



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Staff
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026
Subject: Markup of 6 Bills

The House Committee on Natural Resources will hold a markup on **Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building**. The bills to be considered include: H.R. 741 (Rep. Stanton); H.R. 3924 (Rep. Neguse); H.R. 5694 (Rep. Begich); H.R. 7250 (Rep. Downing); H.R. 7487 (Rep. Boebert); and H.R. 7831 (Rep. Kennedy of UT).

Member offices are requested to notify Madeline Kelley (Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, to confirm their Member's attendance at the markup.

I. KEY MESSAGES & TOPLINE ACTIONS

- Bills expected to move by regular order: H.R. 7487 (Rep. Boebert), "*Rural Jobs and Hydropower Expansion Act*".
- Please note that H.R. 7487 will have an amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS). Members should ensure that amendments are drafted to the ANS.
- Bills expected to move by unanimous consent: H.R. 741 (Rep. Stanton), "*Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025*"; H.R. 3924 (Rep. Neguse), "*Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act*"; H.R. 5694 (Rep. Begich), "*Alaska's Right To Ivory Sales and Tradition Act*" or "*ARTIST Act*"; H.R. 7250 (Rep. Downing), To reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000; and H.R. 7831 (Rep. Kennedy of UT), "*License to Drill Act*".

II. EXPECTED LEGISLATION

[H.R. 7487](#) (Rep. Boebert), "*Rural Jobs and Hydropower Expansion Act*"

The permitting processes for non-federal hydropower development located within a Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) project fall under Reclamation's Lease of Power Privilege (LOPP) Contract, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) License, or, in some instances,

both.¹ Unless otherwise specified by law, Reclamation projects authorized for federal hydropower development are within Reclamation’s jurisdiction, requiring a LOPP for non-federal development. A LOPP is a contractual authorization that Reclamation issues to a non-federal entity to use a Reclamation facility for electric power generation, consistent with Reclamation project purposes. If a Reclamation project is not authorized for federal hydropower development, however, current law places that development within FERC’s jurisdiction, requiring a FERC license for non-federal development.

This jurisdictional split has subjected roughly 69 non-federal projects to dual permitting processes (both LOPP and FERC).² There are also about 12 projects in the development stages that would need dual permits.³ Sponsored by Representative Lauren Boebert (R-CO-04), H.R. 7487 amends the Reclamation Project Act of 1939 to give Reclamation the exclusive authority to develop hydropower within a Reclamation project. This commonsense solution builds upon the work done in the 113th Congress through P.L. 113-24, which authorized Reclamation to contract to develop small conduit hydropower.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS) will be considered at markup that makes technical and clarifying changes to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Richie O’Connell (Richie.O'Connell@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 5694 (Rep. Begich), “Alaska’s Right To Ivory Sales and Tradition Act” or “ARTIST Act”

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA, or Act)⁴ was enacted “to conserve marine mammal populations and protect them from extinction or depletion as a result of human activities.”⁵ Section 101(b) of the MMPA exempts the take of marine mammals by Alaska Natives for subsistence purposes or “for purposes of creating and selling authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing.”⁶ The Act defines “take” as meaning “to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.”⁷ Subsistence harvest fulfills an obvious need for Alaska Natives, particularly those living in remote locations with limited access to food and resources. Yet the creation of native handicrafts and clothing from marine mammals is similarly vital, namely, for maintaining Alaska Natives’ traditions and cultures. Such artwork is also a significant source of economic opportunity for Alaska Native

¹ *Lease of Power Privilege: Permitting Process Overview*, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, May 2023, https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/lopp_usbr_sei_5-2023.pdf.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ P.L. 92-522.

⁵ Anthony R. Marshak, “The Marine Mammal Protection Act (P.L. 92-522): Primer and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, January 5, 2024, available at <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R47892.pdf>.

⁶ *Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, As Amended*, Marine Mammal Commission, www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2025-06/The-Marine-Mammal-Protection-Act-as-Amended-Through-2023_Final-June-2025-.pdf, accessed February 12, 2026.

⁷ *Id.*

communities, as interest in these products is widespread among the state’s residents and millions of annual visitors.

In recent years, several states have enacted bans on ivory, primarily to stem the illegal trade of elephant tusks. But such measures have also banned walrus ivory, which is an essential component of many Alaska Native handicrafts and clothing.

Accordingly, H.R. 5694, sponsored by Representative Nicholas Begich (R-AK-At Large), establishes a special rule under the MMPA to ensure that “an item presented as an authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing may be sold in interstate commerce,” provided that the item meets certain criteria.⁸ This change will allow Alaska Natives to continue producing their artwork and handiwork, overriding arbitrary state-level bans.

An ANS will be considered at markup that makes clarifying and technical changes to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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H.R. 7250 (Rep. Downing), To reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000.

The Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000⁹ authorized the construction of two interconnected water systems—the Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water System and the Dry Prairie Rural Water System—collectively known as the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System (System).¹⁰ One of Montana’s four regional water systems, the System is designed to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water from the Missouri River to the Fort Peck Reservation (Reservation) and surrounding communities in northeastern Montana that historically relied on limited groundwater sources or poor-quality surface water.¹¹

Although a substantial portion of its infrastructure is already operational, the System has not been fully completed.¹² Remaining work primarily involves finishing additional transmission pipelines, storage facilities, and rural distribution connections. Current estimates place final completion in 2028.¹³

Introduced by Representative Troy Downing (R-MT-02), H.R. 7250 amends the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000 to extend the project’s authorization from 2026 to

⁸ H.R. 5694, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5694/text>.

⁹ P.L. 106-382.

¹⁰ H. Rep. No. 106-823, Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000, 106th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/committee-report/106th-congress/house-report/823/1>.

¹¹ “Get to Know Montana’s Regional Water Systems,” Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, January 2021, https://dnrc.mt.gov/_docs/conservation/Regional-Water/DNRC-Regional-Water-Systems.pdf.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Buy America General Applicability Public Interest Waiver for Rural Water Program Previously Planned Projects*, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, May 2, 2024, <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05/doi-usbr-rural-water-program-public-interest-waiver.pdf>.

2028, allowing continued federal support for the System’s construction and maintenance.¹⁴ The completed System will consist of over 3,200 miles of pipeline and deliver drinking water to more than 20 communities and nearly 4,000 farms, ranches, and rural homes.¹⁵

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Jackson Renfro (Jackson.Renfro@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 7831 (Rep. Kennedy of UT), “*License to Drill Act*”

Once a leaseholder or operator identifies an oil and gas deposit on its federal lease, the operator must submit an Application for Permit to Drill (APD) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prior to commencing any drilling activities.¹⁶ Following receipt of an APD, BLM ensures that the operator meets all applicable laws and regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.¹⁷ Additionally, BLM resource specialists typically participate in an onsite inspection prior to APD approval. Such extensive requirements strain agency workloads and create bloated permitting timelines.

To provide BLM permitting staff with the resources needed for timely APDs approvals, Section 365 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 created the Permit Process Improvement Fund (PPIF), which dispersed funds to seven pilot program field offices processing APDs.¹⁸ Subsequently, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015 (NDAA) authorized an APD application fee to help fund the PPIF and shorten permit processing timelines. Indexed to inflation, the fee is \$12,850 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.¹⁹ The majority of PPIF funds are spent on labor costs, while a smaller portion is allocated to operational overhead and electronic database upkeep.²⁰

Since 2020, 100 percent of the NDAA-authorized APD fee has been directed into the PPIF. H.R. 7831, introduced by Representative Mike Kennedy (R-UT-03), reauthorizes the fee structure established in the NDAA, as it has operated since 2020, allowing for continued reliable and timely permitting processing. The bill authorizes the fees through FY 2037 and advances the

¹⁴ H.R. 7250, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr7250/BILLS-119hr7250ih.pdf>.

¹⁵ “Get to Know Montana’s Regional Water Systems,” Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, January 2021, <https://dnrc.mt.gov/docs/conservation/Regional-Water/DNRC-Regional-Water-Systems.pdf>.

¹⁶ “Applications for Permits to Drill,” U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/operations-and-production/permitting/applications-permits-drill>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ “Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Adjustment Calculation,” U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, <https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2024-09/FY2025-Annual-Adjustment-Calculation.pdf>; see also “Fixed Filing Fees,” U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, <https://www.blm.gov/energy-and-minerals/energy-and-minerals>; 43 C.F.R. § 3000.120; and “Minerals Management: Annual Adjustment of Cost Recovery Fees,” U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 91 Federal Register 1194, January 12, 2026.

²⁰ Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Majority Staff correspondence with Bureau of Land Management, March 2, 2026.

goals outlined in President Trump’s Executive Order (E.O.) 14154, titled “Unleashing American Energy,”²¹ and E.O. 14156, titled “Declaring a National Energy Emergency.”²²

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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H.R. 741 (Rep. Stanton), “*Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025*”

H.R. 741 redesignates the Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS) to Assistant Secretary for Indian Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The federal government has longstanding responsibilities for Indian health care rooted in the federal trust responsibility,²³ with IHS serving as the principal federal entity responsible for providing health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives.²⁴ However, Indian health issues within HHS are not limited to IHS alone and often require coordination across HHS operating divisions and with other federal partners.

Supporters argue that redesignating the IHS Director as Assistant Secretary would give the position a more senior role in department-wide coordination, which could improve efficiency across HHS components involved in Indian health and give tribes a clearer point of engagement within HHS.²⁵ Under current law, the IHS Director is appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, so H.R. 741 does not create a new Senate-confirmed appointment. The bill does not create a new program or change IHS healthcare delivery but instead changes the senior-level structure for Indian health within HHS.

An ANS will be offered at markup, reflecting technical assistance from HHS and making minor technical and clarifying amendments.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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²¹ “Unleashing American Energy,” The White House, January 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/reinvigorating-americas-beautiful-clean-coal-industry-and-amending-executive-order-14241/>.

²² “Declaring a National Energy Emergency,” The White House, January 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/declaring-a-national-energy-emergency/>.

²³ U.S. Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Clause 3.

²⁴ “The First 50 Years of the Indian Health Service: Caring & Curing,” U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Health Service, https://www.ihs.gov/sites/newsroom/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/GOLD_BOOK_part1.pdf.

²⁵ “NCUIH-Endorsed Bipartisan Bill to Elevate Native Health Care Within the Federal Government Re-introduced by Representative Stanton and Representative Joyce,” National Council of Urban Indian Health, April 2023, <https://ncuih.org/2023/04/10/ncuih-endorsed-bipartisan-bill-to-elevate-native-health-care-within-the-federal-government-re-introduced-by-representative-stanton-and-representative-joyce/>.

H.R. 3924 (Rep. Neguse), “Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act”

Over the past two decades, the U.S. has experienced a dramatic escalation in catastrophic wildfires. H.R. 3924 aims to strengthen our nation’s understanding of, and response to, the growing wildfire and forest health crisis by requiring the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to conduct a comprehensive review of the U.S. wildfire landscape every four years. By establishing a structured, recurring evaluation process, H.R. 3924 seeks to renew and strengthen the Quadrennial Fire Review (QFR), which began in 2005 and was last issued in 2014.²⁶ The renewal of an externally-led QFR was included as a part of the Wildfire Management and Mitigation Commission’s recommendation to develop a periodic, quantitative review of the comprehensive wildfire environment to assist adaptive management.²⁷ The review initiated by H.R. 3924 would assess management challenges and examine the public health implications of wildfires. The legislation also directs federal agencies to develop policy recommendations to address challenges identified in the review.

An ANS will be offered at markup making technical corrections to the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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III. CBO SCORES

None available.

IV. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

[H.R. 741](#)

[H.R. 5694](#)

[H.R. 7250](#)

[H.R. 7487](#)

[H.R. 7831](#)

²⁶ “2014 Quadrennial Fire Review,” Booz Allen Hamilton, May 2015, www.forestsandangelands.gov/documents/qfr/2014QFRFinalReport.pdf.

²⁷ *ON FIRE: The Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission*, Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, September 2023, www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/wfmmc-final-report-09-2023.pdf.