

**Chair Grijalva
Opening Statement
NPFPL Oversight Hearing (BBB)
March 23, 2021**

- **Thank you all for being here today for this first meeting in the 117th Congress of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.**

- **I want to welcome all our members, returning and new.**

- **As many of you know, our nation was struck again last night by a tragedy that is becoming all too frequent – mass gun violence.**

- **This most recent attack took place in Subcommittee Chair Neguse’s district, and even though I know he wanted to be here this morning, he is called to work more directly on behalf of his constituents.**

- **I will be submitting his full opening statement to the record, and my thoughts are with him and the families and loved ones of those impacted by yesterday’s attacks.**

- **Though it is not in the jurisdiction of this Committee, at a moment like this, I must implore all of my colleagues to consider the damage and pain these moments cause.**
- **It is well past time we enact common sense legislation to protect American's from these very mornings.**
- **As I said, I know that is a topic for another Committee, and another day, but I hope it is one we can all take seriously and come together on.**

[Pause]

- **For this morning, we must press on, to consider the important issues before us.**
- **This hearing is about stepping back for a moment to review the state of our public lands after the past four years and to consider how we might protect them for the future.**
- **As we face a changing climate, and a loss of natural areas, it is imperative that we set a new path forward, with robust investments, expanded protections, and support for communities.**

- **I look forward to starting that work here today.**
- **I want to thank all the witnesses for joining us here this morning. I look forward to hearing your expert testimony.**