill would direct USFS to coordinate with grazing permittees to develop wildfire risk-reduction strategies, including proactive fuels reduction to prevent wildfire and the use of grazing as a post-fire recovery strategy. An identical provision was included in the House-passed “Fix Our Forests Act.”<sup>18</sup>

**H.R. 8182 (Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia), “Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act”**



Proposed Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve map.  
**Source:** NPS, 2024.

Few locations in the country rival the historical depth of the Ocmulgee River Corridor (Ocmulgee Mounds), located between Macon and Hawkinsville, Georgia. This area, which contains a mixture of lands managed by the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Air Force, and state and private entities, contains important historical and archeological resources.<sup>19</sup> According to the National Park Foundation, the current Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park conserves a “continuous record of human life” and habitation dating back 17,000 years to Ice Age hunters in the Paleoindian period.<sup>20</sup> The area is notable for seven earthen mounds built by hand during the Mississippian Period (A.D. 900-1540).<sup>21</sup> Early Mississippian people constructed the mounds with the aid of water from nearby rivers and used the finished structures for a variety of purposes, including as funeral sites, residences,

<sup>17</sup> Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Justification, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, accessed November 12, 2024, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs-fy25-congressional-budget-justification.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> House Amendment 1205 to H.R. 8790, Representative LaMalfa, <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/118th-congress/house-amendment/1205>.

<sup>19</sup> National Park Service, “Ocmulgee River Corridor Special Resource Study,” 2023, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=415&projectID=91276&documentID=132895>.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* National Park Foundation, “Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park,” <https://www.nationalparks.org/explore/parks/ocmulgee-mounds-national-historical-park>.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* National Geographic, “Could this be Georgia’s first national park?,” <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/ocmulgee-native-american-site-georgia-first-national-park>.

and official meeting places.<sup>22</sup> Later, the area was home to dozens of villages inhabited by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the Tribe was forcibly re-located to Oklahoma.<sup>23</sup> In the 1920s, artifacts and graves were uncovered in this area, leading to the largest archaeological dig in American history from 1933 to 1941.<sup>24</sup> During this period, archaeologists excavated more than three million items, such as pottery and tools.<sup>25</sup>

Following this unprecedented discovery, calls to conserve the site began to gain momentum, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the approximately 2,000-acre Ocmulgee Mounds National Monument on December 23, 1936.<sup>26</sup> In 2019, the “John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act” redesignated the area as a National Historic Park and authorized NPS to conduct a special resource study (SRS) determining the suitability and feasibility of designating the broader Ocmulgee River Corridor as a unit of the National Park System.<sup>27</sup> In 2023, NPS concluded in its final SRS that the area was nationally significant and suitable for inclusion in the National Park System because it contained cultural and natural resources not already adequately represented within the System.<sup>28</sup> Due to the large number of private parcels in the study area, however, NPS found that a broader designation would not be feasible and the study area did “not meet all of the established criteria for new national park system units.”<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, more than 70 organizations, including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, joined an effort to designate the Ocmulgee River Corridor as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve. Proponents argue this designation, which would create Georgia’s first national park, would elevate a popular area that attracts 150,000 visitors annually while protecting popular recreation activities such as hunting and fishing.<sup>30</sup> Proponents also contend that a redesignation “could attract up to 1.6 million annual visitors and create upwards of \$287 million dollars annually.”<sup>31</sup>

H.R. 8182 would re-designate the current 2,000-acre Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and authorize the creation of Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve on the date on which the Secretary of the Interior has acquired sufficient land to constitute a manageable unit. The bill creates a co-management system between NPS and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the National Park and Preserve, which would be a first-of-its-kind management system for units of the National Park System. Additionally, the bill sets up a 9-member advisory council, authorizes 126 acres of land to be held in trust for the Muscogee

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<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> National Geographic, “Everything you need to know about Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park”, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/ocmulgee-mounds-national-historical-park>.

<sup>24</sup> National Geographic, “Could this be Georgia’s first national park?”, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/ocmulgee-native-american-site-georgia-first-national-park>

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* National Geographic, “Everything you need to know about Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park”, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/ocmulgee-mounds-national-historical-park>.

<sup>27</sup> Public Law 116-9.

<sup>28</sup> National Park Service, “Ocmulgee River Corridor Special Resource Study,” 2023, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=415&projectID=91276&documentID=132895>.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* Georgia Conservancy, “Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative,” <https://www.georgiaconservancy.org/ocmulgee-national-park>.

<sup>31</sup> Information based on a study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association and the James L. Knight Foundation. “5 Under 40: Seth Clark,” Macon Magazine, August/September, 2022, <https://maconmagazine.com/5-under-40-seth-clark/>.

(Creek) Nation, establishes a hiring preference for Muscogee (Creek) Nation members, and contains provisions related to the continued use of military activities.

### **H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar), “La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act”**

Approximately 95 percent of the land in La Paz County, Arizona, is under federal, state, or Tribal management, with only five percent of the land available for private ownership.<sup>32</sup> BLM is the largest single land manager in this rural county, controlling roughly 58 percent of the total land mass.<sup>33</sup> The county’s economy is primarily dependent on tourism and agriculture.<sup>34</sup> Like many other Western communities with large federal land footprints, La Paz County faces significant challenges in meeting the economic needs of its residents.

In an effort economically diversify and create additional employment opportunities, the County worked with Representative Gosar (R-AZ-09) to pursue a legislative conveyance of 5,935 acres of BLM land for the development of a large-scale solar farm. That legislation, the “La Paz County Land Conveyance Act,” was signed into law in 2019 as part of the “John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act.”<sup>35</sup> After the bill’s passage, La Paz County executed development grants with 174 Power Global, a renewable energy company, and the solar project is currently underway.<sup>36</sup> The project, one of the largest in the United States, is expected to produce 1,000 megawatts of solar power, as well as hundreds of megawatts of battery storage.<sup>37</sup>

H.R. 8517 seeks to build on the success of this project by conveying an additional 3,400 acres of BLM land adjacent to the initial project site. This acreage was part of Representative Gosar’s initial legislation but was ultimately removed in the final version of the bill that became law. While BLM is analyzing most of the proposed acres for renewable energy development, the County believes this additional land will provide important economic benefits and much-needed revenues to support its residents. Senator Sinema (I-AZ) is sponsoring S. 1657, companion legislation in the Senate.<sup>38</sup>

### **H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis), “Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act”**

Land conditions can change each year, but a grazing permit may not be sufficiently flexible to allow livestock grazing at the optimal time for the land and resources. Although grazing permits and leases are generally renewable after ten years, prevailing range conditions may require certain changes such as adjustments to dates, stocking levels, or water sources, to be

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<sup>32</sup> Arizona Commerce Authority, “County Profile for La Paz County”, <https://www.azcommerce.com/a/profiles/ViewProfile/8/La+Paz+County/#::~:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Bureau%20of%20Land,owned%20privately%20or%20by%20corporations.>

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

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by the Office of Congressman Gosar and available on the Committee’s website; [https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/The\\_La\\_Paz\\_County\\_Solar\\_Energy\\_and\\_Job\\_Creation\\_Act\\_-\\_One\\_Page.pdf](https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/The_La_Paz_County_Solar_Energy_and_Job_Creation_Act_-_One_Page.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Public Law 116-9.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> S. 1657, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1657>.

implemented much more frequently.<sup>39</sup> For example, the late snowpack and subsequent flooding in Utah in the spring of 2023 delayed many ranchers from accessing their grazing allotment at the permit date.<sup>40</sup> To ensure flexibility in these instances, Representative Curtis introduced H.R. 9062, the “Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act.” H.R. 9062 would provide increased operational flexibility based on emerging landscape conditions so the permittee can continue to steward the land in the most responsible manner. Operational flexibility may include adjusting the season of use, modifying the beginning or ending date of a permit, or adding additional flexibility of the stocking level or water placement and transportation. S. 4454, sponsored by Senator Barrasso (R-WY), is the companion bill in the Senate.<sup>41</sup>

### **H.R. 9165 (Rep. Maloy), “Public Land Search and Rescue Act”**

Every year, thousands of visitors to federal lands require search and rescue (SAR) services.<sup>42</sup> These services typically require emergency response personnel to search vast areas of remote land and extract visitors who have been injured, lost, or killed. Each federal land management agency has the authority to carry out SAR activities on their lands. In practice, however, this responsibility frequently falls on local law enforcement entities. While SAR arrangements typically vary across agencies and locations, most agencies rely primarily on local law enforcement authorities to carry out SAR activities pursuant to a formal agreement.<sup>43</sup> This is particularly true of BLM and USFS, which usually take only a “lead or first responder role in SAR emergencies if an immediate and quick response will reduce suffering or save lives, or due to their presence in remote and rural areas.”<sup>44</sup> By contrast, NPS largely serves as the primary responder for SAR activities on lands under its jurisdiction.<sup>45</sup>



**Source:** Salt Lake County Sherriff’s Search and Rescue Team, 2019.

As visitation to our federal lands soars, SAR activities are becoming increasingly common and more costly for local governments. For example, NPS, the only land management agency that tracks SAR costs, reported spending \$21.6

<sup>39</sup> Carol Hardy Vincent, “Grazing Fees: Overview and Issues,” Congressional Research Service, March 4, 2019, <https://crs.gov/Reports/RS21232>.

<sup>40</sup> Farmers and Ranchers Throughout Utah Impacted by Flooding and Consequences of Long Winter, Utah Farm Bureau, May 10, 2023, <https://www.utahfarmbureau.org/Article/Farmers-and-Ranchers-Throughout-Utah-Impacted-by-Flooding-Consequences-of-Long-Winter>.

<sup>41</sup> S. 4454, 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4454>.

<sup>42</sup> Congressional Research Service, “Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations on Federal Lands”, Mark K. DeSantis, May 7, 2024, <https://crs.gov/Reports/IF12020?source=search>.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*



million in SAR expenses between 2019 and 2023.<sup>46</sup> Local governments shouldering the SAR responsibilities for USFS and BLM lands expressed concerns with the financial burden of increased SAR activities. According to Kane County, Utah, Sheriff Tracy Glover:

*Western sheriffs are being tasked with higher call volumes for lost or injured visitors. Many of these frantic calls come from some of the most remote areas of federally managed lands ... All too often, the most desirable areas [for] visitation are located in the most remote and sparsely populated areas leaving underfunded rural county sheriffs with the burden.*<sup>47</sup>

This problem is particularly pronounced in Western counties with large federal footprints since they do not have a traditional tax base to fund public services like law enforcement and experience high rates of visitation.<sup>48</sup>

H.R. 9165 would establish a grant program to assist with the cost of remote SAR activities on federal land. Entities carrying out SAR activities could use these grant funds to purchase necessary gear and equipment; maintain and repair SAR equipment; and reimburse remote SAR operations conducted on federal lands. Further, the bill specifies that grant recipients be prioritized in areas with a high ratio of visitors to residents (i.e. gateway communities). Proponents of the legislation argue this program will help support local law enforcement entities with strained budgets while improving the overall efficacy of SAR activities.

### **[H.R. 9528 \(Rep. Pallone\), To designate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.](#)**

Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (NHP) is a unit of the National Park System located in Paterson, New Jersey. The site is recognized for its contribution to American economic independence, first envisioned by Alexander Hamilton in 1792 when he sought “to create the world’s first planned city of innovation built around a hydropower system.”<sup>49</sup> H.R. 9528 would re-name two sites in the NHP, the Great Falls Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge and Overlook Park, after the late Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. Representative Pascrell was known as a plain-spoken New Jerseyan who served his country in the U.S. Army as well as in the House of Representatives for nearly three decades until his death earlier this year.<sup>50</sup> In 2009, Rep. Pascrell sponsored the legislation designating Paterson Great Falls as an NHP.<sup>51</sup> H.R. 9528 is a straightforward piece of legislation that honors the legacy of former Congressman Pascrell and his pivotal role in establishing the NHP. This bipartisan bill is cosponsored by the entire New Jersey Congressional delegation.

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<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Congressman Celeste Maloy, “Rep. Maloy Introduces Bipartisan Search and Rescue Bill”, July 26, 2024, <https://maloy.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1243>.

<sup>48</sup> Tupper, Seth, “Volunteer Firefighters Struggle With Search And Rescue Costs On Federal Land,” SDPB, January 30, 2020, <https://www.sdpb.org/politics-public-policy/2020-01-30/volunteer-firefighters-struggle-with-search-and-rescue-costs-on-federal-land>.

<sup>49</sup> Visit New Jersey, “Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park”, <https://visitnj.org/paterson-great-falls-national-historical-park>.

<sup>50</sup> Browning-Forshay Funeral Home, “Official Obituary of William J. Pascrell, Jr.”, <https://www.browningforshay.com/obituaries/William-J-Pascrell-Jr?obId=32868567>.

<sup>51</sup> Public Law 111-11.

## H.R. 10082 (Rep. Bentz), “Oregon Owyhee Wilderness and Community Protection Act”

Malheur County, located in southeastern Oregon, encompasses roughly 10,000 square miles and boasts a population of just over 31,000 people.<sup>52</sup> This single county is larger than nine states, including Maryland and New Jersey.<sup>53</sup> The area is a rugged and beautiful region, sometimes referred to as “Oregon’s Grand Canyon.”<sup>54</sup> The county is over ninety percent rangeland, two-thirds of which is managed by the BLM.<sup>55</sup> Ranching and grazing cattle on federal land is extremely important to the residents of Malheur County, where cattle outnumber people by more than five to one.<sup>56</sup> Yet, since 2015, extreme activists have called for the President to designate 2.5 million acres, or roughly 40 percent, of Malheur County as a national monument through the Antiquities Act of 1906.<sup>57</sup> The pressure to designate this land as a national monument is only increasing. In August 2024, Democratic Oregon Governor Tina Kotek sent a letter to President Biden, calling on him to designate the Owyhee Canyonlands as a national monument.<sup>58</sup> Although President Biden has already unilaterally designated more than 3.8 million acres as national monuments since taking office, extreme environmentalists are calling on him to further abuse the Antiquities Act.<sup>59</sup> They are calling on the President to further ignore local communities and stakeholders by designating the Owyhee Canyonlands as a national monument during his final lame duck months in office, following the manner of the Obama-Biden administration.<sup>60</sup>

Local Malheur County residents, including ranchers, hunters, and recreationalists, strongly oppose a national monument designation for several reasons. First, a unilateral executive decision from the President fails to have the same buy-in and flexibility as Congressional action, which can more thoroughly encompass the particular needs of a community through legislation. Second, communities are worried that a unilateral designation would lock up millions of acres of land, restricting access to critically important activities like grazing. These concerns are well founded; recently, a national monument designation in Utah resulted in the closure of all target shooting ranges, nearly 600,000 acres to off-highway vehicle (OHV) access, and nearly 175,000 acres for livestock grazing.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Malheur County, Oregon,” *last accessed* November 6, 2024, <https://data.census.gov/profile?q=Malheur%20County,%20Oregon%20Wiyot>.

<sup>53</sup> “National (U.S.) States: Size in Square Miles,” State Symbols USA, *last accessed* November 6, 2024, <https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/national-us/uncategorized/states-size>.

<sup>54</sup> Hagemeyer, Heidi, “Wild Beauty in the Owyhee Canyonlands, Travel Oregon, July 25, 2022, <https://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/destinations/lakes-reservoirs/owyhee-canyonlands/>.

<sup>55</sup> “Welcome to Malheur County,” Malheur County Oregon, accessed November 6, 2024, <https://www.malheurco.org/welcome-to-malheur-county/#more-9>.

<sup>56</sup> “Census of Agriculture – Oregon,” United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022, [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/Oregon/](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Oregon/).

<sup>57</sup> To learn more about the Antiquities Act, see the Federal Lands Subcommittee Hearing Memo from March 20, 2024: [https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing\\_memo\\_updated\\_-\\_sub\\_on\\_fl\\_leg\\_hrg\\_on\\_6\\_bills\\_03.20.24.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing_memo_updated_-_sub_on_fl_leg_hrg_on_6_bills_03.20.24.pdf). How We Got Here, Our Land Our Voice Our Future, accessed November 6, 2024, <https://ourlandourvoice.com/how-we-got-here>.

<sup>58</sup> Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek throws support behind Owyhee Canyonlands national monument, Statesman Journal, August 20, 2024, <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/local/oregon/2024/08/20/oregon-governor-tina-kotek-supports-owyhee-canyonlands-national-monument-push/74872002007/>.

<sup>59</sup> Hardy Vincent, Carol. National Monuments and the Antiquities Act, Congressional Research Service, May 10, 2024, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R41330>.

<sup>60</sup> Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center, “Swift action needed to protect the Owyhee Canyonlands,” November 12, 2024, <https://environmentamerica.org/oregon/center/updates/swift-action-needed-to-protect-the-owyhee-canyonlands/>.

<sup>61</sup> Notice of Availability of the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, Federal Register Vol. 89, No. 193, published October 4, 2024, <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-22760>.

With the looming threat of a national monument designation, the residents of Malheur County rallied to develop a comprehensive and workable solution for the management and use of the public land. Representative Bentz (R-OR-02) has led initiatives in the House to prevent the designation of a national monument in Malheur County and recently introduced H.R. 10082, the “Oregon Owyhee Wilderness and Community Protection Act.” In the Senate, Senator Wyden (D-OR) introduced complimentary legislation, the “Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act.” These dual legislative efforts demonstrate that there is bipartisan, bicameral interest in developing a legislative solution supported by all of the residents of Malheur County that will avoid a unilateral national monument designation, conserve the area’s pristine natural resources, and support rural economies dependent on activities like grazing.

H.R. 10082 is the culmination of hundreds of hours of negotiation and collaboration by those who live, work, and recreate in Malheur County; the Burns Paiute Tribe, and environmental organizations. The bill provides several protections for ranchers and grazing permittees. First, the bill ensures continued grazing in any designated wilderness areas. Second, the legislation creates a voluntary grazing program to provide increased operational flexibility to grazing permittees and lessees for the purpose of improving the health of BLM land. Examples of voluntary, operational flexibility include adjusting beginning or ending date, pasture rotation dates, or placement of water structures under a grazing permit or lease. Additionally, the bill establishes the “Malheur C.E.O. Group” for the purpose of identifying projects that would address range management issues, invasive species, conservation of cultural sites, restoration of water infrastructure, and economic development opportunities.

This comprehensive and collaborative bill also balances the needs of multiple stakeholders through various land designations and releases. The legislation designates 926,588 acres of previously designated wilderness study areas (WSAs) as wilderness areas. To balance these designations, more than 1.6 million acres of BLM land currently under some form of restriction are redesignated and managed for multiple use. This includes the release of 601,295 acres of WSAs and 1,065,597 acres of lands with wilderness characteristics.<sup>62</sup> The bill also allows for continued motorized access on existing roads for tribal cultural activities, fire suppression, invasive species control, private landowners, and livestock grazing in wilderness areas. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of the Interior (DOI) to take 2,410 acres of land into trust on behalf of the Burns Paiute Tribe and establishes a 9,828-acre Castle Rock Co-Stewardship Area to be managed with the Tribe through a memorandum of understanding.

### **[H.R. 10084 \(Rep. Clyburn\), “Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act”](#)**

In 2018, President Trump signed the “African American Civil Rights Network Act” into law, recognizing “the importance of the African American Civil Rights movement and the sacrifices made by the people who fought against discrimination.”<sup>63</sup> Administered by NPS, this Network “is a collection of properties, facilities, and programs that offer a comprehensive overview of the people, places, and events associated with the African American civil rights movement.”<sup>64</sup> Today,

<sup>62</sup> Acreage provided by the Bureau of Land Management on October 8, 2024. Data on file with Committee.

<sup>63</sup> Public Law No. 115-104; National Park Service, African American Civil Rights Network, “Application and Instructions,” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/application-instructions.htm>.

<sup>64</sup> National Park Service, African American Civil Rights Network, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/african-american-civil-rights-network.htm>.

the Network includes more than 80 sites across the country that tell the story of communities and civic leaders who were integral to the fight for justice and societal progress from 1939 to 1968.<sup>65</sup> Like other NPS-administered networks, the African American Civil Rights Network helps connect geographically disparate sites to tell a cohesive national story under one unified program. Pursuant to the original law establishing the Network, NPS may also produce educational materials related to the African American civil rights movement and enter into cooperative agreements with non-federal entities to help enhance coordination of the Network. Under the original law, the Network is scheduled to sunset on January 8, 2025. H.R. 10084, the “Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act,” reauthorizes the program for an additional 10 years. Reauthorizing the African American Civil Rights Network is a critical step to ensure the continuation of this successful program that honors the sacrifices and struggles of the African American civil rights movement.

#### **IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & SECTION-BY-SECTION**

##### **[H.R. 6441 \(Rep. Vasquez\), “Ranching Without Red Tape Act of 2023”](#)**

###### **Section 2. Minor Range Improvements Under USFS Grazing Permits.**

- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to issue regulations within one year allowing a permittee to carry out minor range improvements if the permittee notifies the applicable USFS district ranger at least 30 days prior to carrying out improvement. Minor range improvements include improvements to existing fences and fence lines, wells, water pipelines, and stock tanks.
- Provides for the district ranger to approve the minor range improvement within 30 days. If the minor improvement is approved, the Secretary is directed to carry out the range improvement using any available administrative tools or authorities, including categorical exclusions.

###### **Section 3. Minor Range Improvements Under BLM Grazing Permits.**

- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations within one year allowing a permittee to carry out minor range improvements if the permittee notifies the applicable district or field manager at least 30 days prior to carrying out improvement.
- Provides for the district or field manager to approve the minor range improvement within 30 days. If the minor improvement is approved, the Secretary is directed to carry out the range improvement using any available administrative tools or authorities, including categorical exclusions.

##### **[H.R. 7666 \(Rep. LaMalfa\), To require the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a means of wildfire risk reduction.](#)**

###### **Section 1. Utilizing Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction.**

- Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of USFS, to develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as wildfire risk reduction strategy.

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<sup>65</sup> National Park Service, Civil Rights, “Discover the Network”, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/discover-the-network.htm>.

- Components of the strategy must include:
  - Completing environmental reviews to allow permitted grazing on vacant grazing allotments during instances of drought, wildfire or other natural disasters that disrupt grazing on allotments already permitted;
  - Increased use of targeted grazing;
  - Increased use of temporary permits to target fuels reduction and control of invasive grasses;
  - Supporting grazing as a post-fire recovery strategy; and
  - Utilizing existing statutory authorities.

**H.R. 8182 (Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia), “Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act”**

**Section 3. Redesignation of Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Establishment of Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve.**

- Redesignates the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park as the “Ocmulgee Mounds National Park.”
- Allows the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land by purchase from a willing seller, donation, or exchange, and prevents the use of eminent domain to acquire land.
- Establishes the Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve as a unit of the National Park System, effective on the date when the Secretary determines enough land has been acquired to constitute a new unit. Clarifies that the land acquired for inclusion in the Preserve must be made by purchase from a willing seller, donation, or exchange and prevents the use of eminent domain.
- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to file reports with the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

**Section 4. Administration of Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve.**

- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a co-management agreement with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation no later than one year following the receipt of recommendations from the Advisory Council.
- Clarifies that the Secretary of the Interior shall allow hunting and fishing within the boundaries of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws.
- Allows the Secretary to establish zones and periods that restrict hunting and fishing, after consultation with the State of Georgia, for reasons of public safety, administration, fish or wildlife management, or emergencies.
- Clarifies that nothing in the section prohibits hunting, fishing, or trapping on private land.
- Requires the Secretary to establish policies that allow for hiring preferences of members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.
- Allows the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to continue tribal practices on the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve.
- Allows the U.S. Military to continue to utilize the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve for certain military activities.

### **Section 5. Advisory Council.**

- Establishes the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Advisory Council to advise the Secretary with respect to the preparation and implementation of a management plan and requires the Advisory Council to submit a report relating to the management of the Park and Preserve the role of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.
- Outlines the requirements and responsibilities for members appointed the Advisory Council.

### **Section 6. Land to be Held in Trust.**

- Requires approximately 126 acres of land in the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve owned in fee by the Tribe to be taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe.

## **H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar), “La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act”**

### **Section 3. Conveyance to LaPaz County Arizona**

- Directs the BLM, after receiving a request from La Paz County, Arizona, to convey approximately 3,400 acres of land to the County at fair market value, subject to valid existing rights and excluding any land with significant cultural or recreational resources.
- Conditions the conveyance on La Paz County, or any subsequent owner of the conveyed land:
  - making good faith efforts to avoid disturbing Tribal artifacts;
  - minimizing impacts on Tribal artifacts if they are disturbed;
  - coordinating with the Colorado River Indian Tribes Tribal Historic Preservation Office to identify artifacts of cultural and historic significance; and
  - allowing Tribal representatives to rebury unearthed artifacts at, or near, where they were discovered.
- Withdraws conveyed federal land from the operation of U.S. mining and mineral leasing laws.
- Sets stipulations regarding the availability of the map, costs associated with the conveyance, and proceeds from the sale of the land.

## **H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis), “Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act”**

### **Section 2. Definitions.**

- Defines the term “operational flexibility” as changes to grazing management of an allotment or allotment area that are different from the grazing permit or lease, different from previous grazing management, or occur due to change landscape or producer needs.

### **Section 3. Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program.**

- Provides the Secretary of the Interior with the authority to carry out a voluntary grazing management program to provide increased flexibility to improve the long-term ecological health of rangeland.
- Requires consultation with authorized grazing permittee or lessee, federal and state agencies, Tribes, and other landowners or affected permittees in developing a flexible grazing use alternative.

- Allows flexibility to progress in meeting applicable Rangeland Health Standards and livestock management objectives in the land use plan.
- Requires annual reports on the effects of flexibility in grazing permits or leases.
- Provides protection for current grazing permits and privileges. Protects current grazing permits and leases by ensuring this management program does not affect the existence, renewal, or termination of a grazing permit or lease entered into under the program.

### [H.R. 9165 \(Rep. Maloy\), “Public Land Search and Rescue Act”](#)

#### **Section 2. Grant Program for Remote Search and Rescue Activities**

- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish a grant program to provide resources to States or political subdivisions of a State authorized to conduct remote SAR activities on lands managed by the DOI or USFS.
- Requires the Secretary prioritize grants in areas with a high ratio of visitors to residents.
- Lists eligible projects for grants including the purchase of equipment and gear necessary for remote SAR, maintenance and repair of SAR equipment, and reimbursements to eligible recipients for SAR activities.
- Stipulates that the federal share of assistance under the program shall be 75 percent of the cost of an eligible project.

### [H.R. 9528 \(Rep. Pallone\), To designate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.](#)

#### **Section 1. Redesignation of Paterson Great Falls NHP Facilities.**

- Re-designates the Great Falls Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge at Paterson Great Falls NHP as the “Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge.”
- Re-designates the Overlook Park at Paterson Great Falls NHP as “Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. Overlook Park.”

### [H.R. 10082 \(Rep. Bentz\), “Oregon Owyhee Wilderness and Community Protection Act”](#)

#### **Section 3. Malheur County Grazing Management Program.**

- Provides the Secretary of the Interior with authority to carry out a voluntary grazing management program to provide increased flexibility to improve the long-term ecological health.
- Allows flexibility in meeting applicable Rangeland Health Standards and livestock management objectives in the land use plan.
- Requires the Secretary to adopt a monitoring plan on any action taken to provide flexibility.
- Requires annual reports on the effects of flexibility in grazing permits or leases.
- Provides protection for current grazing permits and privileges.

#### **Section 4. Malheur C.E.O. Group.**

- Establishes the Malheur C.E.O. Group (Group) with eight voting members, to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with representatives of the grazing community,

businesses or conservation organizations, and Tribes. Appointments are to be made within 180 days of enactment, and each member will serve for three years.

- Specifies the Group will determine the projects to be carried out on federal and non-federal land within the county relating to ecological restoration, range improvements, wildlife management, invasive species management, restoration of water infrastructure, conservation, economic development, or research.

### **Section 5. Wilderness Designations and Other Land Designations and Related Management to Designations.**

- Designates approximately 926,588 acres of previously designated WSA land as wilderness in Malheur County, Oregon in 16 different areas.
- Requires the allowance of grazing livestock in the wilderness areas if established before the date of enactment of the bill, including any issued within the last 10 years.
- Allows the continuation of motorized use of roads in wilderness designated areas.
- Requires reasonable access to any private lands, state lands, or Tribal lands within the boundaries of any wilderness designated.
- Allows the use of mechanical equipment, including chainsaws, backhoe excavators, or tractors, for the purpose of wildfire suppression, invasive species control, or activities necessary for management of livestock present on the land under grazing permits.
- Provides authority for Secretary to manage or restore fish and wildlife populations in designated wilderness areas, including the use of motorized vehicles and aircraft.
- Releases a total of 601,295 acres of WSA land and 1,065,597 acres of lands with wilderness characteristics.
- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to update the resource management plan for this area after three years.
- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to publish a map of existing roads in the proposed wilderness designated areas.

### **Section 6. Land Conveyances to Burns Paiute Tribe and Castle Rock Co-Stewardship Area.**

- Allows Secretary of the Interior to accept approximately 32,371 acres of land conveyed on behalf of the Burns Paiute Tribe to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Tribe.
- Directs land exchanges with the state to acquire lands desired for Burns Paiute Tribe.
- Directs an additional 2,500 acres of land current in a WSA to be held in trust for the Burns Paitue Tribe.
- Requires BLM to allow grazing on the land held in trust for the Tribe and sets several stipulations for grazing.
- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Burns Paiute Tribe to develop the Castle Rock Co-Stewardship Area of approximately 7,000 acres. The MOU will address the consideration of Tribal interests, protection of cultural and archaeological resources, natural resources protection, and interests of grazing permittees.
- Allows for land exchanges to acquire private land from willing sellers in the new co-stewardship area.



- Withdraws the co-stewardship area from disposal under public land laws, mining laws, mineral and geothermal leasing.

### **Section 7. Future Protection of Fire Suppression, Invasive Species Control, and Livestock Production Values on Federal Land in County.**

- Finds that protection against wildfire, invasive species, and livestock production are essential in the management of federal land.
- Provides the Secretary of the Interior the authority to take any and all actions to control wildfire and invasive species.
- Ensures continuation of livestock grazing on the land describe in this bill.

### **H.R. 10084 (Rep. Clyburn), “Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act”**

#### **Section 2. Extension of Authorization.**

- Amends “African American Civil Rights Network Act” to reauthorize the program for ten years following the enactment of the “Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act.”

## **V. COST**

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the Senate companion for H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar) would increase net direct spending by \$2 million over the 2024-2034 period.”<sup>66</sup>

Formal cost estimates for the remaining pieces of legislation are not available at this time.

## **VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION**

In testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the following administration positions were offered:

- BLM testified in support of the intended goals of companion legislation to H.R. 8517 (Rep. Gosar), but also expressed their desire to address concerns regarding an existing utility corridor and ensuring conveyed lands are used for renewable energy.<sup>67</sup>
- Regarding companion legislation to H.R. 6441 (Rep. Vasquez), the administration supported the goal of the bill but offered to work on amendments addressing unintended consequences for wildlife.<sup>68</sup>
- BLM testified in support of companion legislation to H.R. 9062 (Rep. Curtis) and stated: “The Department supports the bill’s goal to provide the BLM with flexibility to restore the ecological health of public lands used for grazing and welcomes the opportunity to

<sup>66</sup> Congressional Budget Office, “S.1657, La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act”, April 5, 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-04/s1657.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Statement of Thomas Heinlein before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, July 12, 2023, <https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2023-07/07.12.23%20SENR%20Hearing%20BLM%20Testimony.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> Statement of Karen Kelleher before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, June 12, 2024, <https://www.doi.gov/oc/pending-legislation-78>.

work with the Sponsor to ensure the use of operational flexibility does not result in unintended consequences.”<sup>69</sup>

- NPS expressed support for the companion to H.R. 8182 (Rep. Austin Scott of GA) with suggested amendments.

The administration’s position on the remaining bills on the agenda is unknown.

## **VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)**

### **[H.R. 10084](#)**

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<sup>69</sup> See BLM testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, June 12, 2024, <https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/C9B38B90-39FE-432A-8EC0-388F07FA1771>.