

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland
NPFPL Legislative Hearing
Opening Statement
April 2, 2019**

- **Thank you all for being here for the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands' first legislative hearing of the 116th Congress.**
- **The four public lands bills before the Subcommittee today are an appropriate place for us to start this Congress, because they touch on many of the priorities for this Subcommittee, and for the Committee as a whole.**
- **We will consider legislation that protects intact natural landscapes, which preserve ecosystem services and help us begin to adapt to climate change.**
- **We will discuss legislation that protects recreational access, which promotes economic growth and provides well-paying, jobs for communities across the United States.**
- **We will review a bill that highlights the importance of more equitable access to our public lands.**
- **And we will hear about the need to ensure that our public lands fully represent the diverse stories of the American experience.**

- **I look forward to working together with each of you to help our Subcommittee embark on this new path forward.**
- **I know we will do our part to contribute to the important work that this Congress has already started.**
- **We will work to combat the challenges of climate change on our public lands. And we will focus on how public lands can be better utilized to reduce climate impacts and help our communities adapt to a changing world.**
- **It is my hope that this Subcommittee can help move this nation towards greater inclusivity by incorporating the voices of ALL Americans into the shared story of our country's history.**
- **Our public lands are among our Country's most valuable assets.**
- **They are the treasures that have inspired people on this continent for thousands of years, long before this nation was formed.**
- **It is important that we manage them to preserve their unique character.**

- **And to ensure that they benefit all Americans, not just a few select special interest groups who would exploit our lands solely for their own gain.**
- **We continue this process today, by considering bills that will improve our public lands in Colorado, California, Texas and Georgia.**
- **Representative Neguse’s CORE Act will benefit Coloradoans, balancing critical land and water protections while preserving appropriate opportunities for recreational use.**
- **This bill will help Colorado adapt to climate change, will support clean economic development, and because it is the result of significant stakeholder input, it directly meets the needs of folks on the ground.**
- **Representative Schiff’s legislation to protect the Rim of the Valley will provide recreational access to communities in urban areas.**
- **It will help ensure our public lands are accessible to all Americans, while providing economic opportunities in Southern California.**

- **Representative Jackson Lee has worked hard to highlight the harsh realities of American slavery through her Emancipation National Historic Trail Act.**
- **I commend her efforts to focus on parts of the American experience that too often go untold and look forward to building off this example.**
- **And finally, Representative Hice's Kettle Creek Battlefield Study will help us remember the enduring importance of passionate opposition to oppressive forces.**
- **These are all important bills.**
- **I look forward to moving them through the legislative process.**
- **And I look forward to setting a fresh course for this Subcommittee to follow throughout this Congress.**