

H.R. 5515 – ITARA Hearing Questions Answers

1. Question: This subcommittee has time and time again advocated for further tribal self-determination and governance. How does ITARA play a role in that?

ITARA operationalizes self-determination by shifting decision-making from removed and sometimes distant federal offices to tribal governments. The Tribe leads and the federal government supports, allowing tribes to design, plan, and implement forest management strategies using Tribal laws, regulations, and policies while still within the trust responsibility framework.

2. Question: Your testimony mentions that without congressional action, tribes may lose the benefits of ITARA. Could you provide further insight into how H.R. 5515 would address this?

Without congressional action, ITARA's demonstration authority could sunset, creating uncertainty for Tribes with an approved ITAMP and slowing progress towards true self-determination. H.R. 5515 eliminates that risk by making ITARA permanent, protecting current investments, encouraging more tribal participation, and turning a successful pilot into a lasting tool.

3. Lead Up: Your testimony mentions the expedited implementation of projects through ITARA versus the long timeline the BIA follows.

Question: Could you speak further on how ITARA provides efficiency?

ITARA consolidates planning, analysis, and implementation at the tribal level, reducing delays caused by multiple layers of federal review. Federal oversight remains but is streamlined, turning years of delay into months and increasing the number of acres treated effectively.