Statement for the Record
U.S. Department of the Interior

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife

Legislative Hearing

July 21, 2022

The Department of the Interior appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on H.R. 4951, *Canyon's Law*, and H.R. 7975, *the Great Lakes Restoration Semipostal Stamp Act of 2022*.

H.R. 4951, Canyon's Law

H.R. 4951 would prohibit preparing, placing, installing, setting, deploying, or otherwise using M-44 devices on public land. The bill defines public land as any Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of a public land management agency. At the Department of the Interior this would include lands under the management jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or Service), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Bureau of Reclamation. Land under the administrative jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service would also be included.

M-44 devices, which are also known as "cyanide bombs", use sodium cyanide to control predators like coyotes, feral dogs, and foxes. This legislation would require any federal, state, or county agency that has prepared, placed, installed, set, or deployed an M-44 device on public land to remove it within 30 days of enactment. Many states have similarly banned or restricted the use of M-44 devices.

Enactment of H.R. 4951 would have little practical current effect on lands administered by NPS, FWS, or Reclamation because these devices are not used on the lands managed by those bureaus.

The BLM actively partners with States, Tribes, Federal agencies, and traditional communities in managing fish and wildlife resources to ensure populations of fish and wildlife are healthy, sustainable, and conserved for the use and enjoyment of visitors to the public lands it manages. This includes partnering with the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services, to coordinate in carrying out their efforts in animal damage management activities on public lands. These activities may involve the use of M-44 devices as a tool within a suite of predator removal options to resolve wildlife conflicts with other resources and to ensure public safety. If H.R. 4951 were enacted, the BLM would continue to collaborate with Tribes, States and Federal agencies in utilizing other allowable tools in efforts to address depredation of livestock and special status species and mitigate damage caused by, and to, wildlife species.

The Department is concerned that these devices pose a risk of injury or death to unintended targets, including humans, pets, and threatened and endangered species. The Department defers

to the USDA on an Administration position on the bill, but has no technical objections with it and would work to implement the legislation, if enacted.

H.R. 7975, Great Lakes Restoration Semipostal Stamp Act of 2022

H.R. 7975, *the Great Lakes Restoration Semipostal Stamp Act of 2022*, would direct the U.S. Postal Service to issue a Great Lakes Restoration Semipostal Stamp. The semipostal stamp would provide an opportunity for the public to directly support the operations of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The stamp, depicting the five Great Lakes, would sell above the regular postage rate with the proceeds from the stamp's sales supplementing appropriations for the GLRI. Funds from the sale of the semipostal stamps would be transferred to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which leads the implementation of the GLRI.

While funds resulting from the semipostal stamp sales would be transferred to the EPA for the purpose of funding the GLRI, the EPA is authorized to distribute GLRI funding to other federal agencies, including the FWS, NPS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The Department, as one of 16 federal agencies and departments coordinating on GLRI projects, supports the Initiative in the following ways.

FWS Activities: The Service collaborates with partners across Federal, State, Tribal and international boundaries to restore the Great Lakes for the fish, wildlife, plants and people that live there. Through an annual inter-agency agreement with the EPA, the FWS serves as one of the principle federal partners in the implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to transform approximately $50 million per year into on-the-ground environmental improvements. The Service directs approximately 70 percent of its GLRI funding to State and local governments, Tribes, and NGOs, thereby leveraging resources for Great Lakes conservation and promoting partnerships among key stakeholders.

NPS Activities: The GLRI provides support to restoration and protection efforts in 10 NPS units in 5 Great Lakes states each year. The Midwest NPS has used the nearly $52 million in support to date to implement critical habitat restoration as well as educating the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystems. Projects have also reduced millions of gallons of storm water runoff per year, protected shorelines, controlled invasive species and restored wetlands. Erosion due to high water levels and changing climate conditions has increased the last few years so there is a greater focus on shoreline restoration needs. Some examples of projects include, (1) Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, GLRI funds support the recovery of the federally endangered piping plover, where approximately half of the known population breeds in the park, and (2) a new effort to support public access to restored lands in the AOC focus area was initiated on Lake Superior in 2022 through the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

USGS Activities: The USGS provides a significant portion of the scientific research and monitoring needed to inform restoration decision-making and track progress under the GLRI. The projects are often led by staff from multiple agencies who perform planning and implementation efforts that best meet the needs and requirements of the GLRI. The USGS receives approximately $20M annually to support GLRI efforts related to, among other topics, clean-up of toxic contaminants, prevention and control of invasive species, reduction of nutrient inputs to the lakes, and protection and enhancement of native species.

BIA Activities: The GLRI has been instrumental in building the capacity of Tribes to participate in intergovernmental resource management for the Great Lakes alongside Federal, State, and other partners to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the Great Lakes. The GLRI has also been a significant source of funding for Tribes to implement projects that simultaneously advance Great Lakes protection and restoration under GLRI Action Plans and bolster the protection and restoration of culturally important native species and treaty-reserved resources that support tribal life-ways. Since 2010, BIA, with support from EPA, has provided GLRI funding to more than 30 Tribes and Tribal organizations in the Midwest and Eastern Regions for Great Lakes protection and restoration projects. The GLRI funding provided to BIA has gradually increased, growing from $3 million in FY 2010 to almost $20 million in FY 2022. Through 2021, BIA has provided over $95 million in GLRI funding to Tribes to implement over 700 Tribally led restoration projects. These projects protected and restored over 200,000 acres of habitats and approximately 550 miles of Great Lakes tributaries, which include over 85 distinct projects to protect and restore native species. The majority of Tribal GLRI projects work to assess, monitor, protect and restore local waterways, habitats, and species such as lake sturgeon, moose, and wild rice for Tribal life-ways and cultural continuity. In this way, the GLRI has been a catalyst for not only the restoration of the natural environment of the Great Lakes, but for strengthening and revitalizing Tribal cultures and traditions that are interconnected to the health of the Great Lakes and its ecosystems.

The Department defers to the EPA on matters related to implementation of the GLRI and defers to the U.S. Postal Service on the operational and financial implications of the semipostal stamp.