

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland
NPFPL BLM and USFS Budget Hearing
Statement
March 10, 2020**

- **Thank you for being here today as we examine President Trump's budget priorities for the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.**
- **I'd like to welcome Chief Christiansen, joining us once again on behalf of the Forest Service, and Deputy Director Nedd for making the trek from BLM's new Grand Junction headquarters all the way to our Nation's Capital.**
- **As you both know, this is my first Congress serving as Chairwoman of this Subcommittee, but I'm already having déjà vu.**
- **Since last year, we've continued to urge your agencies to respond to the existential threat of climate change.**
- **We've been asking you to listen to the voices of the American people, and especially the tribal communities who have known the lands your agencies manage since time immemorial.**

- **But these requests have been ignored, and here we are once again reviewing budget proposals that significantly under-invest in the future of our public lands and continue to advance the President's energy dominance agenda, putting profits over people and pollution over protection.**
- **This special interest agenda is clear in your budget requests, which propose cuts to conservation, to water and wildlife protections, and to programs that prioritize climate change and scientific research.**
- **In the year since we were last here, the Forest Service has moved ahead with rulemakings to remove old-growth protections from the Tongass and to weaken the National Environmental Policy Act, one of our most important bedrock environmental laws.**
- **BLM continues its efforts to open Bears Ears and Grand Staircase to new mining, drilling, and destructive activities despite significant local and national opposition.**
- **And last week BLM released plans that would allow drilling near Chaco Canyon.**

- **To top it off, under the guise of putting staff closer to the communities, the administration has done its best to dismantle the Bureau of Land Management.**
- **While the administration pays lip service to prioritizing access, make no mistake that the extractive activities pushed by this administration are the most exclusive and restrictive land use, degrading our lands at the expense of wildlife, recreation, and habitat protection.**
- **The American people want public lands that support clean air, clean water, and access for outdoor recreation, not fenced off mines, piles of contaminated waste rock, pools of frack water, and abandoned oil rigs.**
- **But under this administration, we continue to see an unprecedented rollback of protections for our forests and public lands.**
- **Some are headline grabbing efforts to roll back national monuments, drill in the Arctic Refuge, and mine in the Boundary Waters.**
- **Other actions are more under the radar, like removing administrative protection from millions of acres through the BLM planning process or using timber targets as a metrics for forest health.**

- **This administration seems to be willing to stop at nothing to advance Trump’s extractive vision.**
- **This is a vision that does not match up with what our constituents want, and I’d like to hear from you both about how this budget supports the American people’s clear interest in protecting lands, waters, and wildlife.**
- **I’m hoping for some reassurances about your intent to listen to the American people who want to see our public lands as part of the climate solution, because the priorities in this budget would seem to only add fuel to the fire.**
- **As I cautioned last year, I fully recognize that Congress holds the purse strings, and I do not consider a reminder of this fact an appropriate answer to a budget question.**
- **As you both know, a budget is also about priorities and values. Your budget speaks to this administration’s goals, and the appropriations bills Congress has sent you make clear our intent for your agencies to pursue a balanced mission.**
- **I look forward to hearing your answers.**
- **With that I yield back and turn to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.**