

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

December 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Grijalva:

Americans are increasingly concerned with the opportunity costs of Democrats' impeachment fixation. Due to this singular focus, important issues facing the American people have gone neglected. Bipartisan Congressional activity has ground to a halt, at least in the House, where partisan politics now overwhelmingly take precedent over policymaking. Our Committee is not immune from these unfortunate consequences.

We are amid yet another prolonged catastrophic wildfire season. With deaths reported, millions of acres burned, and hundreds of buildings destroyed, citizens remain wary of Congress's ability to improve the situation. Last year's wildfires destroyed nearly nine million acres of land and inflicted lethal havoc on western communities. Thoughtful proposals from members on both sides of the aisle in the House and Senate have been offered to improve forest health and mitigate the destructive impacts of severe, uncontrollable fires.¹ Yet, this Committee has done nothing.

Our vast public lands in this country have fallen into chronic disrepair with a maintenance backlog totaling nearly \$20 billion. Rank-and-file Democrats and Republicans have coalesced around a thoughtful policy solution, H.R. 1225, the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act*, and worked to build 329 bipartisan sponsors in support of the bill. H.R. 1225 is one of the most diverse, widely supported bills in the history of the House of Representatives. H.R. 1225 has support from over 85 percent of House Democrats, including 87 percent of all freshman Democrats, and 75 percent of the members of our Committee. The failure of the bill to move forward to a vote in the House can only be attributed to the majority's disdain for the political party label of the bill's sponsor. It would be wiser to spend more time encouraging Democrat leadership to schedule a vote on such bipartisan legislation instead of more partisan messaging bills that have no realistic path to becoming law.

In contrast, in previous Congresses under Republican leadership, thoughtful, bipartisan bills were welcome regardless of the sponsor's party. In the last Congress, the Committee reported 228 bills. Roughly 177 went on to pass the House and 50 or more became law, including a significant number of Democrat bills. Another 53 Democrat bills became law as part of S. 47, the bipartisan omnibus lands package negotiated in the 115th Congress.

¹ See, e.g., Press Release, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Feinstein, Daines Developing Bipartisan Bill to Protect Communities from Wildfires (Aug. 1, 2019) available at https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ContentRecord_id=9BC2CAA7-5401-4CAE-A302-32139E6F0DAA. See also Josh Siegel, *Republican Bruce Westerman Proposes Curbing Western Wildfires Through Forest Management Overhaul*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER, May 8, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/republican-bruce-westerman-proposes-curbing-western-wildfires-through-forest-management-overhaul>; *Resilient Federal Forests Bill Reintroduced*, TIMES RECORD, May 12, 2019, <https://www.swtimes.com/news/20190512/resilient-federal-forests-bill-reintroduced>.

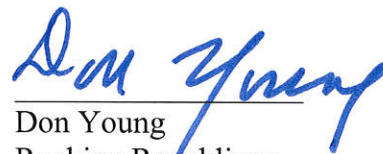
This letter is a plea to focus on what the American people sent us here to do. Americans did not elect us to waste precious time pushing bills for radical liberal special interests that will never become law, invite ex-NFL players and former tobacco industry representatives to discuss climate science, or to conduct witch hunts for nothing more than the sake of creating a public spectacle. Rather, we should be debating and advancing sound policies that will benefit the American public and help the federal government work for them, not against them. We should be working to make Americans' lives easier, not more difficult.

In the past, this Committee has demonstrated that it can place partisanship and dogma aside to advance bipartisan solutions. Let's us work together for the good of our constituents on a better, more productive path. Enclosed is a list of bills worthy of your consideration in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



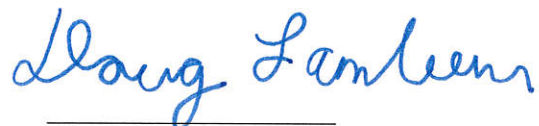
Rob Bishop
Ranking Republican



Don Young
Ranking Republican
Subcommittee on National
Parks, Forests, and Public Lands



Louie Gohmert
Ranking Republican
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Rob Wittman
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Ranking Republican
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans,
and Wildlife



Paul Gosar
Ranking Republican
Subcommittee on Energy and
Mineral Resources



Paul Cook
Ranking Republican
Subcommittee on Indigenous
Peoples



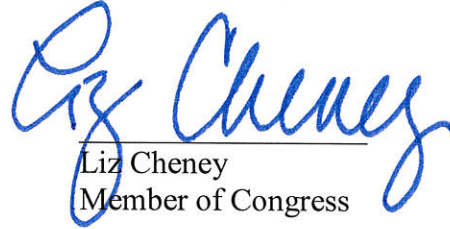
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



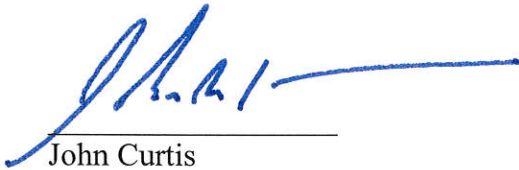
Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



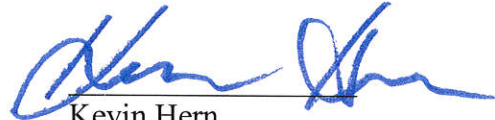
Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



John Curtis
Member of Congress



Kevin Hern
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress

We formally request that the Committee markup the following bills:

- H.R. 30, the SAVES Act
- H.R. 537, the Bureau of Reclamation Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act
- H.R. 548, the FISH Act
- H.R. 579, the Water Rights Protection Act
- H.R. 644, the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act of 2019
- H.R. 998, the State Mineral Review Protection Act of 2019
- H.R. 1621, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act
- H.R. 2607, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2019
- H.R. 3671, the Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act
- H.R. 3814, the Domestic Offshore Energy Reinvestment Act of 2019
- H.R. 4026, the Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act
- H.R. 4294, the American Energy First Act

We formally request your engagement with Democrat leadership in support of advancing the following bills in the House:

- H.R. 278, To direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain facilities, easements, and rights-of-way to the Kennewick Irrigation District, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 315, the Community Reclamation Partnership Act
- H.R. 1014, the Offshore Wind for Territories Act
- H.R. 1218, the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act
- H.R. 1225, the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act
- H.R. 1314, the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act Amendments of 2019