

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

# **Authorization and Oversight Plan**

**119th Congress**



**Chairman Bruce Westerman**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to clause 2(d)(1) of Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) adopted the following Authorization and Oversight Plan for the 119th Congress. The Committee will conduct ongoing oversight of the Executive Branch to strengthen America's environment and economy, promote access to public lands and natural resources, and enhance conservation through innovation and efficiency. The Committee will review all laws and programs within its jurisdiction to assess their application, administration, execution, and effectiveness while providing transparency and accountability. The Committee seeks to eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement through such examination.

Congress is responsible for keeping the government accountable to the American people, ensuring decisions by agencies are open and transparent and the effective stewardship of taxpayers' money. The adopted Authorization and Oversight Plan identifies select agencies and programs with lapsed authorizations and outlines the initial and primary oversight focuses of the Committee. Additional oversight activities are expected to arise throughout the first and second sessions of the 119th Congress.

The Committee will consult, as appropriate, with other committees of the House that may share jurisdiction on any of the oversight activities the Committee may consider.

## **REGULATORY REVIEW**

Committee oversight activities will assist in the collection of relevant information to support the Committee's legislative agenda, monitor the implementation of public policy, and ensure the government's performance in subject matters within the Committee's jurisdiction. Accordingly, the Committee will examine the effectiveness of natural resources laws. Oversight focus will also be provided on how laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Wilderness Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, and others may exceed their regulatory purposes resulting in costly litigation and other adverse consequences to American taxpayers.

## **ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY**

The Committee will conduct thorough oversight of ethics compliance at the federal departments and agencies under its jurisdiction. It will review the operations of departmental ethics offices, ethics training, guidance, and compliance, among other considerations.

## **PREVENTING FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE, AND PROMOTING EFFICIENCY**

The Committee will identify fraud, waste, or abuse at the Department of the Interior and other departments and agencies within its jurisdiction while seeking to promote good government and streamline regulatory efficiencies within these departments and agencies. The Committee will also work with federal agencies and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to reduce unnecessary spending, make the federal government more efficient, and ensure better stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

## **SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AND GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Committee will continue oversight over scientific integrity policies to ensure that scientific activities by agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction are conducted in a manner that is accurate and objective and open to appropriate oversight from Congress. In addition, the Committee will conduct oversight of federal grants awarded by the agencies and bureaus within its jurisdiction to ensure an efficient, fair, and transparent grantmaking process.

## **ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES**

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will review the Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 budget requests for federal land management programs and agencies under its jurisdiction, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The Committee will also work to raise revenues and reduce the federal deficit through budget reconciliation measures that capitalize on our vast domestic energy potential. Lastly, the Committee will work closely with the Trump administration to review agency spending and ensure proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars. In particular, the Committee will seek to eliminate wasteful programs and ensure responsible allocation of funds under the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Expanding Domestic Energy Production –The Committee will work alongside the Trump administration to unleash domestic energy production, meet growing demand, and reduce costs for American families. This effort will create high-paying jobs here at home, increase our global competitiveness, bring greater economic benefits to states and local communities, and improve U.S. national security and energy security for our allies—all while displacing foreign sources and reducing global emissions.

Fiscal Responsibility Act Implementation and NEPA Reform – The Committee will work closely with the Trump administration to revise NEPA regulations and ensure proper implementation of the historic NEPA reforms included in the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA). Furthermore, the Committee will continue its pursuit of common-sense NEPA reforms that will end permitting delays and frivolous litigation on key infrastructure projects, as well as unnecessary administrative burdens on federal agencies.

Onshore Oil and Natural Gas Programs – In the 119th Congress, the Committee will work with the Trump administration to follow the law by holding quarterly lease sales across the western United States and Alaska and reverse administrative actions that have created permitting delays and disincentivized energy production on federal lands. This includes holding meaningful lease sales under the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA), ensuring lands are not improperly disqualified for oil and gas leasing, streamlining the Interior Board of Land Appeals’ (IBLA) drawn-out appeals process, reissuing leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and restoring access to millions of acres in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A). The Committee will also conduct oversight regarding implementation of the over \$4 billion allocated under the IJA for cleanup of orphaned and abandoned wells and ensure that those funds are not squandered as a result of burdensome monitoring requirements.

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Natural Gas – The Committee has jurisdiction over the administration of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) and will work to ensure safe and responsible production of America’s offshore oil and natural gas resources. Specifically, the Committee will collaborate with the Trump administration to revitalize DOI’s 2024-2029 offshore oil and gas leasing plan, prioritizing consistent lease sales to deliver critical benefits. These sales will generate Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) revenue to fund coastal resilience projects and hurricane recovery efforts, bolster the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and provide much-needed resources to coastal states. Additionally, they will help lower energy costs for American families, create thousands of well-paying jobs, and strengthen local economies. This is necessary to reverse the consequences of the Biden Administration’s misguided policies—such as, for the first time since 1958, failing to hold a single lease sale in 2024 and delaying reviews of the 2025 sale, effectively imposing a two-year leasing moratorium through procedural inaction. The Committee will also work with DOI to improve resource assessment methodology in the Outer Continental Shelf and bring increased energy revenues to states for economic development and restoration projects.

Renewable and Alternative Energy – In the 119th Congress, the Committee will conduct oversight over current solar, geothermal, and wind programs operated by the Bureau of Ocean and Energy

Management, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service. The Committee will examine ways to reduce duplicative NEPA reviews and litigation that delay renewable projects. The Committee will also explore mechanisms for renewable energy revenue sharing and work with the Trump administration to ensure that BLM regulations and Resource Management Plans uphold a technology-neutral “all of the above” approach regarding renewable energy development and revenue collection.

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) – The Committee will conduct oversight of ONRR to ensure accountability and the accurate and appropriate collection of energy and mineral revenues. The ONRR collects an average of over \$10 billion in annual revenue, making this office responsible for collecting one of the federal government’s largest sources of non-tax revenue. Specifically, the Committee will work with President Trump and the Secretary of the Interior to address ONRR’s history of arbitrary request denials and prioritization of quantitative goals rather than accurate royalty payment and recovery.

Mineral Security – The Committee will conduct aggressive oversight of domestic hardrock mineral resources, including critical minerals, especially regarding the nation’s current and planned production on federal lands. The Committee will also continue to review ways to responsibly increase production through legislation. To further these goals, the Committee will examine the steeply rising global demand for hardrock minerals, insufficient rates of domestic production to meet this demand, and the resultant risks to our mineral supply chain brought by overreliance on foreign sources. Furthermore, the Committee will place an emphasis on unlocking our significant domestic mineral potential through actions such as overturning the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals’ harmful “Rosemont decision,” expanding interagency and intergovernmental efforts to streamline mine permitting, and supporting the Trump administration in overturning disastrous withdrawals, delays, and stymieing of hardrock mineral development on federal lands. Lastly, the Committee will closely monitor the implementation of the hardrock abandoned mine lands program established by the IJJA.

Coal Mining Regulations and Leasing – The Committee will work alongside President Trump and the Secretary of the Interior to reverse the Biden Administration’s war on coal that has significantly impacted domestic energy reliability, job security, and federal revenues. Specifically, this involves revising the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement’s (OSMRE) recent Wyoming and Montana RMPs, which remove millions of acres from consideration for future coal leasing. The Committee will also explore overturning OSMRE rules and practices that reduce state regulatory independence and hinder transparent access to federal funding. Lastly, the Committee will track the implementation of the \$11.3 billion in additional funding for the Abandoned Mine Lands Program allocated under the IJJA, including the revision of departmental guidance regarding the use of such funds.

United States Geological Survey (USGS) – The Committee will coordinate with the Trump administration to support USGS programs that ensure accurate siting of hardrock minerals and other resources, such as the Earth MRI program, as well as mapping programs for hazard risk assessment, land use planning, and geothermal resource evaluation. The Committee will work to move three authorization bills relating to hazard reduction early in the 119th Congress. The

Committee will work to reauthorize the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program (NLHRP), and the National Volcano Early Warning System (NVEWS). These essential programs must remain operational to help mitigate the impacts of natural disasters. The Committee will also continue its efforts to improve the methodology USGS uses when publishing the Critical Minerals List (CML) and simplify mineral classification across the federal government. Additionally, the Committee will work closely with President Trump and the Secretary of the Interior to eliminate unauthorized funding for climate-related USGS programs and other wasteful spending across the agency.

## **FEDERAL LANDS**

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will review the Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 budget requests for federal land management programs and agencies under its jurisdiction, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and identify fraud, waste, and abuse. In particular, the Committee will continue to examine spending under the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure IJA.

Forest Health and Wildfires – Across the nation, more than one billion acres are identified as at risk for wildfire and millions of acres continue to burn in catastrophic wildfires every year, particularly in the West. The Committee will conduct oversight on forest health, wildfire prevention and suppression, and the need for more active management of our national forests. The Committee will continue to monitor USFS’ progress towards meeting its goal of treating an additional 20 million acres of federal land over the next 10 years through the “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis” strategy. Additionally, the Committee will investigate how failure to manage federal forests results in unnecessary pollution and emissions, economic damages, loss of life and property, destruction of wildlife habitat, and degraded air and water quality.

Deferred Maintenance at our National Parks and Public Lands – Despite historic investments in deferred maintenance through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), maintenance backlogs at the federal land management agencies continue to increase exponentially. Nowhere is this issue more acute than at NPS, which saw its backlog increase from roughly \$11.9 billion in 2018 to over \$23 billion in 2023. This over \$11 billion increase in the backlog over the past five years is indicative of greater underlying problems in how we manage our parks and deserves renewed attention and oversight.

Federal Land Acquisition – The Committee will conduct oversight of the federal land acquisition process, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and the growing size of the federal estate. Proposals for expanding the federal estate will be examined with due regard for the merits of the proposal, spending constraints, input of local stakeholders, our national need for access to vital resources, and the protection of private property rights. The Committee will work with local and state stakeholders to identify lands in the federal estate that the federal government no longer wants or needs, particularly in states and counties predominately comprised of federal lands.

Access and Recreation – The Committee will conduct oversight on ways to expand access to our national parks, national forests, and public lands for recreational and sportsmen’s activities. The Committee will evaluate proposals to ensure greater access to, and enjoyment of, the abundant outdoor recreation opportunities offered by our public lands. During the 119th Congress, the

Committee will build upon previous legislative efforts from the 118th Congress, particularly the EXPLORE Act, a comprehensive, bipartisan, bicameral legislation that works to improve access and transform recreation opportunities on public lands and waters.

Conservation versus Preservation – The Committee will conduct oversight to ensure our public lands provide secure domestic sources of energy, food, fiber, minerals, jobs, and recreation under appropriate conservation standards. The Committee will conduct oversight of preservation and unilateral land designations, such as national monument designations under the Antiquities Act of 1906 and mineral withdrawals, that usurp the authority and will of Congress, State, and local stakeholders. The Committee will conduct oversight of the BLM and USFS to ensure the agencies follow their multiple use and sustained yield mandates.

Grazing – When managed properly, grazing on federal lands can enhance rangeland health and reduce the build-up of hazardous fuels. As one of the most effective wildfire reduction tools, grazing can also help conserve habitat for species like the Greater Sage Grouse. The Committee will examine ways in which grazing can benefit the economy and the health of federal rangelands, and ways to better protect the practice against frivolous litigation and unnecessary regulation.

Sustainable Funding Sources for Conservation Programs – The Committee will conduct oversight on the longevity of revenue streams for conservation funds, including LWCF, the Historic Preservation Fund, and the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund, especially due to previous Biden administration efforts to ban new oil and gas leases on federal lands and waters. that undercut the GAOA and threaten the long-term solvency of important conservation programs.

Natural Climate Solutions – From planting trees to incentivizing innovative grazing practices, public and private lands must play a large role in future discussions on responsible, commonsense solutions to climate change. The Committee will continue to review new innovative practices that benefit the environment without sacrificing rural jobs and our nation’s overall economic health. This includes engaging with stakeholders to identify new frontiers in research and development that should be explored and further opportunities to support American innovation.

Park Partnerships – To truly enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the NPS should adopt more market-based solutions and engage in public-private partnerships to maximize agency resources and enhance visitor services. The Committee will continue to seek out examples of successful partnerships to learn from their successes and encourage the NPS to actively promote new partnership opportunities.

Checks and Balances – The Committee will examine administratively imposed activities and designations to ensure that these actions fully respect the interests and culture of the affected local people and do not infringe on authorities that more properly belong to elected officials in Congress and local government.

## **WATER AND POWER**

Increasing Water Supplies – The Committee will examine how to augment existing water storage and delivery projects in order to continue to serve millions of ratepayers and food consumers

nationwide. Many of these water supply and delivery and hydropower generation operations are impacted by drought, regulations, litigation, and other factors. The Committee will examine ways to improve water supplies through an all-of-the-above approach, including the protection and promotion of new water storage, to help achieve a policy of water abundance.

Colorado River Basin – The Committee is aware of the ongoing, serious drought impacting communities throughout the seven-state Colorado River region, and the need for the region to reach an agreement for operations beyond 2026. The Committee plans to work with the Executive Branch, tribes, the seven Colorado River Basin states, their congressional delegations and stakeholders to focus on the need to help mitigate and resolve this situation.

Protecting and Promoting Hydropower as a Clean, Renewable Energy Source – The Committee will examine ways to protect and promote large-scale and small-scale hydropower generation at existing and potential facilities within its jurisdiction. Hydropower is an emissions-free renewable energy that provides baseload and peaking power for millions of electricity consumers nationwide. Hydropower also serves as a backup electricity resource for intermittent renewable power. Federal hydropower resources have provided these benefits for generations. Drought, federal regulations, and litigation have curtailed some of these hydropower-producing dams. In the 118th Congress, the Committee heard numerous concerns about the dam infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest, particularly regarding the future of the Lower Snake River Dams. In the 119th Congress, the Committee will continue to examine ways to establish long-term certainty for the nation’s federal hydropower fleet.

Indian Water Rights Settlements – The Committee has longstanding jurisdiction over Indian Water Rights Settlements, which can be beneficial to Indian and non-Indian settling parties and can provide some water supply certainty for these parties. Since American taxpayer dollars are authorized in many of these settlements, the Committee will continue to examine how each settlement meets the Department of the Interior’s longstanding criteria and procedures relating to these matters. Additionally, the Committee will conduct oversight of the \$2.5 billion provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to implement the Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund. The Committee will continue encouraging negotiations for Indian Water Rights Settlements rather than unnecessary litigation.

## **FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will conduct oversight of the current spending and proposed annual budget requests of the National Marine Fisheries Service, certain programs of the Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under the Committee’s jurisdiction, and the Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and identify any fraud, waste, and abuse. The Committee will examine how the agencies utilized regular appropriations and additional funding provided through the IJA and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) – The Committee will continue examining the efficacy and modern use of the ESA, both in terms of species-specific issues and the underlying statute itself. In the 118th Congress, the Committee passed legislation to delist grizzly bear populations in the Greater



Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems and gray wolves in the lower-48 states, and passed Congressional Review Act resolutions related to species-specific issues. In addition, the Committee passed legislation to reform and reauthorize the ESA statute, which has not been reauthorized since 1988. The Committee will build upon these ideas in the 119th Congress. The Committee will also continue to monitor the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which governs international activities related to the ESA.

Empowering State Wildlife Agencies – The Committee will continue to examine ways to provide greater financial resources and regulatory opportunities for state wildlife agencies. In the 118th Congress, the Committee passed legislation that gave State wildlife agencies more financial resources to create and restore habitat for at-risk species. In addition, that legislation gave State agencies more regulatory opportunities to manage species listed as threatened under the ESA to incentivize recovery of those species. The Committee will continue to promote these ideas in the 119th Congress.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act – The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) is the primary statute regulating commercial and recreational fishing in federal waters. The MSA was last reauthorized in the 109th Congress and has helped the U.S. serve as the gold standard in fisheries management. Any efforts to reauthorize this legislation must first provide robust consideration of related policy issues and opportunities for stakeholders and the regional fishery management councils to provide input. The Committee will continue to examine ways to best support commercial and recreational fishing across the U.S., including using the best science and data to make management decisions.

Marine Protected Areas and Marine National Monuments – Ocean conservation is not mutually exclusive to ensuring that our federal offshore waters simultaneously remain a vital, sustainable, working, and recreational resource for communities and fishermen. The Committee will continue to exercise oversight over expansions of Marine Protected Areas and Marine National Monuments, and how these designations and expansions can negatively impact their surrounding communities.

Public Access and Management within the National Wildlife Refuge System – The Committee will examine how to improve access to, and management of, the U.S. National Wildlife Refuge System. In the 118th Congress, the House passed legislation that would prevent any proposed lead ammunition and fishing equipment ban that is not supported by science or State agencies. Any proposed lead ban could restrict access for sportsmen and women and be cost prohibitive for some in the hunting and fishing communities. The Committee will also continue to advocate for refuge management practices such as cooperative agriculture and predator control.

Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) – In the 118th Congress, the Committee heard concerns about numerous regulatory actions that NOAA took under the authorities provided in the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Among those that the Committee heard the most about were the unprecedented, proposed amendments to the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule; the issuance of take and harassment authorizations for various offshore activities; and MMPA's role in the issuance of biological opinions (BiOps). These actions, if flawed, impose a huge risk to industry and private citizens alike. The Committee will continue to

examine the process by which these regulations are developed and whether they are based in sound science and reasoning.

## **INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will examine the annual budget requests and staffing levels for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Bureau of Indian Education, and other agencies, offices and functions relating to Indian and Alaska Native affairs, and identify any fraud, waste, and abuse. The Committee will conduct oversight of agency programs with expired authorizations, to determine whether such programs warrant reauthorization, updating, or termination.

Federal Barriers to Economic Development on Indian Lands – Indian tribes have demonstrated that they are best suited to manage their land and resources. When tribes have greater control over their own lands, resources, and decisions, they can make the best decisions for their members and their future. Certain laws and policies govern public lands and lands held in trust or restricted fee for tribes or individual Indians. Activities occurring on tribal land are often subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, resulting in delays, excessive regulatory burdens, and loss of local control for tribes in decision-making. The Committee will conduct hearings on tribal economic development, including on federal laws and policies governing the use of lands held in land trust or restricted status for tribes and individual Indians, on the barriers to tribal energy development on trust lands, and the diversification of tribal economies that increase opportunity for tribal members and communities within or near tribal lands. The committee also intends to conduct oversight of the self-determination programs such as self-determination contracts, self-governance compacts, and the 477 program.

Tribal Forestry – In 2018, Congress passed certain provisions of the Resilient Federal Forest Act which provided tribes the authority to participate in federal Good Neighbor Authority projects. Tribes are good stewards of the environment and know how to manage their forests best. Unfortunately, severe fires throughout the U.S. have impacted many tribal nations. The Committee will conduct oversight to analyze and determine what additional tools will benefit tribal forest management activities and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires on tribal and non-tribal lands.

Natural Resources Management – The Department of the Interior holds approximately 56 million acres of land in trust or restricted status for tribes and individual Indians, with many of those lands having significant, undeveloped energy resources. In 2018, Congress passed the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2017 to increase tribes' ability to develop their resources on their lands should they choose to do so. The Committee will review the implementation of the Act, its furtherance of the goal of increasing tribal self-governance and economic development opportunities and ensure tribes can develop their resources on their lands should they choose to do so.

Land Fractionation – Fractionation of Indian land creates significant land management and administration challenges for both tribes and individual Indian owners, resulting in barriers to economic development, as well as land management and use. In 2010, the Claims Resolution Act

provided a one-time direct appropriation of \$1.9 billion to the Department of the Interior to consolidate highly fractionated Indian land pursuant to the Indian Land Consolidation Act. By 2017, the Land Buy Back Program for Tribal Nations (LBBP) had spent most of the \$1.9 billion but yielded little progress on reducing land fractionization. Without concerted efforts, land fractionation is expected to reach pre-LBBP levels by 2038. The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of the land consolidation program and solicit stakeholder input to find more fiscally sound options to reduce land fractionation in Indian country.

Alaska Natives – The Committee will review the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and other laws pertaining to Alaska Natives, such as the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

Law Enforcement in Indian Country – The Committee will conduct oversight of the implementation and impact of current law, policy, and agency action concerning the safety of indigenous people, including laws meant to address issues regarding missing and murdered indigenous people. The Committee will also examine law enforcement in Indian Country and tribal jurisdiction provisions, as well as improving recruitment and retention of qualified law enforcement officers. In addition, the Committee will review federal policies and programs related to law enforcement in Indian Country and determine whether such programs should be reauthorized, updated, or terminated. The Committee has the responsibility to ensure that the Office of Justice Services is using taxpayer funds for the best solutions to hire, train, and retain law enforcement officers in Indian Country.

Transnational Crime in Indian Country – Dangerous criminal Cartels have established extensive distribution networks in Indian communities for narcotics such as fentanyl and methamphetamine, leading to an increase in violence, crime, and drug overdoses that are ravaging communities across Indian country. The Committee will continue to work with tribal organizations across the U.S. to support law enforcement in efforts to eradicate the cartels, reduce related crimes, and address devastating drug addiction in certain Indian communities. Additionally, the Committee will identify challenges and opportunities for the BIA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to collaborate with tribal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute cartel activities on Indian lands.

Indian Health Care / Indian Health Service (IHS) – The Committee will review the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, with a focus on the delivery of medical services to Indian people, particularly those in remote reservations where access to health care is difficult and costly. Congress has increased Indian health funding nearly every year since fiscal year 2010. Despite these funding increases, reports from the U.S. Government Accountability Office continue to reveal that standards for the quality of care in federally operated Indian health care facilities are absent. Additionally, there continues to be a shortage of health care professionals throughout the twelve IHS areas. In 2017, the GAO placed IHS on its high-risk list as one of the government programs and operations that are vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, or need for transformation. In 2023, IHS began developing and implementing an agency work plan to improve the impact of the Indian health system, which has improved some aspects of healthcare for tribal members. However, recruitment and retention of health care professionals throughout the twelve IHS areas, particularly in rural areas, remains a challenge. To ensure efficient program operation

and modernize Indian health policy, the Committee will conduct oversight of Indian health programs.

Indian Education – During the 118th Congress, the Committee initiated a joint investigation with the Committee on Education and the Workforce on Haskell Indian Nations University, a Bureau of Indian Education post-secondary educational institution. The Committee uncovered a serious lack of oversight by BIE that has allowed potential misconduct to occur including fraud, retaliation against employees and students, mishandling of sexual assault incidents, and non-adherence to federal background investigation requirements. During the 119th Congress, the Committee will continue to investigate potential misconduct at Haskell Indian Nations University, and conduct oversight over other BIE educational facilities, including Flandreau Indian School, and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

## **INSULAR AFFAIRS**

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will conduct oversight of the annual budgets of the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) within the Department of the Interior, and identify fraud, waste, and abuse. The OIA serves a critical mission as territories rely heavily on the funding they receive from federal grants and OIA to support their economic stability. Each U.S. territory should exercise its own self-determination, rather than Congress imposing a “federal government knows best” approach on the Insular areas.

Energy Resources in the Insular Areas – The Committee will encourage federal efforts that ensure affordable and reliable energy systems that meet the individual needs of each Insular area, rather than forcing a federally mandated transition to renewable energy sources without regard for each territory’s particular circumstances and needs. The Committee will look to promote an all-of-the-above energy approach for the U.S. territories to ensure that the islands have access to affordable, reliable, and resilient energy.

Freely Associated States – The Committee will conduct oversight of the implementation of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) and assistance provided by the Department of the Interior’s OIA. COFA were entered into by the U.S. with three Pacific Island nations, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia, collectively referred to as the Freely Associated States (FAS). In 2024, Congress successfully passed the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024, reauthorizing and making amendments to the agreements that were negotiated between the United States and the FAS. These compacts continue a long-standing relationship between the U.S. and the FAS nations and enable mutually beneficial defense and economic connections between nations. These agreements are a primary deterrent against China's increasing aggression. The Committee will conduct oversight of the COFA implementation and its role in countering China’s aggression in the Indo-Pacific.

Oversight of the Insular Areas – The Committee will review the fundamental issues facing each of the territories and FAS, such as support and development of self-government and self-determination, economic development and self-sufficiency through the private sector, accountability of federal funds, implementation and enforcement of federal laws, implementation of the COFA, and the management of limited land and water resources. The Committee will also continue to conduct oversight over the implementation of the Puerto Rico

Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act.

Proposed National Marine Sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands – The Biden administration aggressively pursued Marine Protected Areas to accomplish their 30x30 goal, including the Proposed National Marine Sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands, with potential commercial fishing restrictions for the indigenous residents of the Pacific Remote Islands (PRI), who largely depend on tuna fishing and processing for their livelihoods. The Committee will work with the Trump administration and the PRI to protect their tuna fishing economy from unwanted and unnecessary federal actions.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

Foreign Influence – Throughout the Biden administration, foreign adversaries benefitted from the misguided environmental and natural resources policies that restricted the domestic development of our natural resources. During the 118th Congress, the Committee investigated potential foreign influence over domestic environmental and natural resources policies, particularly at DOI, accomplished through a network of U.S.-based activist non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Committee will continue identifying NGOs with ties to foreign adversaries such as the CCP and Iran and prevent foreign influence over domestic natural resources policy.

Violence and Disruption on Public Lands – On July 24, 2024, a group of U.S.-based non-profits operating under the ‘Shut It Down for Palestine’ movement staged a violent anti-Israel riot at a public gathering at Union Station in DC, a National Park Service site. The Committee will continue to investigate and provide recommendations to improve the public gathering permitting process for the National Park Service to improve the permitting process, and ensure it is not abused by organizations that intend to cause violence and destruction. Additionally, the Committee will continue to expose these organizations’ ties to foreign adversaries like the CCP, Iran, and Hamas.

Border Security and the Environment – As the Trump administration implements policies to reduce migrant crossings on the Southern Border, the Committee will assist the Trump administration to identify challenges faced by U.S. Border Patrol agents in securing federal borderlands, reducing the environmental impact of illegal border crossings, and eliminating drug smuggling and illegal marijuana cultivation on public lands. During the 119th Congress, the Committee will investigate NGOs that have contributed to increased illegal immigration, and consequently, the environmental damage on the Southern Border. Additionally, the Committee will conduct oversight of the Floyd Bennet Field Migrant Camp in New York City, the termination of the lease with NPS, and ensure that required improvements are made by NYC to the Floyd Bennet Field site.

DOI Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities – As new technologies emerge and foreign adversaries seek to exploit cybersecurity vulnerabilities related to critical infrastructure for our nation, the Committee will ensure that DOI is prioritizing cybersecurity. The Committee will assist the Trump administration in identifying emerging cyber threats and working to reduce or resolve, existing cybersecurity vulnerabilities at DOI to ensure the security of America’s critical energy infrastructure.