

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**  
**May 15, 2019**  
**10:00 a.m.**

Oversight Hearing on  
“U.S. Department of the Interior Budget and Policy Priorities for FY 2020.”

**Questions from Rep. Huffman** for Secretary David Bernhardt, U.S. Department of the Interior

1. Mr. Secretary, during the hearing you committed to getting back to me with an answer on a question regarding the re-initiation of consultation for CVP operations, and I wanted to follow up on this issue.
  - a. Have you directed the re-initiation of consultation for CVP operations to include Old and Middle River storm flexibility provisions like those in the WIIN Act? Have you given any direction in that regard? Can you please share with the committee what directives you have provided on the re-initiation of consultation for CVP operations?
2. Mr. Secretary, in September 2017, Interior’s Inspector General found that the federal government improperly subsidized the planning process for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan – which benefited the Westlands Water District – and failed to disclose this to Congress and the public. On October 24, 2017, Chair Grijalva and I requested a GAO legal opinion on this accounting scheme. On April 10, 2019, Chair Grijalva and I wrote to you because we were told you were not providing information the GAO requested.
  - a. At the hearing, you committed to checking with ethics on this. Can you commit to directing Interior staff to cooperate with the GAO on this matter that would appear to benefit your former client?
3. Mr. Secretary, in response to my question about the shutdown you responded that “We directed folks to report for renewable projects, certainly for one particular solar project I’m aware of we put people back to work right away.” I have seen no evidence to support this claim.

You also expressed surprise that BOEM did not decide to bring back employees to work on offshore wind permit reviews and alluded to the reason being the cost of doing so. To clarify your responses during the hearing, please respond in writing to the following questions:

- a. How many employees were brought back during the shutdown to work on wind (both onshore and offshore), solar, and geothermal projects? How many hours of

work did these employees provide? Please provide this data separately for each energy resource.

- b. How many employees were brought back to work during the shutdown for onshore and offshore oil and gas activities? How many hours did these employees work?
- c. How much money did it cost to bring back these employees working on oil and gas activities?
- d. Who made the decision not to bring back employees to work on offshore wind projects and why? What was the estimated cost of bringing back employees to work on offshore wind?