

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

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Mail Stop 6242  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower EOB, Room 251  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Haaland and Director Young:

The House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) conducts one of the most robust hearing schedules in Congress. In 2023 alone, the Committee held 92 hearings across its Full Committee and five Subcommittees. As the House of Representatives' authorizing Committee for the Department of the Interior (DOI), and as part of this Committee's ongoing oversight of DOI, the lack of timely responses to questions for the record (QFRs) following Committee hearings is deeply concerning.

The Committee is troubled by the fact that witnesses from the Biden administration have appeared before the Committee without adequate preparation to answer questions during hearings. Instead, they seem to prefer taking QFRs, either to avoid providing information to the Committee and the American people, or as a dilatory tactic to provide responses with such a significant delay that it renders the response moot. Members may also submit QFRs to delve deeper into the issues, or in the interest of time. Regardless of motivation, Members expect the responses to their questions to be treated with the same gravity and urgency as if they were asked in person, at the hearing. A recent example of this disregard were the responses to QFRs received by the Committee from Secretary Haaland's April 19, 2023, appearance before the Committee on President Biden's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request. The responses to those QFRs were only just received on January 12, 2024, nearly nine months after her testimony. The Committee clearly states in its Rules<sup>1</sup>, and at the conclusion of each hearing, as read aloud by the Chair, that under Committee Rule 3, the hearing record will be held open for ten business days for responses. It is shameful and unacceptable for DOI and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to take upwards of nine months to provide responses to the Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rules of the Committee on Natural Resources. Adopted Feb. 1, 2023  
[https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/118th\\_natural\\_resources\\_committee\\_rules\\_adopted.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/118th_natural_resources_committee_rules_adopted.pdf).

The alarming disregard for the American public's right to the timely presentation of the full scope of the hearing is not acceptable. Of the 40 instances of DOI officials testifying before the Committee during the First Session of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, 21 sets of QFRs remain outstanding and unanswered, the oldest of which dates back to March 2023. There is no justifiable reason for the many months-long delays in receiving responses to Members' questions for the record. It can only be interpreted as an intentional obfuscation on behalf of DOI and OMB to hinder the oversight and legislative work of the Committee.

An attachment to this letter provides a full list of the hearings for which the Committee has yet to receive responses to QFRs. Please provide the responses to all outstanding QFRs, in electronic format, no later than March 1, 2024. Please contact Sophia Varnasidis, Director of Legislative Operations with the Majority staff at the (202) 225-2761 or [sophia@mail.house.gov](mailto:sophia@mail.house.gov) with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation and timely response to this issue.

Sincerely,



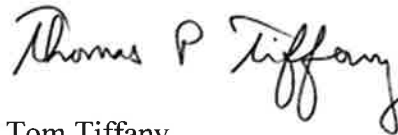
Bruce Westerman  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources



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



Pete Stauber  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral  
Resources



Tom Tiffany  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands



Cliff Bentz  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and  
Fisheries



Harriet M. Hageman  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Rob Wittman  
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



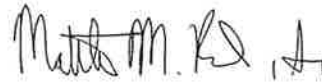
Jenniffer González-Colón  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



John Curtis  
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Jen Kiggans  
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt  
Member of Congress



Mike Collins  
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna  
Member of Congress



John Duarte  
Member of Congress

Enclosure

**Outstanding QFR Responses from the Department of the Interior  
as of February 15, 2024**

**Natural Resources Full Committee hearings:**

1. **Date of Hearing:** 06.15.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3397 (Rep. Curtis), To require the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw a rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to conservation and landscape health.  
**Witness Name and Title:** Ms. Nada Wolff Culver, Deputy Director of Policy and Programs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Bureau of Land Management

**Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources hearings:**

2. **Date of Hearing:** 09.13.23  
**Hearing Title:** Oversight hearing on *“Examining the Methodology and Structure of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Critical Minerals List”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** Dr. Nedal Nassar, Chief of Mineral Intelligence Research  
**Agency/Bureau:** USGS National Center
3. **Date of Hearing:** 09.19.23  
**Hearing Title:** Oversight hearing on *“Examining the Biden Administration’s Mismanagement of the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Program”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Michael D. Nedd, Deputy Director  
**Agency/Bureau:** Bureau of Land Management
4. **Date of Hearing:** 10.18.23  
**Hearing Title:** Oversight hearing on *“Examining the Biden Administration’s Unprecedented Obstruction of the BOEM Offshore Leasing Program”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** Ms. Elizabeth Klein, Director  
**Agency/Bureau:** Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
5. **Date of Hearing:** 11.14.23  
**Hearing Title:** Oversight hearing on *“Examining the Biden Administration’s Abandoned Mine Lands and Active Mining Programs”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** Ms. Glenda H. Owens, Deputy Director  
**Agency/Bureau:** Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
6. **Date of Hearing:** 11.29.23  
**Hearing Title:** Legislative Hearing on H.R. 6285  
**Witness Name and Title:** Dr. Steven Feldgus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior

7. **Date of Hearing:** 12.12.23  
**Hearing Title:** Legislative Hearing on 3 bills: H.R. 5482, H.R. 6474, and H.R. 6481  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Deb Haaland, Secretary [Invited]\*  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior  
\*Agency did not provide a witness, but BLM did provide a statement for the record

**Subcommittee on Federal Lands hearings:**

8. **Date of Hearing:** 06.22.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on Five Regulatory Streamlining and Federal Estate Management Bills: H.R. 2997, H.R.3025, H.R. 3049, H.R. 3250, and H.R. 4141  
**Witness Name and Title:** Ms. Nada Wolff Culver, Principal Deputy Director  
**Agency/Bureau:** Bureau of Land Management
9. **Date of Hearing:** 07.13.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on five bills celebrating America: H.R. 386, H.R. 1318, H.R. 2717, H.R. 3448, and H.R. 4377  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Mike Reynolds, Deputy Director for External and Congressional Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** National Park Service
10. **Date of Hearing:** 09.19.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on four outdoor recreation bills: H.R. 1657, H.R. 3107, H.R. 3200, and H.R. 4984  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Mike Reynolds, Deputy Director for External and Congressional Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** National Park Service
11. **Date of Hearing:** 12.05.23  
**Title of Hearing:** *“Examining Opportunities to Promote and Enhance Tribal Forest Management”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Bodie Shaw, Deputy Regional Director- Trust Services, Northwest Region  
**Agency/Bureau:** Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs // Indo-Pacific Task Force hearings:**

12. **Date of Hearing:** 03.24.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on two bills: H.R. 1246 & H.R. 1532  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior
13. **Date of Hearing:** 05.25.23  
**Title of Hearing:** *“Examining the President’s FY 2024 Budget Request for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of Insular Affairs”*  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior

14. **Date of Hearing:** 06.07.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on 6 bills: H.R. 630, H.R. 1240, H.R. 1722, H.R. 2461, H.R. 2839, and H.R. 3371  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior
15. **Date of Hearing:** 07.12.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on 3 bills: H.R. 929, H.R. 2882, and H.R. 3579  
**Witness Name and Title:** Ms. Heather Dawn Thompson, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior
16. **Date of Hearing:** 11.14.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Oversight Hearing on “*Opportunities and Challenges for Improving Public Safety in Tribal Communities*”  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior
17. **Date of Hearing:** 12.05.23  
**Title of Hearing:** Legislative Hearing on 4 bills: H.R. 4524, H.R. 4748, H.R. 6368, and H.R. 6443  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Jason Freihage, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management  
**Agency/Bureau:** Department of the Interior

**Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations hearings:**

18. **Date of Hearing:** 05.25.23  
**Title of Hearing:** “*Examining Barriers to Access: Ongoing Visitor Experience Issues at America’s National Parks*”  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Mike Reynolds, Deputy Director for External and Congressional Affairs  
**Agency/Bureau:** National Park Service
19. **Date of Hearing:** 12.05.23  
**Title of Hearing:** “*Limiting Access and Damaging Gateway Economies: Examining the National Parks Air Tour Management Program*”  
**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Ray Sauvajot, Associate Director of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science  
**Agency/Bureau:** National Park Service

**Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries hearings:**

20. **Date of Hearing:** 07.18.23  
**Hearing Title:** Oversight Hearing on “*ESA at 50: The Destructive Cost of the ESA*”  
**Witness Name and Title:** The Hon. Martha Williams, Director  
**Agency/Bureau:** Fish and Wildlife Service

21. **Date of Hearing:** 10.25.23

**Hearing Title:** Legislative Hearing on 7 bills: H.R. 520, H.R. 2990, H.R. 5103, H.R. 5504, H.R. 5509, H.R. 5874, and a Discussion Draft To prohibit the implementation of certain documents until the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of the National Marine Fisheries Service issues documents relating to the Rice's whale.

**Witness Name and Title:** Mr. Gary Frazer, Assistant Director for Ecological Services  
**Agency/Bureau:** Fish and Wildlife Service