



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Staff
Date: Monday, July 13, 2026
Subject: Markup of 9 Bills

The House Committee on Natural Resources will hold a markup on **Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building**. The bills to be considered include: H.R. 726 (Rep. Downing); H.R. 2317 (Rep. Amodei); H.R. 2406 (Rep. Bonamici); H.R. 2827 (Rep. Cole); H.R. 6251 (Rep. Begich); H.R. 6893 (Rep. Scott of VA); H.R. 7889 (Rep. Wittman); H.R. 8658 (Rep. Kennedy of UT); and H.R. 9436 (Rep. Lawler).

Member offices are requested to notify Madeline Kelley (Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, to confirm their Member's attendance at the markup.

I. KEY MESSAGES & TOPLINE ACTIONS

- Bills expected to move by regular order: H.R. 726 (Rep. Downing), "*Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Amendments Act of 2025*"; H.R. 2317 (Rep. Amodei), "*Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2025*"; H.R. 6251 (Rep. Begich), To amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to allow importation of polar bear trophies taken in sport hunts in Canada before the date the polar bear was determined to be a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.; and H.R. 9436 (Rep. Lawler), To amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 to extend the time period for which certain regulations concerning the North Atlantic right whale are effective.
- Please note that H.R. 726, H.R. 2317, H.R. 6251, and H.R. 9436 will each have an amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS). Members should ensure that amendments are drafted to the ANS.
- Bills expected to move by unanimous consent: H.R. 2406 (Rep. Bonamici), "*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025*"; H.R. 2827 (Rep. Cole), To provide for the equitable settlement of certain Indian land disputes regarding land in Illinois, and for other purposes.; H.R. 6893 (Rep. Scott of VA), "*Chesapeake Bay Watershed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration, and Science (WATERS) Act*"; H.R. 7889 (Rep. Wittman), "*Advancing Water Research and Collaboration Act of 2025*" or "*AWRC Act of 2025*"; and H.R. 8658 (Rep. Kennedy of UT), "*Indian Health Service Emergency Claims Parity Act*".

II. EXPECTED LEGISLATION

[H.R. 726](#) (Rep. Downing), “*Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Amendments Act of 2025*”

H.R. 726 amends the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010, which was enacted as part of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-291). The statute authorized \$158 million in discretionary funding to enact the settlement and an additional \$302 million in mandatory funding.¹ P.L. 111-291 also directed the Bureau of Reclamation to use those funds to improve the Crow Irrigation Project (CIP) and to design and construct a Municipal, Rural, and Industrial (MR&I) water system.²

H.R. 726 does not change the funding levels or existing water rights. However, it does reform CIP funding mechanisms by creating a Crow CIP Implementation Account within the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). Since the enactment of P.L. 111-291, the Crow Tribe and the U.S. Department of the Interior have deposited appropriated funds at a private bank and used the accumulated interest to carry out rehabilitation and improvement projects. The introduced bill would have created a dedicated, interest-bearing fund in the Treasury where these funds held in a private account would be deposited and accrue interest; however, the ANS that will be considered at markup retains the current joint signatory accounts for future deposits.

H.R. 726 repeals the section of P.L. 111-291 that authorizes the MR&I water system and creates an MR&I Projects Account that the Crow Tribe could use, using available settlement funds, to ensure compliance with environmental laws, purchase on-reservation land with water rights, or develop water infrastructure. Further, the legislation clarifies that the federal government is not obligated to pay for the operation, maintenance, or replacement of any MR&I Project. Finally, the bill extends the Crow Tribe’s exclusive access to develop and market power generation on the Yellowtail Afterbay Dam until 2030.

An ANS will be considered at markup to address a potential scoring issue identified by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and to ensure this legislation remains budget-neutral.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O’Connell@mail.house.gov).

¹ Mariel J. Murray, & Charles V. Stern, “Indian Water Rights Settlements,” Congressional Research Service, Updated October 13, 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44148>.

² *Statement of Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs*, U.S. Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, June 12, 2024, <https://www.doi.gov/ocl/pending-legislation-77>.

H.R. 2317 (Rep. Amodei), “Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2025”

Over 80 percent of Nevada, or approximately 56.3 million acres, consists of federal land.³ The state’s comparatively low levels of private and local land ownership create significant challenges for rural Nevada communities. Because federal lands are not taxable, they hinder state and local efforts to provide critical services, such as law enforcement, firefighting, waste disposal, and emergency response. H.R. 2317 is a comprehensive bill affecting federal lands in Washoe, Pershing, Douglas, Elko, Storey, and Lyon Counties in Nevada. The bill removes from the federal estate, or permits the potential conveyance of, more than 390,000 acres to help economically revitalize northern Nevada, create new job opportunities for its residents, and empower local entities to manage land for conservation and recreation. Potential uses of the conveyed land include expanding state parks, flood management, water infrastructure, open space, residential development, road construction, and resolving checkerboard ownership.

The legislation also transfers over 2,600 acres to the Washoe Tribe. It also designates roughly 150,000 acres of federal land as wilderness and releases nearly 50,000 acres of wilderness study areas.

An ANS is expected to be offered by Representative Mark Amodei (R-NV-02) at markup, with some minor changes and a revised Title I legislative map reflecting additional feedback from federal land management agencies and Douglas County.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contacts: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov) and Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 6251 (Rep. Begich), To amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to allow importation of polar bear trophies taken in sport hunts in Canada before the date the polar bear was determined to be a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

In 2008, the Secretary of the Interior listed the worldwide polar bear population as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).⁴ Threatened and endangered marine mammals are considered depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and their importation into the U.S. is prohibited. At the time of the polar bear listing, however, there were 41 hunters with legally hunted polar bear trophies pending permit approval to import them.⁵ Without legislation, these lawfully acquired trophies cannot be imported. Accordingly, H.R. 6251 amends

³ Carol Hardy Vincent & Laura A. Hanson, “Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data,” Congressional Research Service, February 21, 2020, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R42346?source=search>.

⁴ *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Threatened Status for the Polar Bear (Ursus maritimus) throughout Its Range*. Federal Register, vol. 73, no. 95, 15 May 2008, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2008/05/15/E8-11105/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-determination-of-threatened-status-for-the-polar-bear>.

⁵ *Id.*

the MMPA to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue permits to eligible hunters who legally took polar bear trophies from approved populations before the 2008 ESA listing.⁶

An ANS will be considered at markup that adds a new short title to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O’Connell@mail.house.gov).

[H.R. 9436](#) (Rep. Lawler), To amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 to extend the time period for which certain regulations concerning the North Atlantic right whale are effective.

The Maine Lobster fishery is one of the oldest in the U.S., harvesting more than 100 million pounds of lobster and contributing more than \$1 billion to the state’s economy each year.⁷ The fishery also employs more than 5,600 lobstermen. In recent years, however, this vital fishery has faced crippling regulatory uncertainty. In 2022, for example, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) was set to implement regulations under the MMPA to mitigate impacts to the North Atlantic right whale. At the time, the Maine delegation and other interested parties held that the new regulations would cripple the lobster industry.⁸ Division JJ of the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act delayed the implementation of these regulations until December 31, 2028.⁹

On July 22, 2025, the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held a legislative hearing featuring testimony revealing that ALWTRT’s timeline for implementing new regulations does not comport with the State of Maine’s timeline for collecting the better data necessary to inform workable regulations.¹⁰ H.R. 9436 aims to resolve this issue by extending the deadline for implementing ALWTRT’s regulations until 2035, thereby allowing ALWTRT to promulgate regulations based on the most up-to-date and complete scientific information.

On May 1, 2026, the Trump administration issued a Statement of Administration Policy in support of identical legislation, H.R. 8509, introduced by Representative Jared Golden (D-ME-02).¹¹

⁶ H.R. 6251, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/6251>.

⁷ “Maine Lobster Fact Sheet,” Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, <https://lobsterfrommaine.com/article/maine-lobster-fact-sheet/>.

⁸ Zack Colman, “Lobster Feud Ends: Collins Lifts Hold on Top NOAA Nominee,” E&E News, June 24, 2022, <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2022/06/24/lobster-feud-ends-collins-lifts-hold-on-top-noaa-nominee-00042255>.

⁹ “Message from Commissioner Keliher: Federal Budget Package Includes Pause on Whale Rule,” Maine Department of Marine Resources, December 23, 2022, <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/news/fri-12232022-1200-message-commissioner-keliher-federal-budget-package-includes-pause-whale>.

¹⁰ *Statement of Dustin Delano on Behalf of the New England Fishermen’s Stewardship Alliance*, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Hearing on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness, June 4, 2025, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II13/20250604/118330/HHRG-119-II13-Wstate-DelanoD-20250604.pdf>.

¹¹ *Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 8509—Amending the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 to Extend the Time Period for Which Certain Regulations Concerning the North Atlantic Right Whale Are Effective*, The White House, May 1, 2026, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/SAP-HR8509.pdf>.

An ANS will be considered at markup that adds a new short title to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo is available [here](#).

Staff contact: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O’Connell@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 2827 (Rep. Cole), To provide for the equitable settlement of certain Indian land disputes regarding land in Illinois, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2827 provides a narrow jurisdictional pathway for the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma (Miami) to bring its treaty-based land claim regarding certain lands in Illinois before the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

Now located in Oklahoma, the Miami Tribe was originally based in the Great Lakes and Midwest region, including parts of modern-day Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois.¹² The 1805 Treaty of Grouseland recognized the Miami title to lands in the Wabash River watershed and provided that the U.S. would not purchase portions of that territory without tribal consent.¹³ In the decades that followed, however, additional treaties and federal policies led to large-scale cessions of Miami land.¹⁴ Lands in east-central Illinois, part of the historic Miami homeland referenced in the 1805 treaty, were subsequently patented to non-Native settlers. Those patents were issued without proper extinguishment of tribal title, forming the basis of the Miami’s treaty-based claim.¹⁵

Congress enacted the Indian Claims Commission Act (ICCA) in 1946, which established the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) to provide a forum for tribes seeking monetary compensation for claims against the U.S. that predate August 13, 1946.¹⁶ The ICC did not restore land; rather, it awarded money damages, calculated as the value of land at the time of taking. The ICC ceased operations in 1978, and remaining matters were transferred to the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.¹⁷ The Miami participated in the ICC process for other claims but did not file the Illinois land claim during the ICCA filing window (1946–1951). The tribe declined to pursue the claim before the ICC because that forum provided only monetary compensation and would have extinguished the underlying land claim. At the time, the Miami preferred the return of the lands to a cash award.¹⁸

¹² Veronica E. Velarde Tiller, TILLER’S GUIDE TO INDIAN COUNTRY: ECONOMIC PROFILES OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS, (3rd ed. 2006), pg. 634.

¹³ 1805 Treaty of Grouseland, August 21, 1805, 7 Stat. 91, *available at* <https://treaties.okstate.edu/treaties/treaty-with-the-delawares-etc-1805-0080>.

¹⁴ Veronica E. Velarde Tiller, TILLER’S GUIDE TO INDIAN COUNTRY: ECONOMIC PROFILES OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS, (3rd ed. 2006), pg. 634.

¹⁵ “Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Land Claim Bill,” House Committee on Natural Resources, https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Miami_Tribe_of_OK_Land_Bill_One-Pager.pdf.

¹⁶ Indian Claims Commission Act, Pub. L. No. 79-726; 60 Stat. 1049 (August 13, 1946).

¹⁷ Act of October 8, 1976, Pub. L. No. 94-465.

¹⁸ Discussion between the Miami and House Committee on Natural Resources Staff, December 18, 2025.

In 2000, the Miami filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois against private landowners, asserting treaty-based rights associated with approximately 2.6 million acres in east-central Illinois.¹⁹ The court did not rule on the merits of the land claim, and the tribe voluntarily dismissed the case without prejudice in 2001, precluding issuance of a dispositive ruling.²⁰ Although the case was withdrawn, the treaty-based claim remains unresolved because it has never been adjudicated or extinguished. Absent congressional action extinguishing the land claim, the asserted title interest continues to create uncertainty for current landowners and lenders.²¹

H.R. 2827 provides a pathway to resolution by conferring on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims jurisdiction to hear this single, treaty-based damages claim brought by the Miami, notwithstanding statutes of limitations and other delay-based defenses. This jurisdiction expires if the tribe brings the claim later than one year after the bill's enactment. H.R. 2827 authorizes only monetary relief against the U.S. and precludes any equitable relief or recovery against private landowners. In exchange, the legislation permanently extinguishes the Miami's remaining land and title claims to the specified Illinois lands.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Kirstin Liddell (Kirstin.Liddell@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 7889 (Rep. Wittman), “*Advancing Water Research and Collaboration Act of 2025*” or “*AWRC Act of 2025*”

Authorized by Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 and administered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Water Resources Research Act Program is a federally supported research and education initiative designed to improve the scientific understanding, management, and sustainability of the nation's water resources.²² The program provides federal funding to a nationwide network of Water Resources Research Institutes (WRRI) located at universities in every U.S. state, as well as in U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, ensuring that each state and territory is equipped to manage its unique water challenges.²³

H.R. 7889 reauthorizes the program through Fiscal Year (FY) 2029 and increases its authorization of appropriations from \$15 million to \$16 million per year, consistent with the FY 2026 enacted funding level.²⁴ The bill adds the artificial intelligence (AI) industry's water-use impacts to the Congressional declarations of purpose for the program, reflecting that many WRRI are already working with industry partners to meet growing water demands associated with the expansion of AI technologies.²⁵ Lastly, this bill formally establishes an 80/20 funding

¹⁹ *Miami Tribe v. Walden*, 206 F.R.D. 238 (S.D. Ill. 2001).

²⁰ “Miami tribe drops Illinois land lawsuit,” *The Oklahoman*, June 15, 2001, <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2001/06/15/miami-tribe-drops-illinois-land-lawsuit/62142643007/>.

²¹ H. Rept. 117-597, at 2.

²² “Water Resources Research Act Program,” U.S. Department of the Interior, <https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/>, accessed March 11, 2026.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ H.R. 7889, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/house-bill/7889>.

²⁵ *Id.*

allocation between the base program and special interstate project funds, reflecting the historical allocation.²⁶

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O’Connell@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 8658 (Rep. Kennedy of UT), “*Indian Health Service Emergency Claims Parity Act*”

H.R. 8658 amends section 406 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act²⁷ to require that non-elderly and non-disabled Indian patients have at least 15 days to notify the Indian Health Service (IHS) for emergency treatment or admission for Purchase/Referred Care (PRC) purposes. The bill preserves the existing 30-day statutory notice window for elderly or disabled Indians.

IHS uses the PRC program to pay outside providers when needed services are unavailable at an IHS or tribal facility. For IHS to authorize PRC payment, patients generally must satisfy tribal affiliation, residency, notification, medical priority, and alternate resource requirements.²⁸ Current law gives elderly or disabled Indians a statutory 30-day emergency notice window,²⁹ while the general rule for other patients is a 72-hour regulatory deadline.³⁰ The 72-hour deadline can be unrealistic in true emergencies, however, particularly in rural or remote areas where patients may be hospitalized, transferred between facilities, recovering, or relying on assistance from individuals unfamiliar with the PRC notice rules. When the deadline is missed, otherwise eligible claims may be denied, increasing the risk that Native patients are billed or sent to collections for emergency care.³¹

H.R. 8658 establishes a more practical statutory floor, allowing patients and families more time in emergency situations while still providing IHS with timely notice.

At markup, an amendment will be offered to make a small technical fix.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Kirstin Liddell (Kirstin.Liddell@mail.house.gov).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ 25 U.S.C. § 1646.

²⁸ “Purchased/Referred Care (PRC),” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.ihs.gov/forpatients/prc/>.

²⁹ 25 U.S.C. § 1646.

³⁰ 42 C.F.R. § 136.24(c).

³¹ Testimony from Acting Deputy Director Darrell LaRoche on S. 699, S.1055, and S. 2098, February 4, 2026, <https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/asl/testimony/2026/02/04/ihs-testimony-s-2098-s-1055-and-s-699.html>.

H.R. 2406 (Rep. Bonamici), “National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2025”

Sexual harassment and sexual assault present an ongoing, pervasive challenge within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In February 2018, NOAA issued its Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy.³² In 2021, however, the Government Accountability Office found that while NOAA had made substantial progress preventing and responding to cases of sexual harassment and assault, the agency had still fallen short in key aspects of tackling this important subject.³³

H.R. 2406 responds to these shortcomings by expanding the coverage of NOAA’s sexual harassment prevention and response policy to include observers and voting members and staff of regional fishery management councils. The legislation also expands existing reporting requirements, directs NOAA’s Civil Rights Office to report, in its quarterly briefings to the NOAA Administrator, a synopsis of each case of sexual harassment and the disciplinary action taken in response. Similar reporting requirements apply to the annual report that the Secretary of Commerce is directed to submit to the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contacts: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O’Connell@mail.house.gov) and Kirby Struhar (Kirby.Struhar@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 6893 (Rep. Scott of VA), “Chesapeake Bay Watershed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration, and Science (WATERS) Act”

H.R. 6893 reauthorizes NOAA’s Chesapeake Bay Office (Office), which partners with the Chesapeake Bay Program (Program) to advance oyster restoration, habitat protection, and scientific research.³⁴ The bill also requires Program-funded projects to undergo peer review and the Office’s director to consult with the Chesapeake Executive Council to ensure that the Office’s activities align with the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, a voluntary agreement between Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect the Chesapeake Bay.³⁵ The legislation also encourages the Office’s director to collaborate with public and private institutions to support observation systems that are consistent with the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

³² “Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2025, <https://www.noaa.gov/workplace-violence-prevention-response-program>.

³³ *Sexual Assault and Harassment: NOAA Has Made Substantial Progress in Prevention and Response but Could Further Improve Its Processes*. U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2021, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-560>.

³⁴ “NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, January 13, 2023, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact-directory/noaa-chesapeake-bay-office>.

³⁵ *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, Chesapeake Bay Program, 2025, <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/CBWA-2025-IVFinal-Facing.pdf>.

H.R. 6893 requires the Office to submit a biennial report to Congress and the Secretary of Commerce on the Office's progress in protecting the Chesapeake Bay. The report must also include an action plan that outlines recommended research and data-collection activities, as well as ways to integrate NOAA's work with that of other partners in the Program to achieve the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

An ANS will be considered at markup that makes technical and clarifying changes to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contacts: Richie O'Connell (Richie.O'Connell@mail.house.gov) and Kirby Struhar (Kirby.Struhar@mail.house.gov).

III. CBO SCORES

None available.

IV. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

[H.R. 726](#)

[H.R. 2317](#)

[H.R. 2406](#)

[H.R. 6251](#)

[H.R. 6893](#)

[H.R. 7889](#)

[H.R. 8658](#)

[H.R. 9436](#)