

Opening Statement

- Good afternoon – thanks to the Members and witnesses for speaking on this important issue.
- As most of you know, I introduced the H.R. 2021 – the Environmental Justice for All Act, a robust bill that included input from environmental justice groups.
- Although there are portions related to Indigenous Peoples in the bill, I realize there is still a need to discuss this with Indigenous communities and see what Environmental Justice looks like in these communities.
- The injustices in Indigenous communities are widely known but very different from other marginalized communities.

- As members of Congress, we need to remember that the federal trust responsibility is part of our responsibility as representatives of this country.
- Within this responsibility is the preservation of the health and well-being of tribal nations. If this is not upheld through environmental justice, we are not doing our jobs.
- The federal government does not always see Environmental injustice as part of the federal trust responsibility, but Indigenous communities are different.
- The exploitation of tribal lands and resources are examples of environmental injustice. Further, we should not underestimate the power of Indigenous knowledge in our quest to heal the environment from exploitation.

- I hope that we hear from our witnesses about environmental justice and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in Indigenous communities and continue to learn that Indigenous efforts to conserve and heal our earth may look different than other environmental justice communities.
- Thanks, Chair, for having this hearing, and I yield my time.