

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

February 23, 2021 Hearing

The Nomination of the Honorable Debra Haaland to be the Secretary of the Interior

Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Debra Haaland

Questions from Ranking Member John Barrasso

Question 1: On October 21, 2019, you posted the following on Twitter: “Economics play a huge factor in climate change. With energy prices being so low, it’s easy to lose sight of the big picture.”

- a. Please fully and completely explain your statement and what prompted you to post it.

RESPONSE: As a Member of Congress, I was speaking about the need to diversify our energy sources and increase innovation and new energy technology. At that time, I was concerned that the previous administration was not preparing America to be a leader in clean energy technology, which can both benefit consumers and address climate change.

- b. What “energy prices” were you referring to – *e.g.*, gasoline prices, natural gas prices, coal prices, electricity prices or all of the foregoing?

RESPONSE: See above.

- c. What “big picture” were you referring to – *e.g.*, the importance of affordable energy, the importance of reliable energy, the importance of energy security, the importance of transitioning energy away from fossil fuels and towards renewable and alternative fuels, the importance of addressing climate change?

RESPONSE: See above.

- d. Please define the “big picture” in the context in which you were using the term especially as it relates to energy prices.

RESPONSE: See above

- e. Do you believe that energy prices are too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy for all Americans.

- f. Do you believe that the price of energy generated by fossil fuels is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

- g. Do you believe that the price of oil is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

- h. Do you believe that the price of natural gas is too low?

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RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

i. Do you believe that the price of coal is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

j. Do you believe that the price of gasoline is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

k. Do you believe that the price of residential natural gas is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

l. Do you believe that the price of natural gas for industrial uses is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt industrial consumers.

m. Do you believe that the price of electricity generated by natural gas is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

n. Do you believe that the price of electricity generated by coal is too low?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices fluctuate and can hurt consumers.

Do you believe that the price of energy generated by fossil fuels should be higher in order to make the price of energy generated by renewable and alternative fuels more cost-competitive with the price of energy generated by fossil fuels?

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy prices for all Americans and understand that prices can fluctuate and hurt consumers. President Biden's energy and climate policy is based on advancing clean energy technology and making it more affordable with more innovation and new technology. As I said during the hearing, I support the President's approach and I will work to continue that trend.

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- o. What is the price point at which the price of any of the sources of energy listed in f-n above would be too low? Please explain the basis for your answers.

RESPONSE: I support affordable energy for all Americans. As I said during the hearing, the energy industry is innovating and our climate challenge must be addressed. Together we can work to position our nation and all of its people for success in the future. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. As part of this balance, the Department has a role in harnessing the clean energy potential of our public lands, and to create jobs and new economic opportunities that can help consumers.

- p. What is the danger presented by low energy prices?

RESPONSE: See my answers to the previous questions.

- q. In a December 12, 2008 article published by the Wall Street Journal entitled, *Times Tough for Energy Overhaul*, Steven Chu, who soon after the article was published became President Obama's first Secretary of Energy, stated: "Somehow, we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels of Europe." Do you believe the Biden administration should "figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels of Europe"?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with this article from over 12 years ago. As I said during the hearing, I support the Biden energy and climate plan, which aims to boost deployment of clean energy, create millions of good-paying jobs, and I support affordable energy for all Americans.

Question 2: On October 2, 2020, you posted the following on Twitter: "we must stand up against Trump and his energy dominance policies." In response to each of the following, please be specific and, where applicable, please cite sources to support your position.

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I recognize that the role of a cabinet secretary with regard to the American public is much different than the role of a congresswoman to her district constituents. If I am confirmed as Secretary, I will be supporting the President's agenda that strikes the right balance to get us to net zero emissions by 2050. With this in mind, I offer the following responses to your specific questions.

- a. How do you define "energy dominance policies" in this context?

RESPONSE: The prioritization of fossil fuel development above all other priorities.

- b. Why should one "stand up against" "energy dominance policies"?

RESPONSE: I believe in striking the right balance for energy development on public lands, not placing fossil fuel development above all other priorities.

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c. Is it bad for the United States to lead the world in energy production?

RESPONSE: No.

d. Which nations would likely supplant the United States as the leader in world energy production if our nation lost that position?

RESPONSE: I support President Biden's plans to make America a leader on energy innovation and technology to create jobs and address climate change.

e. Should Russia or Saudi Arabia replace the United States as a source of energy production? If not, how can we prevent that from happening?

RESPONSE: I support President Biden's plans to make America a leader on energy innovation and technology to create jobs and address climate change.

f. What has been the role of the Department of the Interior in helping the nation to attain its current position with respect to energy production? Please comment specifically on the production of natural gas, oil, and coal since 1990.

RESPONSE: The Department plays an important role in domestic energy production and production of both fossil and clean energy on public lands and federal waters has increased since 1990.

Question 3: In late 2019, New Mexico's Democratic Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said that she would seek a waiver from any ban imposed on oil and gas leasing or permitting by a future administration. Is there any basis in law to treat the state of New Mexico differently than the state of Wyoming or other states for the purposes of Secretarial Order 3395 or Executive Order 14008?

RESPONSE: No.

Question 4: Please answer the following questions:

a. Are you aware of any evidence that banning new oil, natural gas, or coal leasing on federal lands will reduce the total production of oil, natural gas, or coal globally? If so, please provide that evidence to the committee

b. Are you aware of any evidence that banning new oil, natural gas, or coal leasing on federal lands will reduce the total consumption of oil, natural gas, or coal globally? If so, please provide that evidence to the committee.

RESPONSE TO a and b: As I stated during the hearing, the President's Executive Order is a pause to review the federal fossil fuel program. Existing oil and gas leases are not impacted by this pause.

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Globally, I have not looked at the statistics, but believe that it is a situation where everyone should work together.

Question 5: The Biden Administration's federal ban on oil and gas production will almost certainly lead to America importing these resources from foreign nations, such as Russia or Nigeria.

RESPONSE: As I stated during the hearing, the President's Executive Order is a pause to review the federal fossil fuel program. Existing oil and gas leases are not impacted by this pause. With this in mind, answers to specific questions follow.

a. Are the environmental regulations governing oil and gas production in Russia and Nigeria more protective of the environment than the environmental regulations governing oil and gas production on lands under BLM jurisdiction?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules, but I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

b. Are the environmental regulations governing oil and gas production in Russia and Nigeria enforced more effectively than the environmental regulations governing oil and gas production on lands under BLM jurisdiction?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules, but I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

c. Are worker safety regulations governing oil and gas production in Russia and Nigeria more protective of worker safety than the regulations governing oil and gas production on lands under BLM jurisdiction?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules, but I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

d. Are the worker safety regulations governing oil and gas production in Russia and Nigeria enforced more effectively than the worker safety regulations governing oil and gas production on lands under BLM jurisdiction?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules, but I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

e. Environmental and worker safety standards for oil and gas production on federal land are among the highest in the world. Are you concerned that oil and gas production will migrate from federal land to other areas, including foreign countries, with lower standards? If not, why not?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules, but I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

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Question 6: Many Indian tribes rely on energy development, including oil, natural gas, and coal production, to fund their governments and provide services to tribal members. Many tribal members and families rely on oil and natural gas production as a source of income.

- a. Do you support the efforts of Indian tribes and individual tribal members to develop and produce oil, natural gas, and coal resources on land held in trust for the benefit of the tribes or tribal members?

RESPONSE: I support tribal sovereignty and regular, meaningful and robust tribal consultation when it comes to Department policy regarding tribal lands.

- b. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members, seeking to develop and produce oil, natural gas, and coal resources on trust lands?

RESPONSE: The United States has a trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal Nations. I support tribal sovereignty and regular, meaningful and robust tribal consultation when it comes to Department policy regarding tribal lands, which are not public lands.

- c. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members, seeking to bring oil and natural gas from trust lands to market through the most cost effective means, such as oil and natural gas pipelines?

RESPONSE: The United States has a trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal Nations. I support tribal sovereignty and regular, meaningful and robust tribal consultation when it comes to Department policy regarding tribal lands, which are not public lands.

- d. Do you commit to assisting Indian tribes and individual tribal members to identify and secure the means to bring coal resources from trust lands to market, including (but not limited) to international markets?

RESPONSE: The United States has a trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal Nations. I support tribal sovereignty and regular, meaningful and robust tribal consultation when it comes to Department policy regarding tribal lands, which are not public lands.

Question 7: In January, White House National Climate Advisor, Gina McCarthy, said that climate change poses the “most significant public health challenge of our time.” With a global pandemic that has left over half a million Americans and more than 2.4 million people worldwide dead in the past year, do you agree with Gina McCarthy’s statement that climate change is the biggest public health challenge of our time?

RESPONSE: I believe that COVID and climate change are both very significant public health challenges.

Question 8: DOI has undertaken activities related to addressing the impacts of climate change while balancing the department’s responsibilities to steward opportunities for energy production and other land uses and purposes (e.g., conservation, recreation, and grazing and range management).

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- a. In the past, executive orders and secretarial orders have been used to establish departmental policies and priorities related to climate change and energy production. What role should future secretarial orders play in addressing climate mitigation or adaptation activities? How would you use them to modify, if at all, existing departmental policy?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will get briefed on past policy actions and carefully consider future policy changes to move our country forward.

- b. Why isn't it best to combat climate change by providing incentives to our state, local, and industry partners to innovate new ways to improve the environmental performance of the development, production, and utilization of our abundant fossil fuel resources? Please be specific.

RESPONSE: I support innovation as a way to address climate change and the Biden administration is open to all technologies to meet our net zero goal by 2050, including carbon capture and sequestration technologies that can address climate change.

- c. If confirmed, would you take any steps to incentivize innovation to help improve the environmental performance of the fossil fuel industry with regard to climate change? If not, why not? If so, what steps would you take?

RESPONSE: I support innovation as a way to address climate change and the Biden administration is open to all technologies to meet our net zero goal by 2050, including carbon capture and sequestration technologies that can address climate change. I know that other departments, such as the Department of Energy, are involved in this area and if confirmed I will direct the Department to collaborate with other agencies in an all-of-government approach to addressing climate change.

- d. DOI, and in particular BLM, has studied and carefully considered impacts to climate change in energy leasing and development activities. If confirmed, will you commit that DOI will fairly study and promptly disclose impacts to climate change from the extraction of oil and natural gas in foreign countries, and the transportation of these products to the United States, including the greenhouse gas emissions associated with these activities?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more on the specific factors in DOI's climate impact consideration. I believe these issues can be raised as part of the Department's upcoming review of the fossil fuel program during the pause on new oil and gas leasing.

Question 9: Please answer the following questions:

- a. Is there sufficient gathering line infrastructure at oil and gas wells on federal land to enable producers to reduce unnecessary venting and flaring of natural gas?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this issue, but I understand the important role that gathering lines can play in reducing venting and flaring of natural gas.

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- b. If not, how would you address the shortage of gathering line infrastructure at oil and gas wells on federal land?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about how the Department is addressing this issue, but I understand the importance of gathering lines to help reduce venting and flaring to benefit jobs, taxpayers, public health and address climate change.

Question 10: The two principal methods of shipping crude oil over long distances on land are pipelines and railcars.

- a. Which method of shipping poses less risk to public safety?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more on the safety information on this issue.

- b. Which method of shipping produces less greenhouse gas emissions?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this issue.

Question 11: Multiple laws authorize the development of various renewable resources on federal lands and waters. Many federal lands and waters are open for the development of renewable energy resources. Some examples of renewable energy resources developed on onshore federal lands include geothermal, wind, solar, hydro, and biomass. Offshore, DOI has issued leases for wind development in Atlantic waters. Development of federal lands for renewable energy projects can contribute to clean energy goals and generate revenues. Over the long term, it can also restrict the use of those federal lands for other activities.

- a. How would you reconcile competing uses and priorities relating to renewable energy development on federal lands and waters?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work to strike the right balance and promote smart planning so that we can increase the amount of renewable resources produced on public lands and waters.

- b. Should DOI offer incentives to develop renewable energy on federal lands and waters, or simply defer to the private sector to utilize existing approaches to such development?

RESPONSE: The president's agenda demonstrates that America's public lands can and should be engines for clean energy production and economic growth. As I said during the hearing, together we can work to position our nation and all of its people for success in the future. If confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.

- c. Do you support sharing revenues that are generated by the leasing and development of renewable energy on federal land and waters with affected states?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will study this issue further and consider any proposals from Congress.

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Question 12: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) recently announced that it will not seek public comment on the controversial Vineyard Wind project, despite the developer's plans to install turbines that are taller and higher-capacity than originally proposed.

- a. Why did BOEM eliminate public comment on this material change to the project?
- b. Do you believe coastal communities are legitimate stakeholders in the offshore wind leasing process?

RESPONSE: I am not at the Department and do not know the specifics of BOEM's administrative processing of this project. If I am confirmed I commit to getting briefed on this matter and to learning more about the status of the project.

Question 13: The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) within DOI is responsible for implementing the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Title IV of SMCRA authorizes the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, which provides grants to eligible states and tribes for the reclamation of abandoned coal mining sites. The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund is financed by abandoned mine land (AML) fees collected on mined coal. Eligible coal production states receive grants from the Fund to assist them in carrying out their coal mining reclamation programs, subject to federal requirements. AML fees provide critical resources needed to reclaim the most environmentally hazardous mine sites across America. There are thousands of these expensive sites left to clean up, and the cost to reclaim them is estimated to be over \$12 billion. OSMRE is responsible for overseeing state reclamation programs that receive these federal funds, providing technical assistance to states, and carrying out the reclamation of sites in states and on tribal lands without approved reclamation programs.

- a. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that OSMRE will apply the SMCRA fairly and efficiently, and working with members of this committee to implement the law correctly?

RESPONSE: Yes.

- b. The outlook for coal production has changed significantly over the last decade. Because AML programs directly depend on coal production, any measure that decreases coal production will decrease revenues into the AML program. Will you protect coal production in order to protect AML programs across the country? If not, how will you propose to compensate AML programs and safeguard the communities and jobs created by reclamation activities?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this issue and working with Congress to strengthen and extend AML programs. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to create jobs and reclaim abandoned mines that are the source of toxic pollution into many rivers and streams.

Question 14: During your confirmation hearing, I told you about a letter I sent to Acting Secretary Scott de la Vega, asking for specific answers to 22 questions about Secretarial Order No. 3395, which bans oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters for 60 days. The letter I received on February 22 from Acting Secretary de la Vega did not respond to my questions. At your confirmation hearing, you gave me your commitment to answer my questions. Please answer the following questions regarding those orders:

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RESPONSE: I am not currently in the Department so cannot speak to personal knowledge of the implementation of this Secretarial Order, but provide the following responses:

- a. Clearly list and define all items, actions, and permits that are considered “existing operations under valid leases” under Secretarial Order No. 3395.

RESPONSE: I understand from the Department that “existing operations” include any action that is not specifically defined in SO 3395. Examples include: First and last production memos; lease segregations; operating rights transfers; suspensions of operations or production; inspection and enforcement activities.

- b. Will the Department approve new applications for permit to drill (APDs) on existing leases while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations, and they are being reviewed under the order.

- c. How does the Department plan to comply with the deadlines for APDs established in 30 U.S.C. §226(p)(1) and (2) while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations.

- d. How will the Department address submitted but unapproved APDs, which may be subject to a categorical exclusion or documentation of NEPA adequacy (DNA) and would not result in new surface disturbance, while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations.

- e. How will the Department address submitted but unapproved APDs, which may be subject to a categorical exclusion or DNA and would result in new surface disturbance, while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations.

- f. How will the Department address submitted but unapproved APDs which are not subject to a categorical exclusion or DNA while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations.

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- g. To what extent will the Department approve sundries, amendments, and other requests related to already approved APDs and new APDs – including instances when requests for approval require new surface disturbance – while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that decisions related to sundry notices and amendments concerning well pads with approved APDs, that would not increase surface disturbance, are not subject to elevated review under the order. Those instances where additional surface disturbance would occur will be reviewed under the order.

- h. To what extent will the Department grant rights-of-way for oil, natural gas, and water gathering lines, pipelines, and other infrastructure related to the operations of already approved APDs and new APDs while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: I understand that the Department has indicated that applications for rights-of-way for infrastructure related operations are being processed by the Bureau of Land Management and are being reviewed for approval under the order.

- i. For each BLM field office, in each state, provide a list of the number of APDs, sundries, amendments, rights-of-way, and other requests approved or rescinded since Secretarial Order No. 3395 went into effect. Please provide me an updated list on a weekly basis.

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that it cannot immediately provide this information. If I am confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, I will follow up on this request with the Bureau of Land Management and will provide additional information, as appropriate.

- j. Describe the professional and technical qualifications of each of the individuals, who are listed in section 4 of Secretarial Order No. 3395 and are now responsible for processing APDs and related permits.

RESPONSE: I understand from the Department that, like policy-level appointees from prior administrations that have served at the Department in the capacity of an acting Assistant Secretary or higher, these individuals have professional qualifications appropriate for the position.

- k. How does the Department plan to comply with the quarterly lease sale requirement under 30 U.S.C. §226(b)(1)?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that all lease sales scheduled to take place during the term of the order will be reviewed under the provisions of the order.

- l. On January 21, 2021, *Bloomberg* reported that “[a] Nevada oil and gas lease sale scheduled for March 9[, 2021,] is the only lease sale listed online at EnergyNet that would fall within the 60-day window.” Does the Department plan to proceed with the Wyoming oil and gas lease sale scheduled for March 15,

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2021? If not, what is the legal basis for proceeding with the Nevada oil and gas lease sale on March 9, but not proceeding with the Wyoming oil and gas lease sale scheduled for March 15?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that no states are being treated differently in this regard. All lease sales scheduled to take place during the term of the order are being reviewed under the provisions of the order.

m. How will the Department address applications for APD extensions, lease extensions, and suspension of operations while Secretarial Order No. 3395 remains in effect?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that the standard timelines for processing APDs continues under existing regulations during the period of S.O. 3395.

n. How will Secretarial Order No. 3395 be phased out?

Response: As indicated in the order, it is intended to remain in effect for 60 days or until any of its provisions are amended, superseded, or revoked.

o. When will Secretarial Order No. 3395 be phased out?

Response: As indicated in the order, it is intended to remain in effect for 60 days or until any of its provisions are amended, superseded, or revoked.

p. Has the Department assessed the detrimental environmental impacts from restricting the permitting and siting of gathering lines, pipelines, and other infrastructure? Specifically, has the Department assessed how Secretarial Order No. 3395 and/or Executive Order No. 14008 may result in additional truck traffic to and from well pads, additional venting and flaring of natural gas, and additional consumption of freshwater? If so, please provide the assessment in its entirety.

Response: The Department has indicated that because SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department bureaus and offices, and because the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions, it is not expected that the implementation of the elevated review will result in detrimental impacts.

q. Has the Department assessed the detrimental impacts that Secretarial Order No. 3395 and/or Executive Order No. 14008 will have on the conservation and recovery of fluid minerals (e.g., oil, natural gas) on federal lands and waters? If so, please provide the assessment in its entirety.

Response: The Department has indicated that because SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department bureaus and offices, and because the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions, it is not expected that the implementation of the elevated review will result in detrimental impacts.

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- r. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is entirely financed by offshore leasing and royalty revenues. The Great American Outdoors Act provides billions annually from onshore and offshore Federal oil and gas leasing and development for national parks and other conservation programs. Has the Department assessed the impact to conservation funding from Secretarial Order No. 3395 and/or Executive Order No. 14008? If so, please provide the assessment in its entirety.

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that because SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department bureaus and offices, and because the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions, it is not expected that the implementation of the elevated review will result in detrimental impacts to these programs. In addition, because development continues under the President’s Executive Order on valid existing leases, royalty payments to state governments and the federal treasury will continue.

- s. How does the Department expect Secretarial Order No. 3395, Executive Order No. 14008, and the resulting economic loss to comply with the Department’s mandate to manage lands “in a manner which recognizes the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals...from the public lands,” as stated in 43 U.S.C. §1701(a)(12)?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that because SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department bureaus and offices, and because the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions, development continues under the President’s Executive Order on valid existing leases.

- t. Secretarial Order No. 3395 states that it applies to the delegation of authority vested in employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). However, the Department recently clarified that the order exempts lands held in trust for the benefit of one or more tribes. Will there be a new delegation of authority issued to BIA employees? If so, when will that occur?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that because the order did not ever apply to actions taken with respect to tribal and individual trust and restricted lands, there was no necessity for a redelegation.

- u. Has the Department assessed the impacts to parcels, which are held in trust for the benefit of one or more tribes, if those parcels are in a unit agreement with federal parcels? Additionally, if the parcel held in trust for a tribe or individual becomes uneconomic on account of Secretarial Order No. 3395 and/or Executive Order No. 14008, will the Department issue permits for the federal parcels to avoid harmful impacts to parcels held in trust for a tribe or individual?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department bureaus and offices, and because the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions, it is not expected that the implementation of the elevated review will result in detrimental impacts in these instances.

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- v. Has the Department provided BLM offices in New Mexico and/or Nevada with guidance, written or oral, on Secretarial Order No. 3395 and/or Executive Order No. 14008, which it has not provided to BLM offices in Wyoming or other states? If so, what is the legal basis for withholding that guidance from BLM offices outside of New Mexico and/or Nevada?

RESPONSE: The Department has indicated that all of BLM’s State Offices were provided with the same information regarding the need to elevate review of actions under the order.

Question 15: DOI is the parent agency of the United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The BOR oversees water resource management and storage projects and is the largest wholesaler of water in nation.

- a. What in your background qualifies you to oversee this agency, and what would your priorities be to ensure that the BOR fulfills its mission?

RESPONSE: I believe I am as qualified to serve as past nominees who have been confirmed on a bipartisan basis. I have served as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives on the House Natural Resources Committee as its Vice Chair and, if confirmed, will utilize the BOR experts to carry out the bureau’s mission and its current issues and challenges. If confirmed, I will work hard, value science and expertise when it comes to water issues and work to promote consensus as we face new water supply challenges due to climate change.

- b. The BOR is a major producer of hydroelectric power. What are your views on hydroelectric power? (BOR)

RESPONSE: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an essential part of our energy future. Hydropower can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid. It is also critical that hydropower is developed and operated in a way that supports healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

- c. The BOR provides critical assistance, both financial and technical, to water districts and users through water contracts, and also provides opportunities for assistance to agencies to promote access to water, recreation and water conservation efforts. As Secretary of the Interior, would you continue to support and prioritize BOR assistance efforts? (BOR)

RESPONSE: I know that water is the lifeblood of the West and that these are challenging issues. If confirmed, I will seek consensus-based solutions to Western water challenges so that we can safeguard the water supplies that are so important to the region’s communities, farms, cities, and tribes. I would seek to work with you and all stakeholders to foster cooperation and creative solutions as opposed to conflict.

Question 16: The federal land systems administered by DOI agencies are managed under different statutory frameworks each with a distinct emphasis. BLM manages land for multiple use and sustained yield of resources.

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The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) manages land to conserve plants and animals. The National Park Service (NPS) manages land to preserve resources and provide for their enjoyment by the public. Congress, the President, and the Secretary of the Interior (among others) have authority to make certain land designations.

- a. Under your leadership, will DOI manage lands within its jurisdiction according to the principles established in the applicable authorizing statute?

RESPONSE: As I said in the hearing, I will follow the law.

- b. Is compliance with the law the last word in establishing the balance to be struck in managing lands for protection and use? If not, what is the authority for establishing a different balance?

RESPONSE: Within the laws that apply to the Department, it is my understanding that there are decisions to make to strike the right balance between use of public lands today and conserving them for future generations.

- c. Do you support additional protections or use restrictions for certain lands and resources? If so, please describe the additional protections you favor and the authority of the Secretary for extending those protections in a specific context.

RESPONSE: I do not prejudge any future decisions I would face at the Department, if confirmed, but I will strive to strike the right balance between use and conservation.

- d. Do you support additional access for commercial uses, such as energy development, timber harvest, and livestock grazing? If not, why not?

RESPONSE: I support striking the right balance between conservation of public lands and resources for future generations use and current economic activities on public lands.

- e. If you are confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, how would DOI work with states, localities, and tribes to manage federal lands? For example, how would DOI use authorities which allow nonfederal governments to conduct resource management work on nonfederal lands?

RESPONSE: As I testified at the Committee, I support state, tribal and local cooperation and look forward to learning more about these authorities and mechanisms for such cooperation.

- f. How does your background enable you to resolve differing views of the role of DOI in managing federal lands and natural resources? Please be specific.

RESPONSE: My background involves being a stakeholder of the Department as a Native woman and tribal employee, along with serving on the committee of jurisdiction in the U.S. House of Representatives, and chairing its subcommittee overseeing federal lands. As I testified at the hearing, I believe in listening

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to science, Department expertise, a wide variety of stakeholders, and seeking out cooperation whenever possible.

- g. Should DOI management of lands and resources prioritize national or local benefits?

RESPONSE: The Department must strike the right balance when making decisions on public land management and that involves listening to state, tribal and local governments and stakeholders.

- h. Generally, do you support one-size-fits-all requirements and regulations, or do you believe DOI should strive to meet the varying local needs of States?

RESPONSE: I believe the Department should have a level of national consistency and seek to adapt to varying local conditions when appropriate and according to applicable law.

Question 17: In a May 2019 article in the Guardian, you were quoted saying the following about how DOI carries out its agencies' various public lands initiatives: "I just feel like our priorities are so messed up right now... We need to protect every single open space that we possibly can."

- a. Please explain your statement that "[w]e need to protect every single open space that we possibly can"? Does this imply that, if confirmed, you will pursue aggressive land restriction policies at the expense of multiple use?
- b. Were you speaking about a specific agency or bureau when you said our priorities are "messed up"? If the priorities at the various land management agencies are "so messed up right now", how do you plan to change the way these agencies carry out their respective missions?
- c. Land uses can be authorized in manners that yield beneficial results on the landscape. How would you direct and prioritize multiple use and sustained yield and apply best practices and science to public land management?

RESPONSE: As a member of Congress, I was speaking on behalf of my constituents who were concerned that the previous administration too often put extractive resource development above all other priorities. As I testified to the Committee, I understand that being a cabinet Secretary is a different role and I take that responsibility seriously. If confirmed, I will work to support multiple use on public lands designated for that purpose and will consult science and best practices for responsible public land management that improves the landscape for future generations.

Question 18: The BLM has a multiple use mission – as set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 – to manage public land resources for a variety of uses, such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvest.

- a. Please explain your understanding of BLM's statutory multiple use mandate.
- b. If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure the BLM meets this statutory multiple use mandate?

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- c. Many DOI lands are neighbors to state and local lands. What role should state and local governments play in defining the appropriate multiple use and sustained yield standard within their jurisdictional boundaries?
- d. What role should the public and nongovernmental entities play in influencing the appropriate multiple use and sustained yield standard on federal lands?
- e. Please describe how you will balance input from affected citizens in the local geographic area where land use decisions are made.

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I understand that multiple use is a foundational tenet of managing our public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, including those on the ground in local areas, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will work to uphold those commitments.

Question 19: The BLM manages grazing on approximately 155 million acres of land in the western United States. As Secretary of the Interior, you would oversee this activity.

- a. Generally, what are your views on livestock grazing on public lands?
- b. Do you agree that grazing is an important conservation and rangeland health management tool, and has also been successfully used to reduce the threat of wildland fires? If not, why not?
- c. Do you believe livestock grazing on public lands should be classified as a “surface disturbing” activity?
- d. If confirmed, what would your priorities be in this area? What changes, if any, would you seek to make with regard to how BLM administers permits and leases for livestock grazing on public lands?
- e. President Biden signed an executive order banning new oil and gas lease sales on federal lands and waters. Many farmers and ranchers fear that a similar order could be issued to curtail livestock grazing on Federal lands. Will you urge the President and his advisors in the White House against the issuance of such an order or any other constraints to livestock grazing? If not, why not?
- f. How will you strive to strengthen and improve the relationship between BLM and stakeholders who hold grazing permits on public lands?
- g. Devastating wildfires, drought, and other factors have significantly impacted grazing allotments across the West. What is your view on allowing permittees to temporarily utilize vacant allotments during certain natural disaster or other uncontrollable circumstances?
- h. Across the west, there are hundreds of vacant allotments that could be permitted for grazing activity. This would support rural economies through improved opportunity for ranchers and apply treatments to areas where the buildup of fine fuels increases fire risk. These vacant allotments need updated NEPA evaluations. If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing vacant allotments in NEPA evaluations to reopen these allotments?
- i. Under your leadership, describe how you might direct BLM to consider use of vacant allotments in response to natural disasters.

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Department’s grazing policy and the factors raised in this question. As I testified at the hearing, I support multiple use and respect the role grazing plays on our public lands. I am not yet a member of the Administration; I also am not aware of any plans for an executive order on grazing.

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Question 20: Overgrazing by wild horses on and around BLM lands have created issues in my home state of Wyoming. To help address this issue, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Congress allocated roughly \$116 million in response to the BLM's May 2020 proposal to institute an aggressive, non-lethal, population control strategy to address the current unsustainable trajectory of on-range wild horse and burro population growth.

- a. Please outline the approach you will direct to wild horse management on and around BLM lands? Is compliance with Appropriate Management Levels is needed?
- b. If confirmed, how would you carry out the Congressional directive outlined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021?
- c. In your view, what, if any, BLM administrative or policy changes would improve the implementation of the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act to reduce costs and improve compliance with Appropriate Management Levels in the West to avoid severe wild horse and burro overgrazing?
- d. Last year, you led an amendment to the appropriations bill that required BLM to set aside \$11 million for applying PZP, a fertility treatment in wild horses. PZP, while effective, is far from being the only option available to the BLM to manage herd sizes. If confirmed, would you commit to implement the full suite of fertility treatments, including PZP, to decrease herd sizes?

RESPONSE: I know that this is a longstanding and difficult issue with passionate advocates. If I am confirmed I would comply with the law, but it would be important to learn more from the BLM experts on this issue on how best to begin to move toward a resolution.

Question 21: The BLM manages close to 65 million acres of forests and woodlands across 12 western states and Alaska. These forests provide food and habitat for wildlife, trails for hiking and biking, clean abundant water for communities, and a variety of different wood products.

- a. What in your employment background or education qualifies you to oversee this management obligation?
- b. Please describe your forestry management philosophy and, if confirmed, how would you work to maintain and improve the health our nation's forests that fall under DOI's purview?
- c. The BLM manages forests and woodlands in accordance with the multiple use, sustained yield mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, how will the "multiple use, sustained yield" mandate inform and guide your initiatives?
- d. What is your view of forest treatments to protect from disease and improve species diversity?
- e. What is your view of forest management treatments to reduce potential catastrophic wildland fire events?
- f. What do you believe the government's role should be in mitigating wildfire risk? Specifically, do you believe proactive forest management is important in reducing wildfire risk, including the devastating effects of megafires in the West? Please explain your views and, if confirmed, how they would guide your priorities as Secretary.

RESPONSE: I believe I am as qualified to serve as past nominees who have been confirmed on a bipartisan basis. I have served as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives on the House Natural

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Resources Committee as its Vice Chair and, if confirmed, look forward to learning more from the Department's forestry and public land managers, listening to Congress, and consulting with stakeholders. I agree we should implement best practices to protect our public lands from disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildlife. If confirmed, I will direct the Department to use the best science and collaborate with other federal agencies when it comes to wildfire. I am committed to supporting wildland firefighters and at-risk communities.

Question 22: The federal government currently owns roughly 640 million surface acres, about 28 percent of the land in the United States. Three DOI agencies manage large amounts of this total: BLM, 244 million acres; FWS, 89 million acres; and NPS, 80 million acres. Federal land ownership is heavily concentrated in the West, and nearly half of all lands in Wyoming are owned by the federal government.

- a. Please explain your stance on public land ownership, how it is informed by your professional or personal experience to date, and specifically whether you think that public lands should always remain in federal ownership? Do you believe there is any instance when federal lands should be sold or transferred to states or other jurisdictions?
- b. A number of states, especially in the West, have sought more state and local control over lands and resources, including through transfer of lands to states. In your view, are there ways in which DOI or Congress can or should provide states with more control over federal lands within their state borders?
- c. Please elaborate on your views on how, from a practical standpoint, state and local governments should be able to cooperate in the management of public lands? Please be as specific as possible.

RESPONSE: I support management of our public lands for the benefit of all Americans. If confirmed, I will seek briefings on the land transfer proposals that come to my attention. I will carefully consider the views of states, tribes, local governments and other important stakeholders on any such proposals.

Question 23: Congress has provided DOI agencies with varying standing authorities for acquiring and disposing of land, ranging from relatively broad authorities for BLM to relatively narrow ones for NPS. Congress also enacts legislation authorizing and governing particular land transactions. LWCF is the primary source for funding land acquisition, although there are others. For example, the FWS has other mandatory funding through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Funding for land disposal is generally provided in discretionary appropriations laws covering DOI agencies.

- a. In your view, what is the optimal size of the federal estate? What, if any, additional authority does DOI need to acquire or dispose of lands to achieve what you view as the optimal size of the federal estate?
- b. Should DOI prioritize wildfire prevention activities and address our national parks' and public lands' deferred maintenance backlog ahead of spending money to acquire more land?
- c. Should DOI prioritize the maintenance and safety of existing land holdings or the acquisition of new land?
- d. In 1997, BLM identified nearly 3.4 million acres of land as potentially available for disposal. How much of this land has been disposed? How much land does BLM currently identify in land use plans as potentially available for disposal?

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RESPONSE: I am excited to implement the Great American Outdoors Act as Congress intended, including both LWCF and the unprecedented new resources for addressing the maintenance backlog on public lands. I will work with Congress on additional maintenance needs which I believe have the potential to create jobs and boost the outdoor and tourism economy. As I am not at the Department, I have not yet been briefed on the status of BLM lands identified as potentially suitable for disposal.

Question 24: The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) made the \$900 million in annual deposits in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) available as mandatory spending. Nearly all of the revenue is derived from oil and gas leasing offshore. The mandatory appropriations are available for the purposes of the fund, including accounts and programs funded under the FY2020 appropriations law. Purposes include outdoor recreation grants to states, federal land acquisition, and others (*e.g.*, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, administered by FWS). GAOA sets out a procedure for the President to allocate LWCF funding and an “alternate” procedure for Congress to make allocations. If Congress does not enact an alternate allocation by the date of enactment of full-year appropriations for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, the President is to allocate amounts.

- a. If confirmed, how would you advise the President to allocate LWCF mandatory funding among federal land acquisition, outdoor recreation grants to states, and other purposes and programs?
- b. If you are confirmed, what processes and criteria will DOI use to prioritize funding among the many potential acquisitions for each agency? Will the agencies collaborate in identifying acquisitions of types of resources or in geographic areas? Would any collaboration extend to the Forest Service, which also typically receives appropriations for acquisitions?
- c. A few weeks ago, Acting Secretary de la Vega rescinded former Secretary Bernhardt’s instruction that any federal acquisitions made using LWCF funds be supported by local communities and their stakeholders. LWCF was not intended to be a unilateral tool to increase the federal estate, it was intended to be a tool to benefit the American public. If confirmed, would you commit to ensuring local communities and local governments supported any acquisition made by LWCF – before the acquisition took place?
- d. If confirmed, will you commit to the strong coordination and collaboration with, as well as the frequent and sustained consultation of, state and local officials during any Federal land acquisition initiatives?
- e. Under your leadership, what kinds of lands would DOI prioritize for LWCF acquisition?
- f. Would you be supportive of using some of the federal LWCF dollars to address key deferred maintenance needs and issues?
- g. The federal land acquisition process requires lengthy and complex procedures and numerous steps, ranging from federal appraisal reviews and environmental site assessments. How will you ensure that various DOI agencies work seamlessly to minimize these lengthy and complicated factors that impact willing sellers and non-federal entities?
- h. In your view, will the mandatory funds in GAOA be sufficient, excessive, or too little for the Administration’s goals? If you are confirmed as Secretary, will DOI seek additional discretionary funds for programs and purposes generally funded by the LWCF?
- i. How many acres of land have DOI agencies purchased with LWCF funds to date? Where are these lands located? How will the amounts and locations change with the new mandatory funds? To what extent will

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DOI agencies use the funding to acquire permanent and temporary easements and other interests in land (rather than full ownership)?

RESPONSE: As I testified, I look forward to implementing the Great American Outdoors Act as Congress intended, with the balance that Congress established for resources for both LWCF and public lands maintenance. I believe conservation works best with local involvement and that LWCF has been a bipartisan success. In terms of land acquisition, I look forward to learning more about the factors raised in this question, but I do believe that increasing access and conserving priority habitat are two important purposes of the LWCF. When it comes to funding questions, I am not currently in the administration, so I am not involved in the development of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget request. If confirmed, I will consider whether additional resources may be necessary or beneficial to either LWCF or deferred maintenance and work with Congress on funding issues as appropriate.

Question 25: On October 22, 2019, you chaired a House Natural Resources subcommittee hearing entitled *No More Standoffs: Protecting Federal Employees and Ending the Culture of Anti-Government Attacks and Abuse*. During the hearing, you criticized subcommittee Republicans for inviting a witness that has “written favorably about giving away Federal land to State and private control.” The Republican Ranking Member, Rep. John Curtis objected, saying that “calling for local ownership and control of public lands does not embody an attack on the Federal government.”

- a. Is it your view that local officials and citizens who want less federal control over their lands should be described as anti-government extremists, or that their views should be discarded entirely?
- b. How does your participation in Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrations and protests correlate to your stance on Anti-Government Attacks? Why is advocating for local ownership and control more of an “anti-government attack” than participating in the Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrations and protests?
- c. If confirmed, will you commit to working alongside state and local officials, including those who may disagree with your land management decisions and philosophies?

RESPONSE: This subcommittee hearing was called to conduct oversight regarding attacks on federal government property that have been perpetrated in recent years by armed extremists. We saw how serious this can be with the events of January 6, 2021, here at the U.S. Capitol. I strongly oppose violent threats that federal employees have faced on public lands and I support the rights of Americans to participate in non-violent protests and to voice their views even when we disagree.

Question 26: The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) established the Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) with mandatory funding to address the deferred maintenance needs for five agencies: NPS, BLM, FWS, Forest Service (FS), and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). For each of FY2021 through FY2025, the LRF is to receive up to \$1.9 billion from specified energy revenues. Most of the money (70 percent) is for the NPS. For all agencies, at least 65 percent of the funds are to be used for “non-transportation” projects. For FY2018, DOI estimated NPS’s deferred maintenance at \$11.9 billion, with more than half for transportation infrastructure. The FS estimated its FY2018 deferred maintenance at \$5.2 billion, with about \$3.7 billion for transportation related assets. DOI estimated deferred maintenance for FY2018 at roughly \$1 billion to \$2 billion for each of BLM, FWS, and BIE.

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- a. If confirmed, what will your strategy be to implement LRF funds to address deferred maintenance needs?
- b. What is your priority for maintaining existing infrastructure relative to acquisition of new assets?
- c. Deferred maintenance estimates have not been provided by NPS since FY2018. Current deferred maintenance estimates are necessary for our legislative and oversight work. If confirmed, will you promptly provide this Committee with FY2019 and FY2020 deferred maintenance estimates for each agency, broken down by asset class such as those DOI has issued for prior fiscal years? When will we expect to receive the estimates? Will you commit to providing the Energy and Natural Resources Committee with deferred maintenance estimates promptly for each fiscal year thereafter?
- d. The most recent NPS data estimated that Grand Teton National Park has a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$181 million, and that Yellowstone National Park has approximately \$563 million in deferred maintenance. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, will you commit to addressing these substantial NPS deferred maintenance backlogs, as well as other NPS deferred maintenance throughout Wyoming? When can we see your plan for addressing them?
- e. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, will you commit to working with DOI agencies to seek contracting opportunities to hire state and local workers with GAOA funds?
- f. NPS has long had the largest maintenance backlog of all DOI agencies. What actions will NPS and other DOI agencies take to reduce deferred maintenance? Is disposal of federal lands and assets desirable for some agencies, areas, or types of facilities?
- g. Do you expect that the mandatory funding provided through GAOA will be sufficient to address the agencies' most urgent deferred maintenance needs? In your view, to what extent, if any, will additional discretionary appropriations be needed for this purpose?
- h. Within the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) funds projects that improve access federal lands on transportation facilities in the national Federal Lands transportation inventory. Under your leadership, how would DOI coordinate with DOT to address the deferred maintenance backlog for transportation projects? How will you ensure that DOI's efforts are complimentary and not redundant relative to DOT's efforts?

RESPONSE: Effectively and efficiently spending the funds Congress has provided for this purpose will be a high priority for me if I am confirmed. I will work with the Department's bureaus and budget office to ensure that we have a plan in place to do so, in particular for the NPS which is set to receive significant resources. I look forward to learning more about the issues raised in this question, but I believe that hiring in-state, local workers for these projects is beneficial when possible and in the best interest of the taxpayers. I will work to provide Congress with the information it needs to do its constitutional oversight duty when it comes to this important effort and work with Congress on any additional resources that may be necessary. I agree that coordination among agencies to avoid redundant efforts is important.

Question 27: In your view, what are the greatest needs and challenges facing the NPS?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, effective implementation of funding for the national parks maintenance backlog is going to be a high priority for me. Our parks can play a critical role in telling the story of all Americans and our shared history. It is important to manage visitation at popular site and promote

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visitation at less visited sites so that our parks can continue to support and drive state and local economies in the surrounding communities.

Question 28: Ensuring public access to the national parks is vital to gateway communities across the country. There have been instances in the past when the parks were closed as a result of a lapse in appropriations. Government shutdowns should not force parks to close because funds from entrance fees are available to pay for essential services. Will you commit to using recreation fees in the event of a government shutdown to protect NPS employees and gateway communities from economic hardship as well as ensure the health and safety of the parks?

RESPONSE: I strongly oppose government shutdowns and hope they can be avoided. If there is a lapse in appropriations, I will consult with the Department’s legal advisors on how that impacts operations and what lawful options would be available.

Question 29: You cosponsored H.R.4236, a bill that aims to ban the sale of disposable plastic water bottles at national parks. At the February 27, 2020 legislative hearing on the bill, you stated that “Americans. . . have gotten lazy about doing what we need to do to keep ourselves healthy,” and that people should be “inconvenienced when it comes to the planet.” While I am supportive of working to reduce single-use plastic litter in our national parks and on our public lands, I am concerned that such a ban would create a dehydration risk to visitors, especially in arid and remote areas without benefits that are even nearly commensurate with the risks. During the Obama Administration, then-NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis established a policy that led to 23 national parks banning the sale of bottled water.

- a. Is this a policy that you plan to reinstate? If so, how would you ensure that visitor safety is not compromised, and dehydration risks are not exacerbated by making water potentially inaccessible to visitors?
- b. With COVID restrictions, will you consider the impacts of common use drinking fountains and the fact that individual bottles may become more important during the pandemic?
- c. Does a ban on the sale of bottled water achieve the elimination of single-use plastic litter in our national parks when the sale of bottled soda and juices would presumably be allowed, and when visitors would still be able to bring their own disposable plastic water bottles into the parks with them?
- d. Did Director Jarvis’ policy result in any significant decrease to plastic waste in national parks? Did this policy result in an increase of instances of emergencies related to visitor dehydration?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I understand this is a different role. I support effective efforts to reduce waste and pollution at our National Parks while ensuring visitor safety. If confirmed, I would make careful consideration of all the factors, including the ones you raise, in any decision.

Question 30: On August 10, 2020, Secretary Bernhardt signed Secretarial Order 3382 to transfer the BLM headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Grand Junction, Colorado. The purpose was to allow headquarters personnel to be closer to BLM lands and field staff and to foster integration of policy and operations personnel, understanding of western needs, decision-making in the field, and partnerships with communities and

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organizations. Among other benefits of the move, BLM cited cost savings from lower office space lease payments, reduced travel from D.C. to the West, and lower cost of living allowances for employees.

- a. Less than 1 percent of BLM lands are located outside of the 11 contiguous western states and Alaska. I believe it is important that federal officials and staff work near the lands they manage and the people they serve. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, would you continue to build upon the BLM headquarters move to the West? Or would you reverse course, and move the BLM headquarters back to Washington DC, away from the lands they manage and the people they serve?
- b. How has the relocation affected BLM decision-making, partnerships with western communities, and coordination with leaders of other DOI agencies and senior DOI management?
- c. How is BLM ensuring continuity of operations in light of staffing changes?
- d. According to data the Biden administration released on January 28, nearly 300 BLM employees left the agency due to the relocation. However, there is no indication that BLM's productivity has declined. Does this raise questions around how many BLM employees are needed to execute the agency's mission?
- e. What are the financial costs and savings associated with the move?
- f. What are the advantages and disadvantages to land and resource management of the current BLM headquarters location?
- g. The BLM headquarters move has garnered bipartisan support. For instance, on January 23, Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper sent a letter to President Biden to express their "continued support for a fully functioning [BLM] headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado." Will you commit to working with the Democratic Senators and the Governor of Colorado on this important initiative?
- h. You stated, "Under the guise of putting staff closer to the communities it serves, the administration has done its best to dismantle the BLM." Despite the work-place challenges during a world-wide pandemic, BLM continues to meet its mission critical mandates and be responsive to the needs of the publics it serves. Please provide any evidence that shows relocating BLM HQ to Grand Junction "dismantles" BLM or has resulted to harm to the agency or its mission.

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, if I am confirmed, I will look forward to consulting with everyone involved in this issue and I understand that we absolutely need to make sure that we have a full team at BLM and that our leaders can be accessible to the American people. It is my understanding that 90 percent of Interior employees are based outside of D.C. and I look forward to learning more about how the BLM is functioning, despite the significant loss of personnel resulting from the recent reorganization.

Question 31: In your op-ed entitled "*BLM silences voices during pandemic,*" you state that BLM management was cutting out members of the public from adequate process located in Indian Country and other rural parts of New Mexico that lack access to adequate internet service. Government-to-Government Consultation is a critical and legally required component of formal consultation. In addition, public input to federal planning and decision-making is required by regulation and is a practical and important process. Due to the pandemic, BLM (and all DOI agencies) were faced with significant workplace and coordination challenges, never before encountered, including conforming to local, state, and tribal quarantine and no-contact guidelines. Despite the

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many obstacles, BLM offices rallied to explore new and innovative ways to virtually and remotely meet with tribes and the public across the West.

- a. Please provide factual information supporting the allegation that BLM purportedly “silenced” voices during the world-wide pandemic.
- b. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, how would you ensure that BLM and every other bureau under your leadership identifies meaningful ways to “virtually” solicit and take into account all comments and concerns when making decisions, and has an appropriate process for doing so?

RESPONSE: There were a number of public complaints from New Mexicans, including tribal members who lack access to reliable broadband, who were unable to effectively participate in virtual meetings and engage in BLM public comment during the height of the pandemic, when their primary concern was the health and safety of their families and their livelihoods. If confirmed, I would make every effort to ensure the Department can effectively engage the public and I will prioritize any actions to help move us past the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question 32: DOI has undertaken a reorganization with a goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness of land and resource management.

- a. Are additional actions needed to enhance DOI efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services?
- b. Should additional restructuring take place so as to minimize duplication and fragmentation of services between programs, offices, and agencies?
- c. Should additional restructuring take place so as to minimize duplication and fragmentation of services across geographic regions?

RESPONSE: I agree that these are important questions, and I look forward to learning more, if confirmed, on the status of the Department’s reorganization and consider input on ways to improve its functioning for the American people.

Question 33: In September 2017, then-Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke issued a reorganization proposal for DOI that included a plan to consolidate the different regional boundaries of each DOI bureau into 12 Unified Regional Boundaries. In September 2018, the DOI announced the designation of DOI’s 12 new Unified Regions. According to DOI, BIA, BIE, and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians are not included in this realignment and retained their existing regional boundaries.

- a. In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages to the 2018 consolidation of the various regional boundaries into unified regional boundaries?
- b. If confirmed, do you anticipate DOI will retain the regional boundaries established in 2018, or do you favor a return to the prior regional boundaries or another arrangement? If a return to prior boundaries or other arrangement is favored, please provide the evidence, your rationale and the timeline and costs of actions to implement such an adjustment.
- c. Currently, each DOI region is served by a Field Special Assistant (FSA) that acts as a convener and coordinator across DOI agencies in a given region. How have the FSAs improved decision-making?

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Does DOI anticipate maintaining the FSA position? If the FSA role continues, does DOI support making these full-time, permanent positions rather than a part-time collateral duty?

RESPONSE: I agree that these are important questions, and I will get briefed on look forward to learning more, if confirmed, on the status of the Department’s reorganization and consider input on ways to improve its functioning for the American people.

Question 34: Last Congress, you sponsored a partisan resolution (H.Res.835) urging the Federal Government to establish a national goal “of conserving at least 30 percent of land and ocean of the United States by 2030.” On January 27, 2021, President Biden issued an *Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* wherein he ordered the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant agencies, to submit a report “recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”

- a. Did you speak to President Biden in advance of this order? If so, please fully and completely describe your involvement. If not, why not?
- b. How do you define “conservation”?
- c. Do you believe grazing is a part of “conservation”?
- d. Is “conservation” only possible under federal control and preservation? If so, how so? If not, why not? Please explain the basis for your view.
- e. What percentage of lands are already protected under current land management allocations and designations (e.g. Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), FS Roadless Areas, Wilderness, National Monuments, National Parks, National Recreation Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Conservation Areas, FWS Wildlife Refuges and Preserves, conservation easements, etc.)?

RESPONSE: As I understand it, the 30 by 30 goal includes areas already under protection. Going forward, the 30 by 30 goal is inclusive of state and local efforts, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This cannot be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation action for future generations. Participation in the effort by all non-federal governments, Tribal Nations, and other groups will be on a voluntary basis.

Question 35: In 2020, more than 58,250 wildfires burned 10.3 million acres, the most acreage impacted in a year since 1960. The 2020 wildfire season also resulted in damaging impacts to several thousand structures—including homes and communities across several states. Several Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports have identified potential issues with DOI’s wildfire risk reduction efforts, wildland fire responsiveness, and stewardship of appropriated funds, among other concerns.

- a. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, what measures would you implement to ensure that DOI is responsibly managing its lands to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires?

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- b. Starting in FY2020, Congress authorized a special budgetary mechanism—referred to as the wildfire funding fix or the wildfire adjustment—to provide a certain amount of funding for wildfire suppression operations. Please describe the impacts of the wildfire adjustment on DOI operations and budgeting.
- c. On January 14, 2021, the Trump administration issued an executive order establishing the Wildland Fire Management Policy Committee. The committee is chaired by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and includes other agency heads. The purpose of the order is to improve coordination among federal agencies on wildland fire management policy, implementation, and oversight issues. In what ways is the Biden administration addressing the issues identified in the order?
- d. The federal government’s wildland firefighting workforce consists predominantly of seasonal hires, many of which are temporary positions filled annually. This has led to concerns about efficiency and the recruitment and retention of firefighters, particularly when compared with employment opportunities at the state level or in the private sector. Issues and concerns with this seasonal hiring practice was compounded by COVID-19 and on-boarding outside of area hires. Additionally, there has been concern about the position classification of federal employees who perform firefighting duties. DOI recently sought FY2021 funding to examine converting some seasonal positions into a full-time, permanent, year-round workforce. Please describe the status of this effort, as well as any additional or differing actions you would take if confirmed as Secretary of the Interior?

RESPONSE: We are experiencing more frequent, severe, and catastrophic wildfires across the West. There are many factors that contribute to worsening wildfire seasons, including a century of fire suppression, more and more structures in wildfire prone areas, and climate change. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of the Interior is working closely with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to reduce wildfire risk and restore the ecological health of our forests and rangelands. I will make sure that our decisions on forest management and hazardous fuels reduction are guided by the best available science on forest health and wildfire management. I am also committed to helping communities after fires to recover and restore their landscapes to be more resilient.

Question 36: As a member of the House of Representatives you introduced HR.1050, the ANTIQUITIES Act, a bill that would, among other things, strip the President’s authority to reduce, diminish, or revoke a national monument. However, the bill retains the President’s authority to establish or expand national monuments, and further enhances federal control and protections over such presidentially-designated national monuments. The protection of objects of historic or scientific interest must be done in a responsible manner and should be done in a way that respects the needs of state and local entities.

- a. Prior to President Trump, presidential authority was used on 18 occasions – including by Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Harry Truman – to diminish the size of national monuments where appropriate. Did the former Presidents act unlawfully or inappropriately?
- b. To what extent should the President make new monument designations, or revise existing ones? If confirmed, would you advise President Biden to consult with state and local governments before establishing, enlarging, or diminishing national monuments?
- c. Under your leadership, how would DOI use different authorities and land designations available to the Secretary to protect important resources that would achieve similar protections afforded by a national monument designation?

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- d. Given differing statutory authorities, particularly the BLM multiple use mandate, what is your view on multiple use management and land uses within national monument boundaries?

RESPONSE: As a member of Congress, I supported the ANTIQUITIES Act based on my concerns with the unprecedented size and scope of the diminishment of existing monuments by the previous administration, which is now the topic of ongoing litigation. The Biden administration has ordered a review of those boundaries by the Department by March 21. The authority to designate monuments under the Antiquities Act is a power reserved to the President.

Question 37: In July of 2020, you posted on Twitter in reference to President Trump’s speech at Mount Rushmore: “Trump’s visit to the site that commemorates 4 US presidents was a violation of the treaties that the US had signed with Native Americans, Pres. Bear Runner said; Trump should have asked permission for the trip from the 7 Sioux tribal governments...”

- a. Please explain the basis for your statement on Twitter in July 2020, with citations to authorities and facts.
- b. Is Mount Rushmore a shrine of democracy?

RESPONSE: I was speaking in support of tribal leaders in the area who were concerned with the lack of consultation around the previous President’s visit. I respect that Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a significant unit of the National Park System and is an important part of American heritage that is admired and visited by millions of Americans.

Question 38: DOI agencies modified operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Modifications in some areas included partially or fully closing sites, reducing or suspending services, and waiving fees for entrance. Other modifications related to employee work locations and schedules, such as increased off-site work. Normal operations in some areas have resumed.

- a. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting DOI’s management and budget, and what pandemic-related challenges is DOI confronting in fulfilling its mission?
- b. How do you intend to enforce the mask wearing mandate in President Biden’s executive order?
- c. DOI management must balance public access with protection of employees, partners, and the public. How would you achieve this balance during the pandemic?
- d. DOI received emergency supplemental appropriations related to COVID-19. How is this money being used, and what progress has DOI made in spending this money? What safeguards ensure that these emergency funds are used for intended purposes and that spending maximizes benefits to recipients and the general public?
- e. How has visitation to DOI lands been affected by COVID-19? Have revenues from DOI lands been affected by COVID-19? What flexibilities or relief should be provided for entities that operate on federal lands or purchase federal resources?
- f. What guidance is DOI relying on to adapt to changing circumstances stemming from COVID-19? How is the DOI determining the extent to which operations should be maintained or curtailed?
- g. What are the logistical challenges to returning employees to work at their pre-pandemic locations?

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RESPONSE: I am not yet in the Department, but I support strong and effective action to stop the COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, helping the nation recover from COVID-19 and the economic impacts will be a high priority and I look forward to learning more about the budgetary impacts, status of plans, visitation changes, and workforce issues, including those raised in this question.

Question 39: If confirmed, you would oversee DOI law enforcement programs. DOI has law enforcement officers in several agencies: BLM, BIA, BOR, FWS, and NPS. As of November 2020, DOI employed nearly 3,400 law enforcement officers, including NPS park rangers and U.S. park police. DOI law enforcement responsibilities generally include protecting natural and other resources, visitors, and federal employees. For instance, the U.S. Park Police helps with public safety and protection of historic and cultural assets during demonstrations on federal lands, including in Washington, D.C. DOI law enforcement officers address myriad other issues affecting DOI lands. They include border security, natural disasters (e.g., wildfires), violence and vandalism, and the cultivation and trafficking of illegal drugs. DOI law enforcement often cooperates with other federal agencies, and tribal, state, and local governments.

- a. As Secretary of the Interior, you would oversee the DOI's Office of Law Enforcement and Security. What is your professional or personal background qualifies you for this oversight role? What approach would you take when instructing this division? Please express as specifically as possible your philosophy of law enforcement, and how that philosophy would instruct your leadership.

RESPONSE: I currently serve as a member of Congress in the House of Representatives. In the House, I served as Vice Chair of the Natural Resources Committee and as the Chair of a congressional subcommittee with oversight jurisdiction over Interior, so I have familiarity with the issues before the Department. As a Native woman, I believe I also have some unique and personal experiences that will help shape my approach to managing the Department which has a major role in our nation's trust and treaty responsibilities with Tribal Nations. I have also lived and worked as a stakeholder of the Department and worked with it as a tribal member and employee. If I am confirmed, I commit to listening to the Department's professional staff, to conducting the Department's work in a transparent manner, and to always seek to learn and improve how we spend taxpayer dollars.

- b. Does DOI have the level of resources needed to ensure the security and safety of federal lands and visitors?
- c. What are staffing trends in DOI law enforcement over the past decade?
- d. Have staff levels at DOI agencies kept up with significantly growing demand for law enforcement presence and services, and are there particular types of positions you would seek to expand or reduce?
- e. How does DOI train law enforcement officers?
- f. What actions is DOI taking to retain skilled law enforcement employees in critical areas such as along the southwest border?
- g. In your view, when is it appropriate to include DOI law enforcement in critical incidents and national emergencies?
- h. Which DOI law enforcement officers are armed?
- i. Is the primary purpose of DOI law enforcement to protect the public from wildlife incidents, to thwart human law-breaking, or some other purpose?

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- j. How does DOI review law enforcement programs and ensure effective direction, oversight, guidance, and coordination? If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, would you change any of these existing processes?
- k. A 2018 DOI Inspector General report on law enforcement body cameras found that DOI's draft body camera policy did not include critical industry standards. How do you plan to approach the use of body-worn-cameras across the various law enforcement units within DOI? Do you anticipate sufficient funding for DOI implementation of any new policies regarding the use of such devices across departmental units?
- l. The chain of command in BLM law enforcement has placed officers under managers with law enforcement training and experience (rather than BLM state or field directors). What is your view of this policy, and how would you assess whether this chain of command improves BLM law enforcement and its leadership?
- m. The Park Police has not had a permanent chief in since September 2019. It is my understanding that an individual has been recommended for this job. When will the permanent chief of the Park Police be installed?
- n. To your knowledge, what actions are the Biden administration taking regarding President Trump's executive order on "Safe Policing for Safe Communities"? If confirmed, what input, if any, would you give President Biden on this issue?

RESPONSE: On Thursday the National Park Service announced the new Chief of the United States Park Police, Pamela Smith, who will become the first African American woman to lead the agency. I also understand that she has announced that, as one of her first actions, she will establish a body-worn camera program for the Park Police within 90 days. Regarding the other issues in your question, if I am confirmed, I will learn more about these important issues and work to ensure that the Department's law enforcement agencies have the tools and training they need to do their important jobs protecting the public, Department employees, and public lands and facilities in the best possible way.

Question 40: On June 12, 2020 you introduced the Police Receiving Overly Traumatizing Equipment Changes Today (PROTECT) Act, which sought to demilitarize local police departments by requiring the Department of Justice to create a new "Gear for Grants program that would provide funding for de-escalation training, anti-racist training, or purchases of body cameras for officers in exchange for the return of military-grade equipment." A fact sheet about this Act states that the purpose is to encourage law enforcement "to engage more with federal grants that can help train officers to be more culturally sensitive, promote peaceful practices, reduce the amount of military equipment on our streets, and start rebuilding our relationships." You also co-sponsored the House Democrats' partisan Justice in Policing Act.

- a. Do you support calls to defund the police?
- b. If not, as a potential leader of law enforcement, will you denounce calls to "defund the police"?
- c. DOI law enforcement personnel are often in harm's way as they provide safety and security for our federal lands and visitors. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, what impact and ramifications would your leadership have on DOI law enforcement personnel in the field?

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- d. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, will you take action to reduce DOI law enforcement officers of protective gear and resources needed to safely perform their critical role in protecting federal lands, federal property, federal employees, other federal resources, and visitors?

RESPONSE: President Biden does not support calls to defund the police and I support his position. If I am confirmed I will learn more about these important issues and work to ensure that the Department’s law enforcement agencies have the tools and training they need to do their important jobs protecting the public, Department employees, and public lands and facilities in the best possible way.

Question 41: Please describe your association with and support for the “Land Back Movement.” The movement reportedly calls for returning all public lands to tribal communities. When you were announced as the nominee to be the Secretary of the Interior, leaders from the movement, including the NDN Collective, celebrated the announcement. Nick Tilsen, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota and CEO of the NDN Collective said, “With the growing land back movement that exists in Indigenous communities, where we’re calling for many public lands to be returned back into Indian hands, it’d be great to have Deb there, recognizing that it is movements like ours that also have to keep people like her in those positions accountable.” Further, in a November 2020 Politico article, a reporter stated: “I asked Haaland whether she had heard of the “Land Back” movement to return expropriated territories to Native nations. She asked me to describe it for her. After I did, [Haaland’s chief of staff] butted in: “Don’t tell anyone in Interior about it until she’s there,” she said, half-joking, but probably also half-serious.”

- a. Please be specific about your views on the Land Back Movement.

RESPONSE: I believe our public lands belong to all Americans and will follow the law when it comes to managing them. I support upholding our nation’s trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations and tribal sovereignty when it comes to their lands. Our nation has a long and tragic legacy of broken promises and mistreatment of Indigenous people and I support educating people about that history and advancing policies to uplift Tribal Nations so they can become more self-reliant and resilient.

Question 42: On May 1, 2017, the FWS issued a final rule to remove the gray wolf in Wyoming from the endangered species list. This action was taken pursuant to a March 3, 2017 order and an April 25, 2017 mandate issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. The court upheld the FWS’ 2012 decision to delist the gray wolf in Wyoming and ordered the removal of federal protections for the species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On October 29, 2020, the FWS issued a final rule delisting the gray wolf in the lower 48 states from the endangered species list. In late January, the FWS assistant director for ecological services wrote a letter to environmentalist groups saying: "Our delisting action recognizes the successful recovery of one of the most iconic species."

- a. Do you agree that the gray wolf has successfully recovered in Wyoming?
b. Do you agree that the gray wolf has successfully recovered in the rest of the lower 48 states?
c. Do you agree that it was and continues to be appropriate for the gray wolf in Wyoming to be delisted from the endangered species list?

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- d. Do you agree that it was and continues to be appropriate for the gray wolf in the rest of the lower 48 states to be delisted from the endangered species list?
- e. The late January letter from the FWS assistant director for ecological services stated that FWS is “implementing post-delisting management in cooperation with Federal, state, and tribal partners to ensure that the gray wolf populations in the lower 48 states continue to be conserved and remain healthy.” If confirmed, will you require FWS to continue down this post-delisting path and ensure the FWS continues to coordinate closely and cooperatively with the appropriate Federal, state, local agencies, and tribal governments and entities?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will ensure that any decisions the Department makes regarding ESA implementation are guided by science and the law.

Question 43: The recovery of the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is one of the greatest recovery successes since the ESA was enacted in 1973. It is a conservation triumph led by the people of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump agreed. Under each of their administrations, the FWS determined that the grizzly bear is fully recovered and should be delisted. Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho first achieved all of the grizzly bear’s recovery objectives in 1997 – twenty three years ago. By 2003, they had met all of its recovery objectives for six consecutive years – the standard required by the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. The states have met – or exceeded – all of the grizzly bear’s recovery objectives ever since. In 2007, the Bush Administration recognized the grizzly bear’s recovery when it published a final rule delisting the species. That rule was overturned by a federal judge based on an environmental group’s claim that a particular food source for the grizzly bear had not been adequately considered during the rulemaking. The importance of that food source was later debunked in a scientific review by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee. In 2016, the Obama Administration recognized the grizzly bear’s recovery when it published a proposed rule delisting the grizzly bear. The Obama administration concluded: “[T]he Yellowstone grizzly bear population has rebounded from as few as 136 bears in 1975 to an estimated 700 or more today. Grizzly bears have more than doubled their range since the mid-1970s and now occupy more than 22,500 square miles of the ecosystem. Stable population numbers for grizzly bears for more than a decade also indicate that the [Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem] is at or near its carrying capacity for the bears.” In 2017, the Trump administration agreed with the Obama administration’s findings and finalized President Obama’s proposed rule delisting the grizzly bear. The Trump administration credited the states of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho with adopting necessary post-delisting plans and regulations that ensure the species remains recovered under state management. Yet again, a federal judge overturned the final rule delisting the grizzly bear based on an environmental groups claim that even more study was required.

- a. Do you agree that the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem has successfully recovered?
- b. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, will you commit that DOI will successfully finalize a rule to delist the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and successfully defend that final delisting rule in court?
- c. Since 1980 – 40 years ago – the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has spent more than \$50 million in grizzly bear recovery. The states of Montana and Idaho, and stakeholders throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, have invested millions more. Do you agree that failing to delist a species that has met its recovery objectives for more than two decades, and that has been determined to be

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successfully recovered by three presidential administrations of both parties, serves as a disincentive to future investment by states and other stakeholders in the continuing recovery of that species, and in the future recovery of other species that are listed and will be listed under the ESA?

- d. As the grizzly bear has rebounded, conflicts with humans have increased. Members of Wyoming's Upper Green River Cattle Association have lost over 1,000 head of cattle since 1995. In 2018, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department had to capture 53 individual grizzly bears to prevent or resolve conflicts. These bears not only mauled livestock but tragically killed a Wyoming elk hunting guide and injured his client. In 2020, grizzly bear attacks injuring humans occurred at a record rate. Are you concerned about the rapid increase in conflicts between grizzly bears and humans, and grizzly bears and livestock?
- e. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, will you consider it to be more appropriate that a species listed under the ESA be determined to be successfully recovered and ultimately delisted based on (1) the best scientific and commercial data available as decided by the FWS, or (2) a legal or procedural technicality, as decided by a federal judge?

RESPONSE: I understand and appreciate the economic and emotional toll that arises in situations where there are conflicts between humans and endangered and threatened species, such as is the case in New Mexico with the endangered Mexican wolf. And, as I stated at my hearing, my sister has a ranching family who care deeply about the land and their animals. Their ranching business is their livelihood. I support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states and tribes. If confirmed I look forwards to learning more about grizzly bear recovery in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and the related litigation, and I will ensure that any decisions the Department makes regarding ESA implementation are guided by science and the law.

Question 44: Last year, I introduced S. 4589, Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2020. I introduced the legislation to modernize and strengthen the ESA. It was the culmination of a collaboration with stakeholders from across the political spectrum that I began to undertake in 2017, and that originated in 2015 under then-Wyoming Governor Matt Mead's leadership of the bipartisan Western Governors' Association. Throughout the collaboration, I consistently heard from state officials, regulated entities, farmers and ranchers, environmental groups, land owners, and other stakeholders that the ESA needs to be reformed so it works better for wildlife and for people. The collaboration led to my bill, which included provisions reauthorizing the ESA for the first time in almost 30 years; substantially increasing the funding authorization and focusing money on recovery of species; elevating the of states and better leveraging their resources in implementing the Act; ensuring non-governmental stakeholders have a clearer voice in recovery and in implementation planning; providing regulatory certainty to incentivize investment in conservation and recovery activities; and prioritizing resources for species most in need. In addition, my bill included a provision to delay the ability of a federal court to overturn a delisting rule during the post-delisting monitoring period currently required under the ESA statute during which the Secretary of the Interior shall monitor a species after the species is fully recovered, delisted, and returned to state management. This provision did not eliminate anyone's right challenge a delisting rule in federal court. It only delayed such a lawsuit so states would have an opportunity to prove that they can successfully manage the recovered species. The species would still be protected during that post-delisting monitoring period – by state regulations and a state management plan, and by the Secretary of the Interior's duty under the ESA statute to re-list the species if its condition deteriorates.

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- a. Do you agree that the ESA needs to be modernized?
- b. Do you agree that the ESA should be reauthorized for the first time in almost 30 years?
- c. Do you agree that the funding authorization for the ESA should be substantially increased?
- d. Do you agree that the funding authorization for the ESA should focus money on recovery of species?
- e. Do you agree that the role of states should be elevated in implementing the ESA?
- f. Do you agree that the resources of states should be better leveraged in implementing the ESA?
- g. Do you believe that non-governmental stakeholders should have a clearer voice in recovery and in implementation planning under the ESA?
- h. Do you agree that providing additional regulatory certainty under the ESA can incentivize investment in conservation and recovery activities for the benefit of species?
- i. Do you agree that DOI should prioritize federal resources for the species most in need?
- j. Do you agree that states should be allowed to manage a species after DOI finalizes a rule delisting the species based on the best scientific and commercial data available as long as appropriate protections consistent with the ESA, state regulations, and state management plans are in place?

Do you agree that DOI can more effectively focus limited federal resources on species most in need by pursuing policies that better leverage state resources and empower states to take on more of the burden of managing recovered species within their borders?

RESPONSE: I believe the goal of constant improvement should apply to all programs managed by the Department, and if confirmed I look forward to continuing the dialogue on this important subject matter with you and other members of Congress on legislative proposals. The Endangered Species Act is one of the most important environmental laws and I am committed to implementing it in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species. As part of that, I look forward to full briefings by Department scientists and experts to identify best practices and challenges and working with Congress, states, Tribal Nations, and other important stakeholders.

Question 45: Discretionary funding for DOI agencies have increased over the past decade by about \$4.0 billion (in nominal dollars), from approximately \$11.4 billion in FY2012 to \$15.4 billion in FY2021. DOI also receives mandatory funding under many different authorities. DOI estimated mandatory funding at \$6.9 billion in FY2019.

- a. Please describe as specifically as possible DOI's top budgetary priorities for FY2022. If confirmed, would those priorities change under your leadership?
- b. What are the DOI's resource requirements for these priorities?
- c. Will these priorities require new programs or authorities, and how will they be funded?
- d. Does DOI intend to seek changes to existing authorities that provide mandatory funding?
- e. Do you foresee a need for any new mandatory spending authorities, and if so for what purposes?

RESPONSE: When it comes to funding questions, I am not currently in the administration, so I am not yet involved in the development of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget request. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other members of Congress to advance a strong and responsible budget for the Department of the Interior that meets the priorities of the American people.

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Question 46: The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is considered the scientific arm of DOI, yet several DOI agencies contain scientific programs and expertise. For example, multiple DOI agencies pursue activities to address fish and wildlife diseases and invasive species. This could lead to questions about the roles of the respective agencies, their coordination and cooperation, and their partnerships with nonfederal entities.

- a. What is the role of scientific research and data in informing decision-making?

RESPONSE: The best available science should inform decisions, and if confirmed I commit to leading the Department in a way that supports scientific integrity.

- b. How will you ensure that the USGS and scientific research at DOI is properly resourced to provide for the safety, security, and prosperity of our country?

RESPONSE: Effectively and efficiently spending the funds Congress has provided for this purpose will be a high priority for me if I am confirmed. I will work with the Department's bureaus and budget office to ensure that we have a plan in place to ensure proper resources for USGS and its important scientific missions.

- c. What are your priorities for the USGS? If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, do you commit to working with the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to ensure that the USGS fully identifies the nation's mineral estate (*e.g.*, critical minerals necessary for battery production and renewable power development where the United States currently gets all or substantially all of its supply abroad from countries such as China and Congo) and continues to produce important scientific data and research?

RESPONSE: I am committed to ensuring scientific integrity at the USGS and supporting its scientific missions. If confirmed, I will also commit to working with this Committee on this issue.

- d. How would you ensure that scientific activities in DOI are complementary and not duplicative among agencies?

RESPONSE: Effectively and efficiently spending the funds Congress has provided for this purpose will be a high priority for me if I am confirmed. I will work with the Department's bureaus and budget office to ensure that we have a plan in place to ensure effective and efficient use of funds.

- e. What is DOI's role in addressing scientific research necessary to address emerging challenges, such as fish and wildlife diseases and invasive species? How would you work within DOI on scientific research and technological innovation in order to effectively address emerging challenges? How would you work with federal and nonfederal stakeholders and partners (*e.g.*, the Department of Energy) on critical science and research coordination?

RESPONSE: If confirmed as Secretary, I would consult with the experts, listen to stakeholders, and work to ensure engagement on emerging challenges and research coordination.

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- f. How will you preserve where necessary and alter where necessary cooperative scientific partnerships with other federal agencies? How will you preserve where necessary and alter where necessary cooperative public-private partnerships related to science with nonfederal agencies? What standards will you apply to make these decisions?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will carefully consider the Department's approach to science partnerships with other agencies and the private sector and seek the right approach to best achieve the Department's important science missions.

Question 47: Wyoming ranks 2nd in the nation in renewable energy production, and I am very familiar with the benefits. Renewable energy is an important asset in the federal lands energy portfolio. However, it can have adverse effects on wildlife and intrusive visual impacts that cannot be ignored, especially when a renewable energy installation becomes a permanent fixture on public lands and essentially eliminates any other use or enjoyment.

- a. Under your leadership, would you prioritize certain geographic areas or zones for renewable energy projects?
- b. Do you agree that renewable energy projects and development contributes to environmental and resource impacts, including impeding important wildlife migration corridors and impacting avian species?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. As part of this balance, the Department has a role in harnessing the clean energy potential of our public lands to create jobs and new economic opportunities. The President's agenda demonstrates that America's public lands can and should be engines for clean energy production and I agree that smart planning and a careful approach is needed to determine the best locations for projects.

Question 48: Wyoming has been the leader on sage grouse habitat conservation efforts for years. Sage grouse conservation across the West has included years of significant time and monetary investment, including by landowners and land managers such as ranchers. The sage grouse Records of Decision finalized at the end of 2020 are currently frozen under the Biden Administration's regulatory freeze. This freeze results in unpredictability for land managers across many western states.

- a. If confirmed as Secretary, what would be your direction to BLM related to sage grouse planning?
- b. How will you ensure that the greater sage grouse does not end up on the threatened and endangered species list?
- c. Will you work collaboratively with the governors of the most highly impacted states to find the best approach to manage the sage grouse?
- d. Ravens are an aggressive predator and threaten sage grouse nests. Ravens are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, despite having a booming population that has present threats to lambs, calves, baby deer and antelope, and other wildlife. Land managers across the west need a better tool to manage ravens. Will you expand opportunities for depredation permits?

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RESPONSE: I understand that sage grouse conservation plans reflect a lot of work and collaboration from many stakeholders. If confirmed, I will seek briefings on this issue, review the status of those plans, pending agency actions, ongoing litigation and their status in the courts – and determine a path forward.

Question 49: At her confirmation hearing, Governor Granholm responded to a question about whether or not to source the raw mined materials necessary for clean energy technologies domestically or continue our nation’s increasing reliance on foreign sources. She responded: “I think it’s important to promote responsible mineral development that will protect the environment and provide the United States a competitive advantage in producing batteries and other technologies that will enable us to advance renewable energy, and other industries supported by critical mineral development. If confirmed as Secretary, I am eager to work with you and others to make sure that the United States has its own critical mineral supply.”

- a. Would you associate yourself with Governor Granholm’s response? If not, why not?
- b. Should DOI support and promote a healthy and expanding mining sector to support domestically-produced critical mineral supply chains?
- c. If so, please describe how you will work to support the mining industry and promote domestic resource production. If not, please describe why you do not believe the U.S. should produce the metals and minerals necessary to support economic recovery and national defense.

RESPONSE: My view is consistent with Secretary Granholm’s and the Biden Administration approach. I agree it is important to promote responsible mineral development that will protect the environment. America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands and waters. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment.

Question 50: Nuclear energy is the largest source of emission-free energy in the United States. Any realistic emission-free future will necessarily require us to sustain and expand the use of nuclear energy. Governor Granholm, during her nomination hearing, committed to working to “continue to support the research, development, and demonstration of technologies to preserve our existing fleet, deploy advanced reactor technologies, and expand nuclear energy to markets beyond electricity to meet our carbon reduction goals in the United States and globally.”

- a. Do you agree with Governor Granholm? If confirmed, what specific actions will you take at the DOI to ensure the U.S. regains its global leadership in nuclear energy and has a robust domestic supply chain of uranium?
- b. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take at the DOI to ensure the U.S. regains its global leadership in nuclear energy and has a robust domestic supply chain of uranium?

RESPONSE: The Department of the Interior does not participate in nuclear energy research, and I believe Secretary Granholm’s comments pertain to an area managed by the Department of Energy. I am in agreement with the Biden administration’s approach to support the development of many technologies to achieve the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and I look forward to inter-agency collaboration

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if there are ways to partner with other federal agencies in pursuit of that goal. I understand that America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy. As a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, I am also familiar with the legacy of toxic pollution from uranium mining in Native communities. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands while protecting public health and the environment.

Question 51: If confirmed, you will be responsible for the issuance of federal leases as well as oversight of the permitting of existing leases. Restricting production on federal lands will drive production to state and private lands and encouraging flaring in areas of the country without sufficient takeaway capacity. In the Wamsutter Basin of Wyoming, for example, there is a surplus of processing, gathering and takeaway capacity for natural gas, while in neighboring states there is a takeaway capacity deficit, often resulting in the flaring of the natural gas produced attendant to oil production. Moreover, industry- opposition groups are making it increasingly difficult to site, permit, and construct the much-needed new takeaway capacity.

- a. Does this change your perspective at all on how you would control leasing and permitting on federal lands, with high environmental standards and sufficient gas takeaway capacity?
- b. Will you commit to issuing permits for existing federal leases where there is sufficient takeaway capacity to gather, process and transport the resource?

RESPONSE: I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment, and I believe it is prudent to continue focusing development in areas where the necessary infrastructure, such as feeder lines and pipeline capacity, exists. The President has paused new oil and gas leasing and directed a review of the program, and I believe that review can include factors such as those included in your question. I agree that methane pollution is a serious issue and I am committed to action to reduce it if confirmed.

Question 52: You completed your sworn Statement for Completion by Presidential Nominees (“Questionnaire”) dated January 27, 2021 on the form requested by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (“Committee”). The Committee Questionnaire has been in substantially the same form for many years. It has been provided by the Committee during the tenure of Chairmen of both parties to all nominees of Presidents of both parties for appointment with the advice and consent of the Senate for positions within the jurisdiction of the Committee. For example, every person who has served as Secretary of the Interior in at least the last two Presidential administrations has completed a Committee Questionnaire in substantially the same form. The information a nominee provides in response to the Committee Questionnaire and throughout the time a nomination is pending before the Committee informs the Committee about a nominee’s background and qualifications, and, ultimately, assists the Senate in fulfilling its constitutional duty to provide advice and consent with regard to nominations.

As you know, certain of your answers prompted follow up communications on February 8 to which you responded on February 12 by the requested time. Certain of your supplemental responses on February 12 prompted further follow up questions on February 18. (Attached to the questions sent to you on February 8 were copies of disclosure forms that you filed with the House of Representatives on May 13, 2019 and January 5, 2021.) You responded to these questions on February 22, 2021 after the requested time for response.

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- a. Do you include by reference the supplemental responses transmitted on your behalf by your representative on February 12 and February 22 in your written and sworn response to the Committee Questionnaire dated January 27? My answers to Ranking Member Barrasso's questions following up on the Committee Questionnaire have been made in good faith as part of the Senate confirmation process.
- b. Your supplemental response of February 22 to six separate questions included in the follow-up questions of February 18 was as forth below in **bold**:

“My income for federal income tax purposes for 2018 was \$2,250. To the extent that financial disclosure filings to the United States House of Representatives include inadvertent errors, I will correct them as soon as possible.”

With respect to your answer of February 22 above:

1. Are all of the financial disclosure filings you made to the United States House of Representatives true, accurate, and complete? If not, please identify in any respect how such disclosures should be amended and provide the facts as they should be or have been amended. Please include in your answer a specific discussion of any amendment to your May 13, 2019 or January 5, 2021 disclosures and explain the reasons for the initial error, if any, and all other relevant circumstances.

RESPONSE: I made a good faith effort to complete financial disclosure filings for the United States House of Representatives. I have recently filed additional amendments to remedy inadvertent errors, which I will provide to the committee. In the process of amending my House Financial Disclosure forms, I became aware of an additional final retirement distribution in June of 2018, from which taxes had been withheld for that distribution. If additional amendments are made, I will provide additional information to the committee to ensure my responses are accurate and complete.

2. If you have filed since January 5, 2021 an amendment to any disclosure form that you previously filed, please provide it.
3. If you have not filed an amendment to any disclosure form that you previously filed but you now believe an amendment is required, when will you make such filing? Have you notified the House of Representatives of your intention to file an amendment?
- c. The Department of the Interior has standards for the vetting of applicants for positions in the Department. By analogy, if the Committee Questionnaire were the Department's questionnaire and the supplemental questions above were your questions, and a candidate for a position in the Department of the Interior (and especially a candidate for a position requiring a Presidential Appointment with Senate Confirmation) answered as you have done, would such answers and the related course of conduct be a source of concern for you or for the Department? If not, why not? Please be specific.

RESPONSE: I have worked in good faith to respond to the Committee's questionnaire. As I am not yet at the Department, I cannot speak to the specifics of its hiring processes.

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- d. Are candidates for employment in the Department of the Interior expected and required to provide complete, accurate and timely answers to questions related to their background and qualifications for employment? If so, what are the potential consequences for failure to respond, completely, accurately, and on time to questions posed to candidates for positions?

RESPONSE: I have worked in good faith to respond to the committee's questionnaire. As I am not yet at the Department, I cannot speak to the specifics of its hiring processes.

Question 53: I submit this question on behalf of Senator Wicker. Congress has authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct flood control projects to protect communities from disastrous flooding. Through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Interior serves an important role as a consulting agency with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. There have been significant floods in Mississippi, including some with unique duration and devastation, that have affected communities awaiting completion of an authorized U.S. Army Corps of Engineering flood control project. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including Region 4 staff, will work in a cooperative, responsive manner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on major flood control projects in Mississippi, particularly as projects move through the preconstruction engineering and design phase?

RESPONSE: As I said in our call, I know that this is an issue that is important to you and to the people of Mississippi. If I am confirmed I commit that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and all the bureaus in the Department will responsibly and cooperatively carry out their missions, including cooperating in interagency matters. I will look into this issue further and commit to being responsive to you and your office on this matter.

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Questions from Senator James E. Risch

Question 1: In 2010, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar issued Secretarial Order 3310 giving BLM the authority to designate areas with wilderness characteristics as 'Wild Lands' and to manage them as wilderness. Congress objected to this order and Secretary Salazar rightly revoked the policy as it was out of the agency's authority and disregarded Congressionally mandated multiple use and Congress's sole authority to designate wilderness.

If confirmed, in your efforts to reach a 30 by 30 target or in other land management, will you stay consistent with the Obama and Biden administration policy first, that only Congress has the authority to designate wilderness and second, that these efforts are best driven locally?

RESPONSE: As a matter of law, only Congress can designate wilderness, and I commit that I will follow the law. As I understand it, the 30 by 30 goal includes areas already under protection. Moving forward, the 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This is not intended to be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations.

Question 2: You have made statements implying you would support an increase in energy prices to curb use. My home state of Idaho is the state with the third highest use of renewables in the country. It's also the state with the lowest utility prices per household, but at the same time has one of the lowest median household incomes. I can assure you that raising energy prices will not curb use, instead it will leave the most vulnerable of my constituents with a dilemma of how to make ends meet.

Can you please explain why you believe raising energy prices – especially in states like mine that is leading the way in the use of renewable energy – is a good idea? Can you instead commit to an all-of-the-above energy strategy like Idaho has embraced to keep emissions and utility bills low?

RESPONSE: As I stated at my hearing, there is no question that fossil energy does and will continue to play a major role in America for years to come. At the same time, the energy industry is innovating, and our climate challenge must be addressed. As in Idaho, diversifying our energy supply and sources need not raise prices, as innovation and new technology can benefit consumers. If confirmed as Secretary, I will work together with all stakeholders to strike the right balance going forward.

Question 3: During our phone call, we discussed multiple use, and we both agreed in the millions of acres the Department manages—over 12 million of BLM acres just in Idaho—they must be managed for different things. Can you tell me what your approach will be for handling requests to simply terminate lawful, Congressionally mandated multiple use or projects that have been completed through proper public processes?

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When we spoke, you reiterated you were always willing to have a conversation. Before Interior terminates a project, permit, or RMP amendment that affects Idaho, I would like for you to inform my office, talk to local BLM field office, and hear all sides of the issue before making a decision. Can you commit to that approach?

RESPONSE: Multiple use is a central tenet of public lands management. In some places more uses are possible than in other places; it is a matter of establishing the appropriate balance among the resource values that are present. If confirmed as Secretary, I commit to engaging with you and with stakeholders, and I will strive to achieve an appropriate balance.

Question 4: Can you speak to your views about the Antiquities Act? In Idaho, from Roadless to wilderness, we have had a great deal of success in locally driven, consensus building initiatives and very little success with top down, federal mandates. Would you agree with me that Congressional consultation and local community buy-in is very important when designating National Monuments?

RESPONSE: The Antiquities Act is a Presidential authority with a rich and successful legacy of preserving our heritage. I agree with you that that conservation efforts are most successful when they reflect input from local communities and states and are done in consultation with Tribal Nations.

Question 5: In administering the Endangered Species Act, how would you engage the states as critical partners – not mere stakeholders – in the process?

RESPONSE: While authority for the Department to administer the Endangered Species Act is provided to the Secretary of the Interior, in general the states are the primary managers of fish and wildlife. The knowledge and experience that states have to offer is invaluable. If I am confirmed as Secretary, I would ensure that the Fish and Wildlife Service and other relevant Department bureaus engage with states to the greatest extent possible.

Question 6: In Idaho, we have had the most success in species recovery when listing can be prevented due to state-led collaborative efforts. How do you define success under the Endangered Species Act? Does the number of species listed constitute success or is success achieved when a common sense plan is developed that precludes the need to list while also maintaining predictable levels of land use?

RESPONSE: I agree that collaboration on habitat conservation is a key conservation strategy. Once a species is listed, the recovery of that species is the goal of the Endangered Species Act.

Question 7: What role do you believe science should play in the determination to list or delist a species under the Endangered Species Act?

RESPONSE: Under the Endangered Species Act, a listing is solely a science-based decision.

Question 8: The Department of the Interior manages lands for a number of different purposes. Many of these lands are managed for particular dedicated purposes, such as national parks. Others are managed for multiple

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use. Please describe your understanding of the term “multiple use” and how this understanding would guide your administration of the Department should you be confirmed as Secretary.

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, multiple use is a tenet of our public lands. The Bureau of Land Management's multiple-use mission was set in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and mandates the management of public land resources for a variety of uses, such as energy development, livestock grazing, outdoor recreation and timber harvesting, while protecting a wide array of natural, cultural and historical resources. I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will look to strike the right balance and believe that we can.

Question 9: Over the last 12 years of greater sage-grouse management, Interior has swung back and forth between a collaborative, science-based approach that incorporates input from western states, and a top-down, restrictive, one-size-fits-all mandate. Now after a series of lawsuits, this Administration appears to want to simply return to the Obama-era plans without any state input. This is a complicated issue of great importance to Idaho, the West, and multiple uses of public lands. What is your approach for resolving this more than a decade long battle?

RESPONSE: I understand that the sage grouse conservation plans reflected a lot of work and a lot of compromise from many stakeholders and that there were a lot of good aspects to those plans related to habitat protections that struck a balance with other land uses. If I am confirmed, I will review the status of those plans and determine an appropriate path forward.

Idaho and other states went through a long and collaborative process to develop a plan for management of the greater sage-grouse, bringing a wide array of diverse interests to the table. Can you commit to supporting the collaborative process when making decisions regarding sage grouse and the individual BLM plans that bipartisan western states utilized collaboration to develop?

RESPONSE: As I indicated in the response to the previous question, if I am confirmed I will review the status of those plans and determine an appropriate path forward.

How will you involve state governors in your decision making? Will the conservation measures in BLM's plan actually be commensurate with the threats facing the species? If you revert to the Obama plans, will BLM commit to a real NEPA cumulative effects analysis of Sagebrush Focal Areas, mitigation measures, lek buffers, and drastic and unworkable grazing standards on their impact to the human environment as well as the sage-grouse?

RESPONSE: I have said that I believe in cooperative solutions and I believe that state partnerships would be a positive approach. I will also follow the law and will ensure that any measures that are necessary are based on science.

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Question 10: Oil and gas production on federal lands is an essential component of America's energy independence strategy. In addition to preserving critical supply chains, this production also lowers energy costs and creates jobs for Americans. President Biden has already signed an executive order banning mineral and energy leasing on federal lands. Do you stand with him in this decision? At what point would you consider this tradeoff between employment and conservation incongruent with multiple use mandates?

RESPONSE: The President's Executive Order paused the issuance of new oil and gas leases on federal lands and waters while the Administration reviews the leasing program in the interests of taxpayers and for climate change. Existing oil and gas leases will continue under their terms. Private entities currently have rights to drill on 26 million acres of public lands and 12 million acres of ocean – an area larger than the state of Iowa. In total, the oil and gas industry is sitting on approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill. Onshore, 53% of the area leased is currently unused, and offshore over 77% of the area is currently unused.

Question 11: You have expressed support for the acquisition of additional federal land. With the extreme backlog of deferred maintenance on federal lands, how would you address increased land upkeep without cost to the taxpayer, especially in the constraint of the recent actions against energy development?

RESPONSE: I support the Great American Outdoors Act, bipartisan legislation signed into law by President Trump, which secures permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and addresses the maintenance backlog on Federal lands. If confirmed, I will work with Interior staff to ensure that the Department implements the Act as Congress intended.

Question 12: The West has seen record-setting fire seasons each year for the past decade, with over 8 million acres burned in 2020. There are many factors that increase the spread of wildfires, but fuel loads are a critical and indisputable piece that we have the ability to control. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, what management strategies would you employ to reduce fuels and prevent another catastrophic fire season?

RESPONSE: We are experiencing more frequent, severe, and catastrophic wildfires across the West. There are many factors that contribute to worsening wildfire seasons, including a century of fire suppression, more and more structures in wildfire prone areas, and climate change. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of the Interior is working closely with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to reduce wildfire risk and restore the ecological health of our forests and rangelands. I will make sure that our decisions on forest management and hazardous fuels reduction are guided by the best available science on forest health and wildfire management. I am also committed to helping communities after fires to recover and restore their landscapes to be more resilient.

Question 13: Over 60% of land in Idaho is federally managed, leaving many rural communities without essential revenue from property taxes. The Secure Rural Schools (SRS) and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs have helped fill this hole in local budgets, helping to provide for emergency services, public schools, infrastructure, and other essential services. However, these programs do not fully account for lost economic and tax revenue and face an uphill battle to be reauthorized and funded each year. You have expressed support for

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additional federal land acquisition. If confirmed, how would you ensure your actions would not have an increased burden on counties in Idaho?

RESPONSE: I am a strong supporter of the PILT and SRS programs and, if confirmed, I will work with Congress on these important programs.

Question 14: Transmission Permitting: It's important that we take a holistic look when talking about expanding the use of renewable energy technologies. If we are facing a climate emergency, we will need renewable energy projects and transmission lines to connect them to the grid. There are ongoing efforts to develop transmission projects in Idaho and elsewhere, and if confirmed you would play a role seeing them come to fruition. Do you support the development of new transmission infrastructure, and will you commit to supporting projects that are already permitted and ongoing?

RESPONSE: I agree that electricity transmission is an important component of incorporating new renewable energy production into our domestic supply. If confirmed, I will aim to ensure the Department takes a smart planning approach, in concert with other relevant federal agencies, in order to avoid conflicts and ensure transmission needs can be met in a way that is balanced and consistent with the law.

Question 15: This administration has stated that it will shut down new oil and gas development on federal lands. This is inconsistent with FLPMA's directive to manage public lands for "multiple-uses", in other words, subordinating multiple-uses for a single non-use. Does this view extend to other uses – grazing, mining, transmission lines, land exchanges? Is it your view that the Secretary has the authority to simply ignore Congressional mandates?

RESPONSE: The President's Executive Order pauses the issuance of new oil and gas leases to review the federal fossil fuel program but does not impact existing oil and gas leases. With respect to multiple use, as I said during the hearing, multiple use is a central tenet of managing our public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will look to strike the right balance and believe that we can.

Question 16: COVID-19 taught us that we cannot always rely on other countries for energy, food and other essential supplies. If confirmed, how would you ensure your policies won't drive more key domestic businesses out of the country, thereby exacerbating our reliance on foreign suppliers? Do you think it's important to maintain these domestic sources, and if so, how would you plan to do so?

RESPONSE: I support American economic resilience and energy independence. If I am confirmed, I would take a balanced approach to development of our public lands, including for essential and critical minerals. I agree with the President that we can use what the earth gives us, our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment. If confirmed, I would work with Congress to find ways to work together to provide for responsible resource development.

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Question 17: Collaboration and cooperation between public and private stakeholders can play a critical role in wildlife conservation. Across our country, the future of fish and wildlife depends heavily on private landowners. For example, many private forest owners are currently voluntarily collaborating with the Fish and Wildlife Service to protect and conserve at-risk species. What role do you believe private landowners should play in conservation initiatives?

RESPONSE: I agree that private landowners can and do play a very positive role in conservation initiatives. Voluntary private conservation should be encouraged and is part of the Biden Administration's plan to achieve its 30 by 30 goal, and it can be a critical part of implementing the Endangered Species Act and other activities.

Question 18: Livestock grazing on federal lands plays an important role across the West in not only sustaining rural communities, but also in supporting and maintaining a thriving ecosystem. In your role as Secretary of Interior, how would you promote and protect this continued, sustainable use of our public lands?

RESPONSE: As I mentioned when I appeared before the Committee, my sister has a ranching family and I understand the importance of grazing in the West. I support sustainable use of public land and the use of best grazing practices. If confirmed as Secretary, I would consult with the experts, listen to stakeholders, and work to ensure sustainable grazing practices are widely adopted.

Question 19: Collaboration with those that use the land and make a living on it is the most successful way to achieve positive results in sustainable, long-term stewardship and conservation. In no situation is this more evident than with species management. Particularly with sage-grouse, the state of Idaho has been a leader in bringing together diverse interests to develop workable solutions to managing the species and its habitat.

If confirmed, can you commit to using your position to foster these types of collaborative efforts and encourage local, site-specific decision-making for land and species management decisions that utilize beneficial grazing tools when necessary?

RESPONSE: I support collaborative, science-based approaches to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests. I think if we work together with all stakeholders we can get a lot accomplished. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Question 20: The proliferation of catastrophic wildfires across the West is cause for great alarm. One effective tool for managing fuel loads across the millions of acres of federal rangelands is livestock grazing. More nimble land management policies can help enable the use of prescriptive grazing, fuel breaks, and other grazing management methods to better reduce fuel loads and control and prevent wildfires. Studies done across the nation, including those done at the University of Idaho Range Land Center, have shown these strategies to be among the most effective fire-prevention tools at our disposal.

How would you utilize livestock grazing and other multiple use tools available to you, along with new and developing research, to address the catastrophic fuels and fire problem?

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RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work to make sure the Department is using all the tools available to address wildfire issues. I will ensure that the Department is working closely with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to reduce wildfire risk and restore the ecological health of our forests and rangelands. I will make sure that our decisions on forest and rangeland management and hazardous fuels reduction are guided by the best available science on forest health and wildfire management.

Question 21: Do you support new taxes on the materials (crude ore, waste rock, and dirt, etc.) displaced during the mining and reclamation process on public, state, and private lands?

RESPONSE: I understand that this is not an issue that falls within the authority of the Department of the Interior and, if confirmed, I would need to confer with my legal and policy team at the Department to understand the issue and its impact better.

Question 22: If confirmed, will you support efforts to streamline the mineral permitting process at the Department of the Interior in order to help boost domestic production and decrease our reliance on foreign sources of metals and minerals necessary for clean energy technologies?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America's public lands have long been - and will continue to be - an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 23: As Secretary of the Interior, how would you work with mining companies and renewable energy stakeholders to encourage, incentivize, remove barriers to, and enact permitting reforms that will support and enable President Biden's clean energy goals without increasing our mineral imports from other countries?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will listen to all stakeholders, to ensure that we are harnessing the minerals we need while safeguarding public health and important natural and cultural resources. I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands and waters. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 24: Do you think mining and resource development can be done responsibly and should be done in the U.S.?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America's public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will

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look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands and waters. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 25: Do you believe that resource development projects on federal lands and waters deserve the same level of prioritization as conservation and recreation?

RESPONSE: I support the principle of multiple use concerning the management of our public lands. I believe we must strike the right balance in the use of our public lands, and that can depend on the area and on the activities proposed.

Question 26: Should there be constraints on what the DOI can do to support species conservation?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.

Question 27: Do you support delisting a species if prescribed population targets have been achieved?

RESPONSE: It is my view that Endangered Species Act listings should be driven by the science, and species should be delisted when they have recovered.

Question 28: In your time in the House, you supported efforts which would mandate the most restrictive management designation on 23 million acres of land and 1800 miles of rivers in 5 Western states, including my home state of Idaho. You have also been quoted as saying “we need to protect every single open space that we possibly can.” If confirmed, will your general approach be to restrict as much public land as possible from multiple use?

RESPONSE: As I stated at my hearing, service as a cabinet secretary representing every single American is far different from being a member of Congress where I am representing the interests of a single district. I take this responsibility seriously. If confirmed, I will work collaboratively and make decisions based on science and the law, for the benefit of all Americans.

Question 29: NEPA is a procedural statute; it doesn’t dictate outcomes like other environmental statutes such as the Clean Air Act or Clean Water Act. If a project has completed a detailed NEPA analysis at the state level, will you honor that result?

RESPONSE: While I believe it would depend upon the specific circumstances of the situation, if confirmed I would consult with my legal and policy team at the Department to understand the issue better. I would work closely with the Council on Environmental Quality if called upon to address policy questions about NEPA.

Question 30: In January, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule to amend Section 7 consultation regulations under the Endangered Species

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Act. Current regulations have unnecessarily halted conservation and management projects in Idaho, New Mexico, and many other states. Moreover, these changes have been supported on a bipartisan basis in Congress, as well as by the last two administrations. If confirmed, would you complete this rulemaking to support these important projects?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I would review the proposal carefully and would consult with my legal and policy team to determine a path forward.

Question 31: Hydropower is incredibly important to the Idaho, providing the majority of our state’s energy needs. Preserving hydroelectric facilities was even cited by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine as a necessity for reaching carbon emission targets.

- Do you agree hydropower is a clean and renewable resources?
- Do you support the continued use of already operating hydropower projects, and do you support additional hydropower development?

RESPONSE: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an essential part of our energy future. Hydropower can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid. It is also critical that hydropower is developed and operated in a way that supports healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 32: Given the Biden administration’s urgent focus on climate change, will you support streamlined or more efficient permitting of renewable energy projects on federal lands that fall under the Department of the Interior’s control?

RESPONSE: If confirmed as Secretary, I will work to support smart planning and permitting of renewable energy projects in order to increase production on public lands and waters.

Question 33: The shift to “green technologies” like wind, solar, battery storage and others is projected to create a huge surge in demand for minerals. Electric vehicles require almost four times more copper than conventional cars, and every 3 MW wind turbine requires about 9400 pounds of copper. The World Bank estimates we will need to mine more copper in the next 25 years than we have in the last 5,000. So, with that in mind, I return to the inefficiency and uncertainty we see in the regulatory process – particularly NEPA. The same permitting problem we see in getting approval for a solar farm in Nevada plagues silver or phosphate mines in Idaho. On average, it takes 7-10 years to get a hard rock mine through the federal permitting process. What ideas do you have to address these NEPA inefficiencies?

RESPONSE: America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our

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public lands and waters. I would work closely with the Council on Environmental Quality if called upon to address policy questions about NEPA.

Question 34: Are you familiar with FAST-41 (Section 41 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act of 2015), which created the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC)? Mining was approved as an eligible sector in January 2020, and a rule to this effect was finalized in January 2021. As you may know, FAST-41 is set to expire in September 2021, and the Biden administration has made infrastructure a central part of its economic recovery plan. American minerals are important inputs for construction products like steel, concrete and asphalt, and would obviously contribute to President Biden’s “Buy American” goals. Given this big-picture view, will you support retaining mining as an eligible sector in the FAST-41 reauthorization?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I am interested in learning more about the process and its relation to Department activities from the appropriate staff at the Department.

Question 35: On February 4, 175 solar energy companies signed a pledge swearing off products in their supply chain that are sourced in China, due to concerns about slave labor and human rights violations, particularly in the Xinjiang region. Electric vehicle makers, cell phone manufacturers and battery suppliers have also grown uneasy about human rights issues in China and child labor in the Congo, as well as the widespread environmental degradation in both places. The United States is a leader in producing minerals in a manner that protects workers and the environment and has strong child labor laws. How can the Department of Interior work with mining companies to help them meet the rising demand for products while ensuring compliance with US laws in these areas?

RESPONSE: I am a strong supporter of human rights and as I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands and waters. I believe we can responsibly use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 36: As the steward of the United States’ mineral estate, which provides the inputs for so many renewable energy technologies, how do you plan to work with other agencies like DOE, USDA, Department of Commerce and others to implement the Biden administration’s whole-of-government approach to climate change?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with all of the other cabinet secretaries as a team to implement President Biden’s vision to address climate change.

Question 37: According to the Congressional Research Service, the federal government owns about 28 percent of the land mass in the United States. On January 27, President Biden signed an executive order committing the administration to efforts to conserve 30 percent of U.S. land and waters by 2030. Clearly, even if we placed all federal lands off limits to logging, grazing, mining, and wind and solar development, we would only reach 28

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percent. Because Interior is the largest landowner in the federal portfolio, can you tell us what “30 by 30” means to you, and how you would achieve that goal?

RESPONSE: As I understand it, the 30 by 30 goal is intended to be inclusive and inspiring. It will honor state and local parks, Indigenous-led conservation, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for and by generations of farmers and ranchers. To be successful, this can’t be a top-down approach but must be locally driven, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers, ranchers, and outdoor enthusiasts. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together conserve lands for future generations.

In Idaho, we already have over 60% of our land managed by the federal government. Will you focus this initiative on places with less than 30% of land and water already conserved?

RESPONSE: As stated above, the 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can’t be a top-down approach but must be locally engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, tribal nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations—a bipartisan idea that is very popular with the American people.

In 1999, a report by the National Science Foundation of the National Academy of Sciences noted “Only a very small portion of Earth’s continental crust (less than 0.01%) contains economically viable mineral deposits. Thus, mines can only be located in those few places where economically viable deposits were formed and discovered.” In short, locating mineral deposits is incredibly difficult. We have many beautiful places in this country that are worth protecting and that have been protected. That said, initiatives like “30 by 30” seem to call for closing off more public land to mineral entry and exploration, while a fight against climate change signals skyrocketing demand for minerals. How do you plan to help resolve this tension?

Can you describe how the 30 by 30 goal of preservation or conservation is consistent with the multiple use mandate under FLPMA and NEPA?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I will follow the law. The 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, Indigenous-led conservation, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can’t be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations.

How will you engage local and state governments in this 30 by 30 goal?

RESPONSE: We will actively reach out and encourage state, local, Tribal and voluntary private conservation efforts.

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Will there be a NEPA process that involves robust public involvement in whatever process or tools you use to change land designations and reach this 30 by 30 goal?

RESPONSE: It will be an inclusive process.

What are your highest priority areas you plan to target for conservation, and will you provide Congress and the public with maps of these areas?

RESPONSE: It is not a top down plan but rather a grassroots process that is inclusive of all areas, federal, state, local, Tribal and voluntary private conservation.

Most groups advocating for 30 by 30 note that 30 percent is just a minimum, and that we need to preserve or conserve something more like 50 percent of lands worldwide. Do you share this goal? Is 30 by 30 just a checkpoint on the way to something larger?

RESPONSE: The 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, Indigenous-led conservation, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can't be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations—a bipartisan idea that is very popular with the American people.

Question 38: In 2018, BLM determined they didn't have authority to require compensatory mitigation on projects. Do you agree with this decision? If not, why?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will rely on the scientific and legal experts at the Department and in the states to brief me on these matters.

Question 39: For BLM mine permitting projects on which NEPA was initiated prior to the new administration, would you honor the EIS time limits established by Secretarial Order 3355?

RESPONSE: NEPA is managed under the auspices of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. If confirmed I will consult with CEQ on matters of NEPA policy.

Question 40: BLM Idaho has completed or authorized numerous permits, resource plan amendments, rights-of-way, mining permits and land exchanges over the past 5 years. These projects were managed at the state and local BLM level with expertise provided by state agencies, and in many cases, span years and multiple administrations to complete. These projects have also been through extensive NEPA processes, and in turn, BLM has responded, resolved, or made significant changes to these projects in response to various stakeholder comments. If confirmed, you will likely encounter requests from stakeholders dissatisfied with the final decision seeking to undermine these projects through the so-called "sue and settle" method. Are you familiar with the "sue and settle" approach to resolving lawsuits?

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RESPONSE: If I am confirmed I would look forward to learning more from the Department's legal team on the Department's approach to resolving lawsuits.

What is your approach for resolving this type of request? Can you describe your commitment to public transparency in making these litigation settlement decisions? How will you involve the state BLM, the state of Idaho, and to the extent relevant, the project proponent in your decision making?

RESPONSE: I am committed to transparency and to following the law. If I am confirmed, I will rely on the Department's legal team to brief me on all litigation matters.

Question 41: Your nomination has been supported by a number of groups that have pointed to your legislative history and regulatory agenda, much of which is not consistent with the President's. Throughout your confirmation process, when questioned, you have deferred to his positions. If confirmed, will your past record or the President's record take precedent?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, if I am confirmed as Secretary, it is President Biden's agenda, not my own, that I would be moving forward. I recognize that role of a congresswoman in one district in the country is much different than the role of a Secretary who is fighting and working for every single American in all of our public lands across the country.

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Questions from Senator Maria Cantwell

Question 1: The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Puget Sound Agency Office in Everett, WA, serves 15 Indian tribes but currently has only two full-time employees. This has resulted in a massive backlog of fee-to-trust applications, routine approvals, and other transactions for the tribal governments served by the office and their tribal citizens.

As the Department considers options to permanently fill these vacancies, will you commit to swiftly deploying personnel from other Departmental offices and bureaus to resolve the current backlog of transactions?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed, I will work closely with Department officials to receive the most current information on challenges facing the Puget Sound Agency Office in Washington and to determine the best steps forward on addressing both the personnel shortage and the application backlog. I am committed to working with you on this important issue.**

Question 2: The North Cascades Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan process, led by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was started in 2015 under President Obama and Secretary Sally Jewell. The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continued through the environmental review process until the Trump abruptly terminated the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in July 2020. A Record of Decision was never issued.

Can you commit to resuming the FEIS and issuing a Record of Decision on the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed, I will rely on the expertise of my legal and policy team to brief me on the previous Administration's termination of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and best steps forward for the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan. I am committed to working with you on this important issue.**

Question 3: On January 15th, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a rule that revised the designation of critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl. The rule removed 3.4 million acres of critical habitat in the states of Washington, Oregon and California, well beyond the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's original recommendations to remove a little over 200,000 acres in Oregon.

I was pleased that President Biden announced that the effective date of the rule will be pushed back from March 15, 2021 to April 15, 2021 and in the meantime, the Department of Interior would be reviewing the Trump Administration rule. It's important that science drive critical habitat designations and the Northern Spotted Owl be protected.

Can you commit to reviewing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule to remove 3.4 million acres of critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl and take actions to ensure Northern Spotted Owl populations have the habitat it needs to recover?

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RESPONSE: Yes. As you indicate in your question, the President has directed the Department to carry out this review and, if confirmed, I commit to reviewing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule and working with you on this important issue.

Question 4: Senator Collins and I will be reintroducing the Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act. This bill would establish a pilot program to prompt the National Park Service to give preference to locally adaptive native plant materials and incorporate efforts to prevent the spread of invasive, non-native species. It would also authorize the Department of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the cost-effectiveness of using native plants.

Do you support the Native Plant Species Pilot Program and commit to helping Senator Collins and I get this legislation signed into law?

RESPONSE: As I said at the hearing, I know first-hand the impact of invasive species. It happened in Laguna with the salt cedar. It just took over immediately and there was an effort to try to eradicate the salt cedar on the banks of the Rio San Jose. I understand how quickly invasive species can take over and I look forward to working with you to find ways to remedy those situations. The idea of using native plants to combat invasive species and carry out restoration work is a creative idea and, if confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to learn more and work with you on this effort.

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Questions from Senator Mike Lee

Question 1: The prior administration took steps to increase efficiency in the NEPA process. Can you discuss those changes and tell me which provisions you believe would or would not be compatible with your vision for the department?

RESPONSE: **If I am confirmed I would consult with my legal and policy team at the Department to understand the issue better. I would work closely with the Council on Environmental Quality if called upon to address policy questions about NEPA implementation.**

Question 2: Livestock producers in the west are fighting for space on the range every day. In my state, there are approximately 5,700 wild horses and burro while the Appropriate Management Level only calls for there to be 1,900. That's about three times the acceptable amount. Tell me, how will you work to preserve the ability of producers to operate and reduce horse and burro populations on the range?

RESPONSE: **I know that this is a longstanding and difficult issue with passionate advocates. If I am confirmed I would comply with the law and rely on the BLM experts on this issue so that I understand it and the role of livestock producers better, and so that we can move towards a resolution.**

Question 3: In a 2019 article published by The Guardian, you are quoted saying, "I am wholeheartedly against fracking and drilling on public lands." The Biden Administration agrees with you and recently issued a pause on administrative procedures for activities like extraction and mining. However, these activities on tribal lands were later 'clarified' to be exempt from the order. Tell me, would you like to see fracking, and other extractive activities similarly phased out on tribal lands?

RESPONSE: **The President has been clear that he opposes universally shutting down the industry practice of fracking and I will support his position.**

If your desires to end fracking and extractive activities are truly rooted in concerns for the public health and welfare, don't you think that would be reflected in your obligations in managing lands as a trustee to tribes?

RESPONSE: **Interior holds tribal lands in trust for the benefit of a tribe or individual Indian. Interior's mission with tribal lands is different from public lands. For tribal lands, Interior works with the sovereign landowner to provide the best possible technical and economic advice and services in assisting Indian mineral owners to achieve economic self-sufficiency by creating sustainable economies through the environmentally sound development of their energy and mineral resources.**

Question 4: New Mexico Governor Lujan Grisham previously stated her intention to request a waiver exempting your state from any drilling ban, highlighting the importance of oil and gas revenues to support education funding. What is your response to State Governors who plan to request an exemption from the Biden Administration's oil and gas moratorium?

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RESPONSE: There is no drilling ban in place. The President's Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore are not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

If you were confirmed, would you recommend to the president that he issue a permanent moratorium on oil and gas leasing?

RESPONSE: I will not prejudge the outcome of the review of the fossil fuel program which will take place during the pause on new oil and gas leasing.

Question 5: The Trump Administration was committed to making sure decisions in land management were made closer to the citizens they impact. They were so committed that they moved BLM headquarters to Junction, CO. Do you plan to keep BLM headquarters in the West?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, if I am confirmed, I will look forward to consulting with important stakeholders involved in this issue and I understand that we absolutely need to make sure that we have a full team at BLM and that our leaders can be accessible to the American people. It is my understanding that 90 percent of Interior employees are based outside of D.C. and I look forward to learning more about how the BLM is functioning despite the significant loss of personnel resulting from the recent reorganization.

Question 6: The U.S. government has long recognized the strategic value of helium gas to the nation's economy and national security and has supported domestic helium production on a bipartisan fashion. Helium is designated as a critical mineral that is vital to the Nation's security and economic prosperity. How will the recent suspension of the Bureau of Land Management's authority to issue new federal oil and gas leases effect the timely development of helium and other critical minerals?

RESPONSE: While I am not familiar with the details involved in the helium program, I look forward to learning from the appropriate staff and look forward to learning more about the program. As I have noted in previous responses, this pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved.

Question 7: Access for recreation and community events on federal public land is very important in Utah and many other states. This is especially true in units under the jurisdiction of the National Parks Service. These units are natural resources that deserve to be preserved but should also be allowed to help sustain the communities that facilitate visitation to them. A good example of this is the Mount Rushmore National Memorial. You may be aware that Tourism is South Dakota's 2nd largest industry, and the Mount Rushmore firework celebration is an important driver for tourism in the Black Hills. Visitors to the event spent over \$2

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million in South Dakota, generating \$160,000 in state and local tax revenue. Are you committed to helping states and local communities facilitate events such as the Mount Rushmore firework show?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will learn more about this issue from Department staff and commit to both following the science and soliciting proper stakeholder engagement.

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Questions from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Representative Haaland, Indian Country is facing numerous public safety issues, including the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Crisis. Tribal communities are lacking the infrastructure and officers needed to keep their communities safe. Will you commit to doing a thorough review of the hiring process for BIA law enforcement to ensure that BIA hires prospective officers in a timely manner?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, staffing at the Bureau of Indian Affairs would be a high priority and I would commit to advancing a hiring process that results in well qualified people being hired and trained in a timely way.

Question 2: Representative Haaland, will you commit to aggressively addressing infrastructure backlogs, such as providing the funding needed for the Lama Deer detention facility in order to get it back up and running as a holding facility in Northern Cheyenne?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed by the Department regarding Indian Country detention facilities and look forward to working with Congress on funding issues.

Question 3: Representative Haaland, currently, no BIE schools in Montana are open for in-person teaching. As the country continues to get vaccinated, how quickly can we get students back into the classroom?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Bureau of Indian Education works closely with state, local, and tribal governments and public health departments to coordinate with local jurisdictions. I am hopeful that the effective, equitable distribution of treatments and vaccines under President Biden's Administration can secure a safe and swift return to in-person instruction for the benefit of all children, including BIE students.

Question 4: Representative Haaland, will you commit to having BIA work with the Little Shell Tribe in order to provide base level funding to meet their needs?

RESPONSE: As discussed, I support the BIA working with the Little Shell Tribe to support their new Tribal government and operations.

Question 5: Representative Haaland, there are a number of new wind and solar projects being developed in Montana. However, we have heard from stakeholders that they chose to locate on private land as working with federal agencies on permits is lengthy and expensive. As Secretary what is your plan to attract new projects to public land?

RESPONSE: If confirmed as Secretary, I commit to consulting with experts at the Department and with stakeholders on finding ways to ensure the Department takes a smart approach to planning in order to ensure the process of permitting for renewable energy development on public lands and waters is efficient and effective.

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Question 6: Representative Haaland, storage will be an essential part of any expansion of intermittent energy resources. Pumped hydro storage is one of these technologies and Montana is leading the nation on the development and use of this technology. What actions will you take to facilitate storage projects on federal lands?

RESPONSE: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an essential part of our energy future. Pumped storage hydropower accounts for the vast majority of energy storage currently on the grid. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 7: Representative Haaland, when speaking of a clean energy future, would you include hydropower as important component in a carbon free energy grid?

RESPONSE: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an essential part of our energy future. Hydropower can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid. It is also critical that hydropower is developed and operated in a way that supports healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 8: Representative Haaland, do you believe we should build more hydropower dams and units on public lands and waters or do you think we should remove existing dams?

RESPONSE: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an essential part of our energy future. Hydropower can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid. It is also critical that hydropower is developed and operated in a way that supports healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 9: Representative Haaland, do you support the breaching of hydropower dams in the Columbia Snake River System?

RESPONSE: If confirmed as Secretary, I look forwards to learning more about this issue and consulting with experts at the Department and with stakeholders, including Congress, on this topic.

Question 10: Representative Haaland, do you believe we should streamline permitting for offshore marine and in-stream hydrokinetic power?

RESPONSE: If confirmed as Secretary, I look forward to consulting with experts at the Department and with stakeholders on finding ways to ensure the Department takes a smart approach to planning in order to ensure the process of permitting for renewable energy development on public lands and waters is efficient and effective.

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Question 11: Representative Haaland, you were a cosponsor for the Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act which was signed into law last congress. As a cosponsor and strong supporter of streamlining renewable energy projects on federal lands I believe this was an important bill. What are your plans to implement this legislation?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed I commit to working hard to ensure this legislation is implemented as Congress intended.**

Question 12: Representative Haaland, where else do you see opportunities to streamline permitting on federal lands?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed as Secretary, I commit to consulting with experts at the Department and with stakeholders to find ways of ensuring the Department takes a smart approach to planning in order to minimize conflicts.**

Question 13: Representative Haaland, do you believe it is necessary to decommission coal fired power plants and remove coal from the U.S. energy mix to meet President Biden’s climate goals?

RESPONSE: **As I said during the hearing, we need to move forward with technology and innovation for our energy needs. That’s not going to happen overnight, but the energy industry is innovating. I believe it is fundamental that we tackle the climate crisis by innovating, harnessing our technology and creating jobs. Together we can work to position our nation and all of its people for success in the future. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.**

Question 14: Representative Haaland, with the advancements in clean coal technology and carbon capture, it will be possible to run coal plants with zero carbon emissions. Would you support or oppose the construction of a new coal plant with CCUS technology or the retrofitting of an existing plant with CCUS technology?

RESPONSE: **As I said during the hearing, we need to move forward with technology and innovation for our energy needs. That’s not going to happen overnight, but the energy industry is innovating. I believe it is fundamental that we tackle the climate crisis by innovating, harnessing our technology and creating jobs. Together we can work to position our nation and all of its people for success in the future. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.**

With regard to carbon capture and sequestration, the Biden Administration is open to many technologies to meet our net zero goal by 2050, including CCUS and I support that approach.

Question 15: Representative Haaland, it is estimated that coal, gas, and nuclear energy use approximately 12 acres of land per megawatt of energy produced. Solar needs approximately 43 acres per megawatt and wind approximately 70 acres per megawatt. With the expansion of wind and solar energy there will need to be an

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exponential increase of land use to generate the same amount of energy. How do you plan to balance conservation of land and species with the increase in land use for wind and solar?

RESPONSE: We can protect wildlife and manage our public lands and forests, including the development of renewable energy. If confirmed, I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science, and I support the President’s goal of conserving 30% of our nation’s land and waters by 2030 to ensure that we conserve enough habitat for nature to thrive.

Question 16: Representative Haaland, coal development is major economic driver for the Crow tribe in Montana and represents a major portion of their non-federal budget and the employment of tribal members. Will you take a different stance on tribal development of natural resources than you will on other public lands?

RESPONSE: I believe that honoring our nation-to-nation relationship with sovereign Tribal Nations, upholding the trust and treaty responsibilities to them, and engaging in regular, meaningful and robust consultation are paramount to fulfilling the Department’s mission. The President made this commitment clear in his recent memorandum on consultation. I am committed to robust tribal engagement and tribal consultation when the Department is making decisions that affect them, so that our actions are inclusive of Tribal Nations’ priorities and recommendations.

Question 17: Representative Haaland, there are many tribes around the nation who use natural resource development to grow their economy. A leasing/mining ban on all federal land will impact tribal communities due to the legacy of fractionated interests on reservation. Coal production in particular provides for housing and public safety for many tribes. How will President Biden’s push to reduce coal, oil and gas production impact our energy producing tribal communities?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, President Biden’s Executive Order does not affect lands that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for Tribal Nations or individual Indians.

a. Representative Haaland, how many tribal jobs will be impacted?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, President Biden’s Executive Order does not affect lands that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for Tribal Nations or individual Indians.

b. Representative Haaland, how will this impact revenue?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, President Biden’s Executive Order does not affect lands that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for Tribal Nations or individual Indians.

Question 18: Representative Haaland, a Wyoming study found that a leasing moratorium would “...have implications for the Montana economy. During the first year under a leasing moratorium, value added is \$29 million lower...which reduces personal income by \$13 million and lowers employment by 210.” This price tag would continue to grow each year, resulting in thousands of lost jobs and millions in lost local revenues. Do you support the leasing moratorium and how long do you think it should last?

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RESPONSE: The President’s executive order paused the issuance of new oil and gas leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore are not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

Question 19: Representative Haaland, many rural Montana communities rely on revenues generated from oil and gas development on federal lands. Montana has received over \$123 million for schools and essential services from oil and gas development on federal lands since 2016. You have called for a stop of oil and gas development on federal lands. What would your plan be to replace that local revenue if you are confirmed?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order paused the issuance of new oil and gas leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn’t affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore are not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

Question 20: Representative Haaland, unlike oil and gas development on federal lands, wind and solar development on federal lands does not create direct revenue for local communities. Do you support creating a revenue sharing arrangement for wind and solar like there is for oil and gas?

RESPONSE: I am aware that the methods of revenue collection for renewable energy development differ from oil and gas development. I look forward to learning more about the differences and the reasons for those differences if confirmed and working with Congress on any improvements.

Question 21: Representative Haaland, based on 2019 estimates of oil, gas, solar, and wind federal revenues and generation production and capacity, it is estimated that wind and solar generated \$2.5 million per terawatt-hour of equivalent energy produced on federal land, whereas oil and gas generated \$4.08 million per terawatt-hour equivalent energy produced on federal land. If the U.S. implemented a ‘keep-it-in-the-ground’ policy on federal lands, which you have supported, the Federal government would see a 40% decrease in revenue per kilowatt-hour of equivalent energy produced. As Secretary what are your plans to make up for the difference in federal compensation and would you increase or decrease federal fees on energy production?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order temporarily paused the issuance of new oil and gas leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn’t affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that,

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over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

Question 22: Representative Haaland, you were a cosponsor of H.R. 5552 which expands the prohibition on the unauthorized take or killing of migratory birds including incidental take by commercial activities. This includes incidental take by electric transmission, wind power generation and oil and gas facilities. As Secretary do you intend to maintain the current prosecutorial standards at DOI or will you increase prosecutions of unintentional migratory bird takes?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I understand that this is a different role. I am committed to upholding our environmental laws. Law enforcement authorities need tools to enforce these laws. If I am confirmed, I will learn more from Department experts and consult with stakeholders on this issue.

Question 23: Representative Haaland, all energy production on public lands has an impact on native species. For example, wind production can have impacts on protected species like the bald eagle, solar production can have impact on desert species like native lizard populations, and oil and gas development can have impacts on various ground nesting birds. As Secretary will you evaluate the impacts of wildlife fairly and equally for all forms of energy development?

RESPONSE: I do not believe we need to choose between protecting our wildlife and having a strong economy – we can strike the right balance to have both. If confirmed I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.

Question 24: Representative Haaland, the Keystone XL pipeline would cross 44 miles of BLM land in Montana. As Secretary, you would play a key role in administering that right-a-way. Do you support the Keystone XL pipeline and would you support or remove the right-a-way that was granted to Keystone XL Pipeline?

RESPONSE: Since I am not a confirmed member of President Biden’s Administration, I was not consulted on this decision. President Biden’s Executive Order to tackle the climate crisis launched a whole-of-government approach to address the climate crisis and create millions of jobs in clean energy while putting America on a path to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The President’s Build Back Better plan aims to create millions of jobs and support workers and, if confirmed, I look forward to helping him move his plan forward. If confirmed, I can also commit to listen to all stakeholders and take a balanced approach on any pipeline issues that arise before the Department.

Question 25: Representative Haaland, “multiple use” is a bedrock of BLM’s mission. As Secretary you will have the ability to advance BLM’s multiple use mission or reduce it. According to the current BLM mission statement:

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“Congress tasked the BLM with a mandate of managing public lands for a variety of uses such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting while ensuring natural, cultural, and historic resources are maintained for present and future use.

To do this, we manage public lands to maximize opportunities for commercial, recreational, and conservation activities. This promotes healthy and productive public lands that create jobs in local communities while supporting traditional land uses such as responsible energy development, timber harvesting, grazing, and recreation, including hunting and fishing.”

Do you have plans to change BLM’s multiple use statement?

RESPONSE: I understand and respect BLM’s mission with regard to multiple use.

Question 26: Representative Haaland, do you believe that responsible energy development, including coal, oil, gas, and geothermal development is part of BLM’s multiple use directive?

RESPONSE: I agree that responsible energy development is a part of BLM’s multiple use mandate in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Question 27: Representative Haaland, what does multiple-use and sustained-yield mean to you?

RESPONSE: I understand and respect BLM’s mission with regard to multiple use land management. I also believe that multiple uses must be managed appropriately so that public lands are sustained for the benefit of future generations.

Question 28: Representative Haaland, reclaimed coal and mining operations are often times more productive for wildlife and plant species. In fact, Montana has frequently been awarded for our reclamation efforts. In some places the reclaimed areas have better habitat and at one site I have heard that we are seeing elk and deer that were not present beforehand. Have you visited a world-class reclamation site before and would you agree that post extraction reclamation can be better for habitat than it was before extraction?

RESPONSE: As I indicted at my confirmation hearing, I believe mining reclamation is critically important to protecting the health and safety of Americans. If confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to visit a reclaimed site.

Question 29: Representative Haaland, the U.S. is reliant on many critical minerals and metals that are essential for healthcare, renewable energy, communications, and more. Do you believe that the U.S. should decrease its dependency on foreign countries, particularly adversarial countries, by increasing responsible mining in the U.S.?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will

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look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 30: Representative Haaland, do you believe the U.S. has better or worse environmental and labor standards when it comes to mining than China, Indonesia, Russia, Venezuela, or the DRC Congo?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with those countries' environmental rules. I support American energy independence and strong standards for workers and public health in the U.S.

Question 31: Representative Haaland, as we discussed during the hearing, in order to produce wind, solar, and storage technology you need raw materials that need to be mined and extracted from the earth. You have previously introduced legislation that would increase the costs and lengthens the permitting for hard rock mining. Where do you believe we should source raw materials for renewable energy?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America's public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 32: Representative Haaland, with my strong support, in 2018, Congress amended the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) to streamline vegetation management approvals necessary for utilities to access federal rights-of-way to enhance electric system reliability, promote public safety, protect natural resources, and mitigate wildfire risk. To my knowledge, the Bureau of Land Management has yet to implement these critical changes. If confirmed, will you commit issuing the vegetation management rule this year, to promote the long-term, cost-effective, and efficient management of electric facilities on federal lands?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will commit to learn more about this issue, and to ensuring the Bureau of Land Management complies with the law and moves forward with appropriate wildfire prevention and mitigation policies.

Question 33: Representative Haaland, The Department of the Interior issued Order No. 3395, which suspended the BLM and BIA authority “to grant rights of way, easements, or any conveyances of property or interest in property, including land sales or exchanges, or any notices to proceed under previous surface use authorizations that will authorize ground-disturbing activities.” Federal rights of way are an essential component to ensure rural communities can receive safe, reliable electric power and broadband access. If confirmed how will you ensure timely access to federal rights of way are not inhibited?

RESPONSE: I am informed that S.O. 3395 created a temporary elevation of the process for reviewing permits during the transition. I also understand permits are still being reviewed and approved, with an additional last level of review taking place in a timely way. If confirmed, I look forward to finding a productive path forward.

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Question 34: Representative Haaland, our National Park System is the envy of the world. If confirmed what steps will you take to increase visitors experience in our national parks?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will support the implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act as Congress intended, which permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provides funds to address the maintenance backlog on federal lands. Implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act, and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund will lead to increased access to public lands, including our national parks.

Question 35: Representative Haaland, The Great American Outdoors Act is a historic law that takes the revenue from energy development on public lands and uses it to reduce the backlog of maintenance on our parks and public lands. The program is estimated to reduce the backlog on parks by half over the next 5 years. Would you support extending the program, which means continuing energy development on public lands, in order to continue to reduce the backlog on public lands?

RESPONSE: I support the Great American Outdoors Act which permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provides funds to address the maintenance backlog on federal lands. If confirmed, I will work with Interior staff to ensure that the Department implements the Act as Congress intended.

Question 36: Representative Haaland, will you take actions to change the implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act as it relates to our National Park System?

RESPONSE: As stated above, if confirmed I will work with Interior staff to ensure that the Department implements the Act as Congress intended.

Question 37: Representative Haaland, how would the Department of the Interior under your leadership, prioritize deferred maintenance projects in National Parks under the Great American Outdoors Act?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work with Interior staff to understand the current process, and, as stated above, will ensure that the Department implements the Act as Congress intended.

Question 38: Representative Haaland, as of 2018, Glacier National Park has an estimated maintenance need of approximately \$176 million, when you include deferred maintenance, capital improvements, and other facility maintenance needs. Montana is also home to a number of amazing small and mid-size parks that have similar maintenance issues. As Secretary, how will you balance the needs of larger, highly visited parks, like Glacier, that might see 3 million visitors a year, with those of a smaller park like Grant Kohrs?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will work with Interior staff to understand the current process for prioritizing maintenance needs at national parks. Prioritization involves balancing the needs of various parks, park visitors, and other stakeholders, with available resources.

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Question 39: Representative Haaland, keeping up with all the costs in National Parks and public lands is expensive. Partnerships have been a prime example of how the Department of the Interior can work with private and public groups to increase visitor experiences at parks. For example, in Montana, the National Park Foundation, the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, and the Friends of the Little Bighorn Battlefield partnered together with the National Park Service to construct a new visitor center at the Little Bighorn National Monument. Do you support these types of public/private partnerships and what actions will you take as Secretary regarding these types of projects?

RESPONSE: I believe that collaboration and working together yields the best outcomes. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about these types of partnerships across our federal lands.

Question 40: Representative Haaland, just before the inauguration of President Biden, the Department of the Interior announced a final rule relating to improving concessionaire contracts in National Parks. The rule was postponed for review by the new administration. Do you have any concerns with the rule and if confirmed will you work to publish and implement the rule?

RESPONSE: I have not had the benefit of being briefed by National Park Service officials on this rule. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department experts on reviewing the rule and pursuing next steps from there.

Question 41: Representative Haaland, some groups have proposed to increase park entrance fees, increase franchise fees, or impose new fees to fund national parks and public lands. As Secretary will you increase visitation fees, franchise fees, or implement new fees to fund public land management?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the National Park Service on issues surrounding park entrance fees and how best to proceed in a way that allows all individuals to enjoy our great outdoors.

Question 42: Representative Haaland, last year you signed a letter urging the administration to close parks and public lands in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Secretary will you move to close any park units or publicly accessible lands?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I believe now that President Biden is in office, there is a mask mandate on our public lands and in our national parks. If everyone does their part to social distance and be careful and wear their masks, we will have more of those opportunities. I will support every effort by the Biden Administration to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question 43: Representative Haaland, our National Parks support large and small tourism companies throughout the state. From outfitters and guides to motorcoaches, it is important that companies have fair access and up to date information on the parks and their operations. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure continued partnerships, access, and information with Montana tourism companies?

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RESPONSE: As I stated at my hearing, I know that President Biden supports a strong outdoor economy, and so do I. I believe that collaboration and working together yields the best results. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about how the Department partners with the outdoor economy in your state.

Question 44: President Biden’s Executive Actions to Tackle the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, Create Jobs, and Restore Scientific Integrity Across Federal Government commits the U.S. to the goal of conserving at least 30% of our lands and oceans by 2030. You have introduced a resolution along the same premise, the detail of which have been sparse. Please answer the following questions in regards to the 30 X 30 initiative:

- a. What is your baseline definition of “conserving” in this case?
- b. Does the 30 X 30 initiative apply only to public land or all U.S. lands?
- c. How many acres of land do you estimate still need to be “conserved” in order to reach this goal?
- d. Will you recognize existing management levels and activities that currently afford protections?
- e. How will you recognize motorized recreation?
- f. Will you recognize activities such as logging and grazing, and reclamation as contributing to conservation?
- g. Do you foresee changes to current management levels or reductions on current or historic uses?
- h. Do you believe working lands (i.e. forest restoration, grazing) are an important component of 30 X 30?
- i. How will you incorporate and enhance sportsmen and hunting opportunities in the 30 X 30 initiative?
- j. Extensive environmental review is required before any project or action may be carried out on public land to ensure proper mitigation and restoration plans are in place. In what meaningful way are ground-disturbing activities contrary to conservation principles or environmental stewardship?
- k. Between Areas of Conservation Concern, Critical Habitat, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Land with other protective designations and classifications—in what meaningful way the majority of our public lands not being protected?
- l. How do you intend to engage stakeholders and will you commit to prioritizing the input of local governments and the community?
- m. Will you commit to providing sportsmen, ranchers, timber, and energy stakeholders an equitable voice in the stakeholder-engagement process?
- n. Land is reclaimed following mining and other extractive or ground-disturbing activities and mitigation measures must also be followed. More often than not, the land is left healthier and sustains more wildlife than prior to energy development. In what meaningful way is this not conservation?
- o. Will you commit to providing the Energy and Natural Resources Committee with bi-monthly updates on 30X30 planning and implementation efforts?
- p. Will you commit that these bi-monthly updates include a detailed briefing to discuss planned recommendations to the National Climate Task Force, what factors will be used to determine successful completion of the goal, and what steps will need to be taken to achieve the goal?

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- q. Do you believe the National Climate Task Force is the most appropriate entity to be tasked with the 30 X 30 initiative and why?
- r. Do you foresee utilizing authorities in the Antiquities Act to achieve 30% conservation status?

RESPONSE: The 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, Indigenous-led conservation, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can't be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations—a bipartisan idea that is very popular with the American people. I look forward to working with Congress to move this important goal forwards and will work with Congress and interested stakeholders as we do so.

Question 45: Representative Haaland, the Great American Outdoors Act provided the largest investment in conservation and our public lands in history. How will you go about implementing this act to ensure stewardship of this significant investment?

RESPONSE: As I previously stated, if confirmed, I will work with Interior staff to ensure Department implements the Act as Congress intended. Effective and efficient use of the funds that Congress provided will be a high priority for me.

Question 46: Representative Haaland, you have repeatedly called for a permanent moratorium on energy development on our federal land. Offshore and onshore energy revenues fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. How do you plan to make up the loss in revenue that funds conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund?

RESPONSE: As I stated at my hearing, President Biden has placed a pause on new oil and gas leases on public lands to review the program. During that time production and therefore revenue from existing leases continues, so I am not aware of any loss in revenue that needs to be made up. I understand the role of Secretary is different and I take that seriously and I will not prejudge the outcome of the review of the oil and gas leasing program. I appreciate your concern on this issue and these factors can be considered as part of that review.

Question 47: Representative Haaland, state and local input is absolutely critical in land management decisions. If confirmed, how will you incorporate state planning efforts in land management decisions and include state and local governments in the process?

RESPONSE: As I said at the hearing, it is important for local communities to weigh in on important decisions that affect them, and if confirmed I would seek partnerships with states, with tribes, and with local communities to ensure effective collaboration on land management decisions.

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Question 48: Representative Haaland, federal land management can sometimes be contentious. How do you intend to navigate through conflict on federal lands and federal land management? How important are local voices in reaching management decisions and how do you intend to protect those voices, particularly when local opinions differ from those of national organizations or the administration?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed I will work to support collaborative approaches to land management decisions. I will work to support the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes, and I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.**

Question 49: Representative Haaland, you have indicated your commitment to addressing climate change. You have also indicated your support of President Biden's Executive Actions relating to climate and energy. The cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline and the moratorium on energy leasing is expected to increase emissions. How will you address the increase in emissions caused by President Biden's actions over the last month?

RESPONSE: **President Biden's Executive Order to tackle the climate crisis launched a whole-of-government approach to address the climate crisis and create millions of jobs in clean energy while putting America on a path to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The President's Build Back Better plan aims to create millions of jobs and support workers and, if confirmed, I look forward to helping him move his plan forward.**

Question 50: Representative Haaland, you cosponsored the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protections Act which designates 23 million acres of Wilderness, including 7 million acres in Montana. Which Montana officials and local Montana stakeholders did you receive input from to inform your support?

RESPONSE: **As I stated at my hearing, the role of an individual Member of Congress to her constituents is different than the role and responsibilities of a cabinet secretary to the public. While I was one of 44 cosponsors of this legislation in the 116th Congress, the bill addressed more than the congressional designation of wilderness in the State of Montana, comprising seven titles and including provisions regarding Indian Tribes.**

Question 51: Representative Haaland, do you support CEQ's final rule in July of 2020 to modernize and clarify the CEQ regulations to facilitate more efficient, effective, and timely NEPA reviews by simplifying and clarifying regulatory requirements, incorporating key elements of the One Federal Decision policy and codifying certain case law and CEQ guidance?

RESPONSE: **If I am confirmed, I look forward to consulting with my legal and policy team at the Department to understand the issue better. I would work closely with the Council on Environmental Quality if called upon to address policy questions about NEPA implementation.**

Question 52: Representative Haaland, Montana is home to hundreds of iconic wildlife species—some of which are endangered, some of which have recovered, many of which drive our hunting and sportsmen heritage, all of which are cherished by Montanans who have championed some the most successful wildlife conservation

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stories in the West. When do you believe an endangered species should be considered recovered? When a species has recovered, do you support returning management to the state and removing federal protections?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes. I agree that collaboration on habitat conservation is a key conservation strategy. Once a species is listed, the recovery of that species is the goal of the Endangered Species Act. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.

Question 53: Representative Haaland, the recovery criteria for the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the North Continental Divide Ecosystem has been met for several years. Will you commit to moving forward with delisting the grizzly bear in each of these distinct population segments?

RESPONSE: ESA listing should be driven by the science and it is appropriate for species to be delisted when they have recovered. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.

Question 54: Representative Haaland, the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the North Continental Divide Ecosystem has not only recovered but is flourishing. While this recovery is something to be celebrated, it has also led to an increase in human/livestock and bear conflict. While delisting the grizzly bear will help with this problem, other steps must be taken. The Boone and Crockett Club recently convened a roundtable in Dupuyer to address the issue and the Department of the Interior provided additional funds to cooperative efforts run by USDA Wildlife Services. If confirmed, will you continue this funding commitment to support cooperative problem-solving efforts?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife and avoiding conflicts.

Question 55: Representative Haaland, the 2015 *Cottonwood* decision has compromised the integrity of our land planning process. Its court case has raised bipartisan concerns, even the Obama Administration said at the time that the decision “had the potential to cripple forest management.” Do you agree with the Obama Administration that the *Cottonwood* decision was problematic and has caused undue delay of needed forest management?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will work hard to support collaborative, science-based approaches to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests. On this particular matter, I look to learning more about the status of the issue and how the Department is making decisions on this matter and I would consult with the Department’s legal and policy team.

Question 56: Representative Haaland, Montana has been ground-zero for copy-cat litigation, delaying habitat management and fuel reduction projects. However, more recently New Mexico forests were also impacted. As you know, a court issued a total injunction and completely shut down 2 ½ Forests. Do you support the draft rule pending at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that would address this situation?

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RESPONSE: As I said in my response to the previous question, I will work hard to support collaborative, science-based approaches to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests. On this particular matter, I would consult with the Department's legal and policy team. My experience in New Mexico included the delegation working with the Forest Service and other agencies and stakeholders to find productive paths forward and that is the approach I would bring if confirmed as Secretary.

Question 57: Representative Haaland, you have spoken out against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rulemaking clarifying that for an area to be "critical habitat" it must first be habitat of the species in question. Please explain why you believe critical habitat should not have to be an area that sustains the species. If confirmed, do you intend to rewrite this rulemaking and if so, how will you define "critical habitat"?

RESPONSE: As a member of Congress, I spoke on this issue based on my concern that the previous administration was removing conservation options that could help the species recover, which is the goal of the ESA. I understand that being a cabinet Secretary is a different role and that's one I take seriously. If confirmed I look forward to getting more fully informed on this issue by Interior staff. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law and the Department will continue to listen to the input of Congress and stakeholders on these matters.

Question 58: Representative Haaland, you have also spoken out against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rulemaking that defined "foreseeable future" as far "into the future as the Services can reasonably determine that both the future threats and species responses to those threats are likely." Given your opposition, please explain how the agency is expected to analyze the effects on an action into the foreseeable future beyond what they can reasonably determine?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I look forward to learning more about this particular part of the FWS decision making process under the ESA from Interior staff. I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law.

Question 59: Representative Haaland, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of reviewing the listing status of the Canada Lynx. What factors will you taking into consideration determining recovery criteria and how soon do you anticipate a decision to be made?

RESPONSE: ESA listing should be driven by the science and the law, and the law provides for delisting when a species has recovered. If confirmed, I look forward to getting more fully informed on how these decisions are made by Interior's expert staff. I appreciate you raising this particular species and I agree that this matter deserves the Department's close attention. As Secretary, I will ensure that any decision we make is guided by science and the law and seek to foster conservation partnerships that help species recover and support rural communities.

Question 60: Representative Haaland, past appropriations bills have included language directing the Bureau of Land Management to work with stakeholders to resolve risks shared by wild and domestic sheep in areas where they occupy the same range. This has created collaborative breakthroughs, maintaining grazing operations while restoring bighorn sheep herds and reducing conflict. While the Bureau of Land Management has policy in

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place, they have not been implementing it thoroughly. If confirmed, will you commit to work with me to ensure this policy carried out?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I look forward to learning more about this issue and working to ensure that when successful collaborative breakthroughs take place they are used to model development of solutions to other land management challenges.

Question 61: Representative Haaland, the gray wolf has also successfully recovered returned to state management. This has been supported by the Fish and Wildlife Service since the Clinton Administration which prepared the first proposal to delist. Since then, states have enacted wolf management policies. Do you agree that management of the gray wolf should be left to states?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will follow the science and the law on listing decisions, and work with farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes. I commit to getting more fully informed on matters related to the Gray Wolf and the ESA.

Question 62: Representative Haaland, you have made statements advocating to ban trapping on public lands. If confirmed, you will have the authority to implement a ban on trapping on lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, will you move to take action to ban trapping on public lands?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I recognize that the role of a cabinet secretary with regard to the American public is much different that the role of a congresswoman who is addressing the concerns of her district constituents. I commit to you that if confirmed any actions taken on wildlife management will incorporate input from state and local stakeholders and be based upon the best available science.

Question 63: Representative Haaland, what has informed your opinion on the practice of trapping?

RESPONSE: I understand the history of trapping in America and I will not prejudge decisions and will consider the issues and input from stakeholders carefully.

Question 64: Representative Haaland, why should hunters and sportsmen feel confident that hunting and shooting opportunities on public lands will not be compromised given your call to ban all semi-automatic rifles, the most common modern hunting rifle?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I am a Pueblo woman. We've been hunting wild game for centuries. In fact, the reason that I'm sitting here today is because my ancestors sustained themselves through those practices. My dad, my grandparents, my brother, they all hunt. In fact, I was fortunate to harvest an Oryx from the White Sands Missile Range. It fed my family for about a year. I absolutely understand and respect the sportsmen and the anglers and their traditions. If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that all Americans have those kinds of opportunities that my family and I have had.

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As I said at the hearing, I advocated for my constituents in Congress but I understand that being a cabinet Secretary is a different role and I take that seriously. I am not aware of a role for the Department of the Interior in regulating the types of firearms that can be sold.

Question 65: Representative Haaland, will you commit to a no-net-loss policy for hunting and fishing access on public lands?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, multiple use is a central tenet of managing public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to increase access for hunting and angling including by implementing the Great American Outdoors Act as Congress intended.

Question 66: Representative Haaland, former President Obama banned the use of lead ammo and tackle on public lands. The Trump Administration reversed this move. If confirmed, will you consider restrictions on lead ammo and tackle on public lands?

RESPONSE: Hunting and fishing are key components to the success of wildlife conservation. If confirmed, I commit to being briefed on learning more about this issue from Interior staff, and to ensuring that any decisions on this matter are based upon the best available science.

Question 67: Representative Haaland, the Administration recently announced the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. With that in mind, FWS programs and regulations directly impact the welfare of indigenous people around the world. For example, hunting programs regulated by FWS generate revenue for indigenous communities in Africa. Were you aware of this when you supported the CECIL Act during the 116th Congress?

RESPONSE: I understand that the FWS International Affairs program provides domestic and international conservation. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this program. As I testified, I understand the role of a cabinet Secretary is different from the role of a Member of Congress and I take that seriously.

- a. If confirmed, will you review and revise FWS regulations with consideration of relevant countries, indigenous communities, and rural communities throughout the FWS decision-making process?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I look forward to learning more about this issue and I will carefully consider the relevant issues when decisions come before me.

Question 68: Representative Haaland, the USFWS has an inconsistent record regarding the information it discloses in response to FOIA requests, especially related to the identities of international hunters. In some instances, information disclosed has been abused on social media and elsewhere to attack, harass, and threaten law-abiding hunters. Federal courts have upheld the USFWS' ability to withhold personal information from disclosure and faulted the USFWS for its inconsistent approach in determining what information it can legally

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withhold. Will you commit to protecting individuals' personal information from disclosure under FOIA, as the law allows? Will you commit to directing DOI FOIA offices to consistently withhold personal information, as permitted by federal law, to protect the privacy rights of American citizens?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will respect and follow the law when it comes to FOIA and personally identifiable information and I would expect the Department's bureaus, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to do the same.

Question 69: Representative Haaland, will you commit to no-net-loss of motorized recreation on public lands?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, multiple use is a central tenet of managing our public lands. Motorized recreation can have impacts on wildlife and habitat and in some places, must be considered carefully, according to applicable law. I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will look to strike the right balance and believe that we can.

Question 70: Representative Haaland, the Trump Administration opened up over 4 million acres at national refuges and fish hatcheries to the public for hunting, fishing, and trapping. If confirmed, do you intend to keep these newly accessible public areas open for hunting, fishing, and trapping? Do you intend to explore opening additional public lands to hunting, fishing, and trapping?

RESPONSE: Multiple use is a central tenet of managing our public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. If confirmed, I will look to strike the right balance and believe that we can. I was excited to work on the Great American Outdoors Act in part because of the opportunities it can provide to increase access for hunting and fishing on public lands.

I absolutely understand and respect the sportsmen and the anglers and their traditions. If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that all Americans have those kinds of opportunities that my family and I have had.

Question 71: Representative Haaland, if confirmed, will you place a priority on collaboration with the hunting and conservation community by continuing the USFWS Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council and appointing representatives to the Council that represent the hunting and shooting sports public? Do you also intend to designate a representative in your office, someone who hunts, as a liaison to the hunting and conservation community?

RESPONSE: I recognize that hunting and fishing are integral to wildlife conservation and that hunters and anglers are key to the success of wildlife conservation. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council and the role it plays in the Department's work to collaborate with partners. I would commit to maintaining meaningful communication with the hunting conservation community.

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Question 72: Representative Haaland, this year, wildfires in California produced more carbon dioxide than the power sector. In Oregon, wildfires accounted for more carbon dioxide than the transportation sector. Studies have shown that healthy forests can act as a carbon sink whereas dead, dying, diseased, and infested trees emit carbon into the atmosphere. Do you intend to increase active forest management on our public lands as a key component of your initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on our public lands?

RESPONSE: Wildfires are becoming more common and more severe due to a number of factors, including climate change and the emissions are a further concern. If I am confirmed, I will consult with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to help ensure that we make decisions with the best science on forest health and wildfire management to help guard against wildfires and to help communities to recover and be more resilient. I believe that restoration of nature is a powerful tool in the effort to address climate change and look forward to working with other agencies and Congress on this topic.

Question 73: Representative Haaland, modelling has predicted several giga-fire scenarios within the next ten years unless vegetation management increases two to four times what is currently occurring on our timberlands. If confirmed, what steps will you take to increase the scope and scale of active forest management?

RESPONSE: As I said in response to the previous question, wildfires are becoming more common and more severe due to a number of factors, including climate change. If I am confirmed, I will consult with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to help ensure that we make decisions with the best science on forest health and wildfire management to help guard against wildfires and to help communities to recover and be more resilient.

Question 74: Representative Haaland, I understand certain Bureau of Land Management field offices have interpreted Secretarial Order 3395 to apply to all ground-disturbing activities and are refusing to sign a contract to proceed on NEPA-cleared vegetation management projects. What authority does the BLM have to stop these timber sales and projects and do you agree with this decision?

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that this order is a temporary elevation of the process for reviewing permits and other actions, and that processing of these actions is taking place on a timely basis. I do not believe that this would impact the need to comply with underlying authorities. I know there have been many questions about the process, and if I am confirmed I will be committed to ensuring certainty and transparency in these processes.

Question 75: Representative Haaland, how might the delay of timber projects caused by S.O. 3395 increase the wildfire risk for nearby communities and if confirmed, how will you make up time lost by the undue delay to complete time-sensitive timber projects?

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that this is order is a temporary elevation of the process for reviewing permits and other actions, and that processing of these actions is taking place on a timely basis. I do not believe that this would impact the need to comply with underlying authorities. Regarding

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addressing the wildfire risk, if I am confirmed I will consult with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to help ensure that we make decisions with the best science on forest health and wildfire management to help guard against wildfires and to help communities to recover and be more resilient.

Question 76: Representative Haaland, what will your priorities be as your review the timber sale protest process?

RESPONSE: I would look forward to learning more about this process at the BLM, if confirmed.

Question 77: Representative Haaland, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture were incorporated into a “wildfire subcabinet” during the Trump Administration to increase coordination during the agencies during wildfire season. If confirmed, would you support keeping a wildfire subcabinet? How do you intend to coordinate wildland firefighting efforts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

RESPONSE: Wildfires are becoming more common and more severe due to a number of factors, including climate change. If I am confirmed, I will consult with the Forest Service, states, Tribal Nations and local communities to help ensure that we make decisions with the best science on forest health and wildfire management to help guard against wildfires and to help communities to recover and be more resilient.

Question 78: Representative Haaland, ranchers are the stewards of the West and the original conservations. Grazing permits have decreased drastically in Montana over the past two decades. How do you intend to improve grazing permit administration to increase certainty and flexibility for ranchers?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I understand how important grazing is to many ranchers. If confirmed I would welcome ideas for improvement to the grazing permit program and be happy to work with you on this important subject for ranchers and their communities.

Question 79: Representative Haaland, will you commit to no net-loss of grazing permits or allotments?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I cannot make such a commitment at this moment. But if I am confirmed, I appreciate knowing and understanding your concern about this and I will carefully consider any grazing policy decisions that may come before me if confirmed.

Question 80: Representative Haaland, what is your strategy for reducing or eliminating invasive and noxious weeds?

RESPONSE: I know that invasive and noxious weeds can be a problem on our public lands. At my hearing I mentioned my Tribe’s effort to eradicate salt cedar at Laguna Pueblo, and I understand how difficult that task can be. I know that the Department has a number of authorities to address this problem and I would look forward to working with the Department’s stakeholders and Congress to make sure that these programs are effective.

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Question 81: Representative Haaland, you have repeatedly said that public lands are responsible for 25% of carbon going into the atmosphere in this country. Please explain which uses you believe are contributing to emissions and the level in which they are contributing.

RESPONSE: The figure of 25% of U.S. carbon emissions is a commonly cited statistic from a 2018 U.S. Geologic Survey study. Fossil fuel emissions are the primary sources of these emissions which contribute to climate change.

Question 82: Representative Haaland, in the 116th Congress, you supported the Tribal Wildlife Corridors Act of 2019 and the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019. The previous Administration issued a Secretarial Order conserving wildlife migration corridors. Land used for Agricultural purposes and privately owned property play important roles in protecting wildlife corridors in the West. Will you commit to collaborating with ranchers and private land-owners on any future wildlife migration corridor initiative proposed?

RESPONSE: If I am confirmed, I look forward to hearing from the experts and with local stakeholders to look at this issue and to understand it more fully. As I said during the hearing, my sister married a rancher and gave birth to three cowboys and a cowgirl. They care deeply about the land and their animals. I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward. I believe the previous administration's Secretarial Order on this topic had positive aspects and I look forwards to considering how to make further progress on wildlife corridors if confirmed.

Question 83: Representative Haaland, in the last Congress, Democrat members of the Natural Resources Committee were very critical of the ethics record of officials in the Department of the Interior under the prior administration. In particular, the Natural Resources Committee majority criticized Interior appointees because interests they represented prior to their appointments were affected by Interior activities or programs. Many of the people appointed to positions at Interior in the present administration previously worked for or represented interests affected by Interior. As an example, it was reported yesterday that Daniel Cordalis has been appointed as deputy solicitor for water issues. Mr. Cordalis is a lawyer who previously worked for Earthjustice the Yurok Tribe. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure Mr. Cordalis and other appointees avoid perceived conflicts of interest of the type alleged against Interior appointees during the Trump administration?

RESPONSE: While I am not familiar with any perceived potential conflict of interest that you reference, President Biden has asked all who serve in his administration to conduct themselves with the highest ethical standards. The Department has an Ethics Office which is there to provide employees with advice and guidance on ethics issues, and I will expect and encourage them to do so, if I am confirmed.

Question 84: Representative Haaland, as discussed during the hearing you criticized the decision to move the BLM headquarters to Grand Junction. Do you still believe that moving the BLM headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado was the wrong decision?

- a. As DOI Secretary will you commit to keeping the HQ in Grand Junction?

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RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, if I am confirmed, I will look forward to consulting with everyone involved in this issue and I understand that we absolutely need to make sure that we have a full team at BLM and that our leaders can be accessible to the American people. It is my understanding that 90 percent of Interior employees are based outside of D.C. and I look forward to learning more about how the BLM is functioning despite the significant loss of personnel from the recent reorganization.

Question 85: In the 116th Congress, the House passed the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act which would require the Federal Government to keep a record on payouts from the Equal Access to Justice Act to ensure transparency. Unfortunately, implementation of this important, bipartisan act has been abysmal. The information is inconsistently reported and not easily accessible. If confirmed, would you work on ensuring the nature of the law is met and the Department reports on information as needed?

RESPONSE: I am aware that provisions of the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice were contained in S.47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. If I am confirmed, I would ensure that I am fully briefed on the status of implementation of the provisions of this important conservation legislation.

Question 86: The Administration has touted the idea of bringing “ethics” back to Washington, yet has appointed several individuals who have participated in the practice known as “Sue-and-Settle.” This practice eliminates transparency and public comments, while denying any dissenting viewpoints and the past Administration worked to eliminate this practice. Do you believe this practice should be resurrected?

RESPONSE: If I am confirmed I would look forward to learning more from the Department’s legal team on the Department’s approach to resolving lawsuits.

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Questions from Senator Lisa Murkowski

Question 1: A critical element of statehood is the primary authority to regulate resident fish and wildlife and establish the means, methods, seasons, and bag limits for the taking of such resident fish and wildlife. This state authority also extends to federal lands unless and until expressly and specifically countermanded by Congress using its Property Clause authority. Congress later provided that federal land designations and administration were not to diminish this State authority. Do you concur that states, possess primary authority to regulate hunting and fishing on federal lands?

RESPONSE: Yes, I recognize that states have significant responsibility to protect and manage wildlife within their borders and in many cases that includes on federal public lands for these purposes. If confirmed I commit to cooperating with states to the maximum extent possible in carrying out Departmental responsibilities in managing wildlife.

Question 2: Many promises and commitments were made by the federal government to Alaska Native peoples and the State of Alaska that have yet to be fulfilled. These promises and commitments are embodied in statutes, including the 1959 Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), the Alaska National Lands Interests and Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the recently enacted, Alaska Native Vietnam-era Veterans Allotments at Section 1119 of the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act. The Department of the Interior is charged under these statutes with upholding and fulfilling these promises and commitments which includes land transfer entitlements. The Alaska land transfer program is the largest ever undertaken in the United States. According to the Bureau of Land Management's website:

- The total entitlement to the State of Alaska is 104.5 million acres, roughly the size of California.
- The remaining state entitlement is 5.2 million acres, roughly the size of New Jersey.
- The total ANCSA entitlement is 45.7 million acres, roughly the size of the state of Washington.
- The remaining ANCSA settlement is 1.8 million acres, roughly the size of Rhode Island and Delaware combined.

What assurances can you give to the people of Alaska that these promises, these commitments, particularly with respect to these land entitlements that have been made to our state, to our native peoples, to our Vietnam veterans, that you will make it a priority to fulfill these promises, and complete these land entitlements?

RESPONSE: I appreciated the information you have provided to me, which I have reviewed and I am looking forward to learning more about this history and past Department actions regarding these issues. If confirmed I will respect and follow the law, and I commit to working with you, the State of Alaska, and Alaska Natives to make progress on meeting those federal commitments that are within the Department of the Interior's authority.

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Question 3: In 2019, as our public lands package, which I sponsored, was being considered in Congress, the Washington Post published a perspective piece by a reporter titled the “[The big Alaskan land giveaway tucked into a sweeping conservation bill](#)” attacking section 1119, of the package, that would allow Alaska Native Vietnam veterans the opportunity to claim up to 160 acres of land in Alaska. The reporter characterized section 1119 as “...hand[ing] over nearly a half-million acres of federal lands in Alaska — your land and mine — to private hands.” This reporter argues that transferring public lands to Indigenous people could lead to energy development or prevent sportsman, hunters and those who truly “love” the land from having access to it. In other words, giving land back to Alaska Natives will lead to its destruction. I have heard this perspective articulated more broadly to apply to the land entitlements I mentioned in the previous question too. In other words that these land entitlement transfers are a mass give away of public lands. Do you believe that carrying out these land transfers to fulfill these land entitlements is giving away our public lands?

Please explain your views in detail about land transfer in Alaska.

RESPONSE: I appreciate the information that you provided to me on this issue. As a general matter, I support public lands being available for the public, but I respect this is a unique situation in terms of meeting the needs of Alaska Natives and an important issue for you and for the people of your state. I want you to know that I have committed to you that if I am confirmed I will follow the law, and that includes in this instance. I commit to working with you, the State of Alaska, and Alaska Natives to make progress on meeting those federal commitments that are within the Department’s authority.

Question 4: All of these land transfers to fulfill these land entitlements including the allotments to Native Vietnam Veterans were put on hold by the Biden administration when it pulled back the Trump administration’s decision to partially revoke 11 PLOs, as recommended in the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan. In total, this would make nearly 10 million acres of land available for selection by the State, ANCs, and Alaska Native Vietnam veterans.

- Do you agree that PLOs that are no longer needed to fulfill their original purpose, should be revoked?
- If confirmed, will you uphold the Trump administration’s order to partially revoke these 11 PLOs?
- Will the lands affected by the delay of these PLOs be available for application and selection by Alaska Native veterans prior to their effective date?

RESPONSE: I appreciate the information that you provided to me on this issue. While I am not yet at the Department and do not know all of the facts related to this matter, I understand and appreciate that this is an important issue for you and for the affected people of your state and I commit that if I am confirmed I will learn more about it and that I will do what the law requires.

When it comes to these PLOs I look forward to learning more about the Resource Management Plan in question and the recent actions by the Department, including your question about the selection by Alaska

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Native veterans prior to the effective date. I would like to learn more from you, Alaska stakeholders, and the Department key staff before making any decisions on this matter.

Question 5: As you are of course well aware, an important duty of the Secretary is to oversee numerous programs for the indigenous population of the United States, including Native Americans and Alaska Natives. As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I look forward to a constructive relationship with the Secretary and the Department of the Interior. Through my role as Ranking Member of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I work closely with the Department to ensure it has the budget necessary to function. Will you commit to appearing before and being responsive to these committees when requested of you and the Department?

RESPONSE: Yes, I will.

Question 6: Another decision that targeted Alaska on President Biden's first day was a pause on all federal activities in the 1002 Area. I was proud to champion the authorization of responsible development in 2017 and excited to see the completion of the first congressionally mandated lease sale earlier this year. In our conversation previously, you committed to following the law if confirmed as Secretary? Will you commit to complying with the statutory mandate to manage an oil and gas program on the Coastal Plain and to conduct another lease sale by the end of 2024, in accordance with all relevant environmental regulations and laws?

RESPONSE: I know this matter is important to you and there are strong feelings on the issue. The President has issued an executive order pausing any federal oil and gas activity in the Refuge. As you know, the President's general policy position on oil and gas development in the Refuge is clear. If confirmed, I will always seek input from all sides and follow the law. As Secretary, I will get a full briefing on the legal status going forward, and commit to open communication with you and being responsive to your requests for engagement

Question 7: Traditionally, the Secretary of the Interior has had a designated senior advisor to advise them on Alaska, given the massive scope of DOI-jurisdictional issues in our home state. This advisor is supposed to provide fair and factual guidance to inform the Secretary's decisions pertaining to Alaska.

- What qualities or background – if any – do you believe someone who would advise you on these issues should possess?
- If confirmed, will you commit to working with me in selecting the individual who will assume that role?

RESPONSE: I am aware of this practice in past administrations and agree that it makes a lot of sense to continue. If I am confirmed and am able to choose a senior advisor, I would want someone who possesses a strong knowledge of the many Department issues involving Alaska and who works in a collaborative fashion with Alaska stakeholders. I would always welcome your thoughts and advice on issues related to your state.

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Question 8: I was proud to work with Senator Sullivan and Congressman Young to include section 1119 in my Dingell Act back in 2019. That section created a program to correct an issue whereby Alaska Natives who served during the Vietnam War were unable to apply for allotments, which they were previously eligible for under now-expired statutes. As a result, roughly 450,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land has been made available for the remaining eligible allottees. The downside is that this land is overwhelmingly difficult to access, because it can only be reached by boat or plane. This is particularly difficult for aging veterans who face physical difficulties reaching the land, or those who are financially unable to do so. Per a mandate in the Dingell Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released a study identifying and recommending that over three million additional acres within the National Wildlife Refuge System be made available for selection. This land is closer to population centers like Bethel and significantly easier to access for these veterans.

- Do you agree with that recommendation? If confirmed, can you commit to supporting that position?
- In general, do you recognize the importance of this program and of resolving this long-standing inequity for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans? Will you commit to implementing the program fully, and to making the conveyance of allotments a priority if you are confirmed?

RESPONSE: **As the daughter of two veterans, including a combat decorated Marine who is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, I recognize the importance of supporting our military veterans. I look forward to learning more about the history of the Alaska Native veteran land allotment process and the issue that the provision in the Dingell was intended to address. I understand this issue is important to you and if confirmed, I commit to reviewing the FWS study that you reference, and to ensuring the Department and its bureaus work to comply with the law without undue delay.**

Question 9: Alaska faces numerous geological, seismological, and related natural hazards including volcanoes, earthquakes, landslides, and tsunamis. Recently, Alaskans have experienced the awful impacts of these disasters, including a landslide in the town of Haines in Southeast Alaska, which tragically claimed the lives of two young Alaskans. Over a dozen families remain homeless.

Additionally, in November 2018, Alaskans experienced a magnitude 7.1 earthquake which damaged buildings, homes, roads, and infrastructure throughout Southcentral Alaska. For many, this brought to mind images and experiences of the catastrophic magnitude 9.2 earthquake, the second most powerful in recorded history, which struck Alaska on Good Friday in 1964. Alaskans have also received several alerts from the tsunami warning system; media reports have indicated that warnings were sent erroneously to people not within the geographic area at risk, or not sent to people within the area. It is imperative that these warning systems function to the highest degree of accuracy possible, as they have and will save lives.

- How do you view the Department's role in disaster response?

RESPONSE: **The landslide in Haines was a heartbreaking tragedy and if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that the Department is an active and effective partner in natural disaster prevention, warning and recovery in Alaska and throughout the Nation.**

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It is my understanding that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is responsible for the National Landslide Hazards Program, the primary objective of which is to reduce long-term losses from landslide hazards by improving our understanding of the causes of ground failure and suggesting mitigation strategies. The USGS also monitors and reports on earthquakes, assesses earthquake impacts and hazards, and conducts targeted research on the causes and effects of earthquakes as part of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, a four-agency partnership established by Congress.

I also understand that the Department's role in disaster response is multifaceted and includes protecting employees and visitors from impacts of disasters on lands managed by the Department, supporting national responses to wildfires, hurricanes, oil spills and other natural disasters, and providing technical expertise to support states, Tribal Nations and territories to understand, prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.

I support these roles and am committed to working with you to ensure that these programs are effective and have the funding that they need.

Question 10: In the past, the U.S. Geological Survey has had difficulties working with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on deploying monitors for volcanoes, earthquakes, landslides, and lahars. The Trump administration worked hard to facilitate agreements between the three departments to work on monitoring, but more coordination is needed.

- If confirmed, can you commit to working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Commerce Department on this issue?

RESPONSE: Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues across the Cabinet to enable a whole-of-government approach to this issue.

- What work do you believe, if any, needs to be done to improve coordination between the Department of the Interior and other federal partners that oversee disaster response in the wake of disasters?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the Department's staff on this issue. Generally, if previous coordination has not been effective enough, it may be that established processes need to be created and senior leadership needs to send the message to make such coordination a priority.

- The previous administration revived Village Fire Crews, which tap into local and rural talent to respond to wildfires. If confirmed, can you commit to increasing this program?

RESPONSE: I am very interested in learning more about this issue and working with you to build on past success on fighting wildfires in Alaska. Local people know their land best and providing employment in rural areas can provide great benefits, especially at a time of natural disaster. If confirmed, I look forward to being more fully informed by the Department's staff on the recent administration's effort on Village Fire Crews and to working with Congress.

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Question 11: Critical minerals are one of the greatest challenges facing American supply chains today. This is a series of 35 elements identified by the U.S. Geological Survey in 2018, which are necessary for the production of high-technology devices across the spectrum. Notably, these minerals are necessary for green energy technologies, such as electric vehicles, solar panels, and more. These elements are also utilized in defense technologies and medical devices integral to combatting COVID-19, and Chinese dominance over their supply chains leaves us vulnerable to supply manipulation and competitive disadvantage. According to the most recent figures, the United States imports more than 50 percent of its supply of 31 of these minerals, and is wholly reliant on imports to satisfy demand for 14 of them. Do you believe that the lack of domestic production of critical minerals represents an economic and national security threat to the United States?

- If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the responsible development of these supply chains, including traditional, primary production, where available in the United States?
- Will you support the continued work of the USGS in preparing and updating lists of critical minerals?
- If confirmed, would you support domestic mining activities that are integral to developing and building clean energy infrastructure?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed I look forward to working with other agencies on how critical minerals and supply chains impact our economic and national security.**

As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. And our grandchildren should be able to rely on what they get from the Earth as much as we do. America's public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed I will work with other agencies on responsible development of critical minerals.

I will support the continued work of the USGS when it comes to objective and scientific information about mineral resources to inform policymakers.

If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands and waters. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 12: The Denali Park Road in Denali National Park and Preserve is the sole means of access for motor vehicles going into and out of the park. For most of the year, vehicles are restricted to authorized tour buses and official vehicles. It remains the most convenient and accessible way for tourists to experience the grandeur of one of the crown jewels of the National Park System. In particular, the area of the road known as Polychrome Pass, running alongside a sheer cliff face, is under imminent and near constant threat from collapse and landslides, and is only kept open through temporary fixes. In tandem with these maintenance issues, and the COVID-19 threat, delays in park opening and related falls in visitation have caused an incredible collapse in tourism revenue for the Park and surrounding communities. If confirmed, can you commit to prioritizing funding and resources to fix the segment at Polychrome Pass so that it is fully repaired in the next two years?

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RESPONSE: I understand that this is an important issue for visitors to Denali National Park and if the road were to fail it would have a significant impact on tourism for the surrounding community. If confirmed, I commit to working with you to address this issue to avoid a failure of the road, public safety risks, and an economic hit to families in the area. As I am not yet in the Department, I am not involved in the budget planning for Fiscal Year 2022 but effective implementation of funding for the public lands maintenance backlog is going to be a high priority for me.

Question 13: The Ambler Mining District in northwest Alaska is a resource-rich area with potential for significant development. Resources identified include deposits of copper, silver, zinc, and gold, as well as the one of the world's largest copper-zinc deposits. The Ambler Mining District was recognized by the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), passed into law in 1980, which mandated the Secretary of the Interior to permit "access for surface transportation purposes across the Western (Kobuk River) unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve (from the Ambler Mining District to the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road)." BLM issued an affirmative Record of Decision on July 23, 2020, for a 211-mile road in accordance with ANILCA. On January 11, 2021, Ambler road ownership signed 50-year rights-of-way agreements with BLM and the National Park Service. This will allow for potential development within the Ambler Mining District. Will you commit to upholding the statutory mandate under ANILCA? Will you direct DOI bureaus to cooperate with the developers of Ambler road?

RESPONSE: I understand that this project is important to economic activity in your state. If confirmed you have my commitment that the Department will comply with the law, and to work with you to ensure this issue is addressed. I look forward to learning more about this provision of ANILCA and the status of this road project and future Department actions and decisions.

Question 14: Beginning in World War II, the U.S. Navy, and later the USGS, initiated efforts to explore for oil and natural gas on the North Slope of Alaska, largely in the 23.7-million acre area now designated as the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). Some 136 core tests and wells were drilled between 1944 and 1982. Many of these wells and drilled cores were abandoned hastily, prior to significant protections such as the National Environmental Policy Act, leading to issues with proper remediation and land contamination surrounding these wells.

- Will you commit to prioritizing legacy well cleanup in the Department's budget proposals?
- Will you commit to diligent oversight of these cleanup activities?

RESPONSE: Yes, cleanup of nonoperational oil and gas wells will be a priority of mine at the Department. The Biden Administration is committed to this work as a way of supporting jobs and protecting the environment. If confirmed, you have my commitment to work together on this issue and oversight of these projects to ensure they are conducted properly.

Question 15: The COVID-19 pandemic is posing an unprecedented challenge to Alaska's tourism industry, including National Park visitation. We've already lost one tourism season, and with Canada announcing a large ship ban until February 2022, we are going to lose another. Some Parks have had to close entirely, but the Park

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Service has worked to keep others, including Denali National Park, open on a limited basis. This has salvaged some seasonal jobs and access to recreation for Alaskans, but the situation is putting tremendous economic pressure on the concessionaries who manage, maintain, and invest in these critical facilities. Concessionaries have formally requested fee and contract relief not unlike what the Park Service has provided in the past for disruptions like wildfires, hurricanes, and government shutdowns. If confirmed, will you work with the Park Service to respond to these applications quickly and provide relief consistent with past practice?

RESPONSE: The impacts of the pandemic are significant across the nation, and my heart goes out to those impacted, including business operators who have been impacted. Tourism is a significant part of New Mexico's economy and I am familiar with the pain this is causing in my home state as well. If confirmed, I commit to learning more from the National Park Service to understand the issues facing operators in our National Parks and the relief efforts for concessionaires to date. Going forward as Secretary, I would work with the Park Service to respond to applications and provide relief, consistent with applicable law and available funds, in a timely and fair manner.

Question 16: There is an ongoing dispute between the Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation (UIC) and the Bureau of Land Management over 936 acres of land that UIC is owed. Over the past two years, UIC has been working with BLM and the U.S. Navy to resolve this outstanding issue, but so far agreement has not been reached. If confirmed, can you commit to having DOI staff engage with stakeholders, including UIC, the Navy, and the Alaska delegation to quickly resolve this issue?

RESPONSE: Yes. You have my commitment if confirmed to look into this matter, to seek a resolution of the dispute, and to ensure the Department complies with the law.

Question 17: A provision in the 2019 Dingell Act required the Bureau of Land Management to work with Chugach Alaska Corporation (CAC) and the Forest Service to conduct a study of CAC's split estate in the Chugach National Forest and to make recommendations on land exchanges that could resolve the split estate. My understanding is that BLM has almost completed the report and that it should be released soon. If confirmed, can you commit to quickly releasing the report?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I commit to ensuring that BLM works cooperatively on this matter, that the BLM complies with the law, and releases this report as soon as it is ready and appropriate to do so consistent with the Department's processes for such reports.

Question 18: Since the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) became law last year, my office has worked with stakeholders in Alaska to build a cohesive strategy on how to leverage this new funding for the stateside portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Unfortunately, the State's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan will lapse in 2021, and, if it is not renewed, Alaska will not receive any stateside funding. The State's grant administrator also retired last year, meaning no one was in place to oversee LWCF grants and funding. Alaska and several other states have proposed amendments to the GAOA that would allow LWCF funds to assist with administrative expenses (such as a grant coordinator) as well as using LWCF funds for deferred maintenance projects on state land. Do you support the nature of these proposals, to fund administrative and state deferred maintenance costs?

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In the Dingell Act, Congress required that at least 40 percent of LWCF funds be allocated to the stateside portion and at least 40 percent of funds be allocated for federal purposes.

- What do you view as a “federal purpose”?
- What do you believe is an appropriate use of funds for “other purposes”?
- If confirmed, how will you propose to set the allocations between state, federal, and other purposes?
- Where and how should Interior prioritize federal land acquisition?

RESPONSE: I support the Great American Outdoors Act and, if confirmed, will work to ensure that the law is implemented as intended by Congress. I would need to consult with Department attorneys before deciding on any definitions on these specific questions. If confirmed, I commit to working with Interior staff on the implementation issues for the Land and Water Conservation Fund that you have raised, and to consult with you and other stakeholders to ensure that the Act works as intended. I understand your support for the stateside portion of LWCF and concern about implementation issues in Alaska. As Secretary, I would work with you to help your state successfully benefit from the GAOA. In terms of proposing the allocations, I am not currently in the Department so am not involved in the budget preparations for Fiscal Year 2022, but I will carefully consider this issue and listen to Congress and stakeholders.

Question 19: How will the Department allocate sufficient resources and implement the statutory delegation of authority contained in Title V of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to ensure that the Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council, a tribally-chartered Alaska Native Organization, is authorized and supported in its administration and enforcement of a local co-management program for polar bears?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the appropriate staff in the Department and stakeholders on this issue and I will respect and follow the law on this topic. I respect that this is an example of the unique management issues the Department is involved in with regards to Alaska. I will support adequate resources for all of agency functions, consistent with budgetary constraints and the resources provided by Congress.

Question 20: How will the Department invite the participation of tribes, tribal organizations, and their members in the cooperative or co-management of natural resources currently managed by the Federal government, but which hold significant economic, nutritional, and spiritual importance to tribes, tribal organizations, and their members?

RESPONSE: I am committed to robust tribal engagement and tribal consultation when the Department is making decisions that affect them, so that our actions are inclusive of Tribal Nations’ priorities and recommendations. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Biden’s memorandum on tribal consultation. It is my understanding that the Department Manual requires consultation with Alaska Native Corporations when their interests are involved. I look forward to learning more about how

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the Department has engaged Tribal Nations and tribal organizations in cooperative management of natural resources by the federal government, and I am looking forwards to finding areas to work together to support tribal engagement in these topics and advance the Department’s mission, consistent with applicable law.

Question 21: In the last Congress, you introduced a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should establish a national goal of protecting 30 percent of all lands and waters within U.S. territory by the year 2030. The resolution states that this action was needed to address climate change. This goal has since been adopted and put forward by President Biden. As Interior Secretary, you would be responsible for implementing that order, considering the input from communities and Tribes, and determining how the United States will measure progress toward this goal.

- Can you describe the scientific justification for the 30 percent goal? Is this goal premised on research conducted by federal scientists?
- How would you define lands and waters that are in “conservation status” under this order? Would they need to have designations from Congress to be considered conserved?
- How will you treat states that already have more than 30 percent of their lands and waters in some sort of conservation status? How will you treat private and state lands?
- Can you explain to me your understanding of ANILCA’s statutory “no more” clause?
- Would Alaska be exempt from the 30X30 initiative because of ANILCA’s “no more” clause?

RESPONSE: The 30 by 30 goal has scientific justification in work by scientists around the world. The President’s Executive Order includes direction to the Interior Department to propose how to best honor the myriad approaches to conservation of lands and waters. As I said at the hearing, the President’s 30 by 30 plan is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations. I also know that it is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can’t be a top-down approach but must be locally engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, tribal nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers.

Some states like Alaska have significant amount of land in conservation status while others do not and if confirmed I believe that 30 by 30 will recognize that fact. I look forward to increasing my understanding of the history and effect of ANILCA’s provisions, and when it comes to any actions under the 30 by 30 initiative the Department will follow the law.

Question 22: The President issued a document in his first week in office announcing “agency actions that heads of the relevant agencies will review in accordance with the Executive Order: ‘Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis.’” This list included the “Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision for the Proposed Willow Master Development Plan Project, Alaska,” 85 Fed. Reg. 69351 (November 2, 2020). This project is incredibly important for the State of the Alaska and the

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Alaska Native people that will benefit from infrastructure development and revenues from this project. The project is estimated to contain 450 to 800 million barrels of recoverable oil. It will provide over 2,000 construction jobs and hundreds of long-term jobs. Revenues to the State of Alaska from the project will raise about \$2.3 billion and there will be an additional \$7.6 billion in federal revenues. Under the Impact Mitigation Plan for the project, \$2.6 billion in funds will be provided to North Slope communities, which are largely populated by Alaska Natives; \$1.2 billion in revenues will go to the North Slope Borough. These revenues and impact mitigation funds provide critical public services, schools, emergency response, health clinics, drinking water, wastewater, roads, power, and solid waste infrastructure and assistance. The leases for this project were signed under the Clinton administration and the project was developed under the Integrated Activity Plan for the NPR-A from 2013 under the Obama administration. The project is currently in litigation, impacting this season's construction and the long term permitting and development of the project in the future.

- Will you commit to defending the robust environmental impact statement and record of decision for the project during the existing litigation and future litigation on the plan and project?
- Will you follow your stated commitment to follow the law and provide objective permitting for all future permit applications on the project?
- On your congressional website you “pledge to vote against all new fossil fuel infrastructure.” The Willow project was leased by the Clinton administration and the project was pursued under the Obama administration's management plan. Thus, the Willow project is not a new plan or commitment of infrastructure. Do you support the Clinton and Obama administration's actions to lease and issue development planning programs consistent with federal statute to responsibly develop these lands? Do you commit to following the Clinton and Obama administration's example to review and allow development consistent to the leasing program for the NPR-A mandated by federal law?

RESPONSE: As I stated at the hearing, I know that President Biden does not want to cripple any state. His Executive Order has directed a review of that regulatory action from November 2, 2020, as you note in your question. As a nominee who is not yet within the Department, I cannot prejudge the outcome of that review. I can commit to following the law and overseeing an objective permitting process for all projects in all states.

When it comes to my statements and actions as a Member of Congress, I am aware that being a cabinet Secretary is a different job and I take that seriously. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, I will be responsible to all Americans; I will no longer represent the interests of constituents in a single congressional district. I want you to know that if I am confirmed I want to work with you, and I will rely heavily on our relationship moving forward. I want to make sure that I understand the unique issues in Alaska, and to make sure that we are doing all we can to ensure that your constituents have the opportunities that they need. Although it is beyond my current capability as a nominee to make commitments or representations about pending litigation, I want to assure you of my commitment to follow the law if confirmed as Secretary.

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Question 23: As you know, during the challenging economic conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic has created, it is more important than ever to make sure we are creating and maintaining stable, high-paying jobs. In my state, 24 percent of all jobs and 27 percent of all wages are tied either directly or indirectly to the oil and gas industry. I worry that the unilateral actions this administration have already taken, resulting in the loss of 11,000 jobs in the case of the Keystone Pipeline project, and hundreds of job losses in Alaska already. You supported legislation and letters in the past that single out Alaska in banning oil and gas exploration and development in the 1002 Area and NPR-A. The law explicitly states that the federal government must conduct lease sales for development in the 1002 Area and the NPR-A. The enabling act for the NPR-A directly states that “The Secretary shall conduct an expeditious program of competitive leasing of oil and gas in the Reserve in accordance with this Act” (42 U.S.C § 6506a). The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act mandates at least two area-wide lease sales in the Coastal Plain within 10 years. An initial lease sale is required within four years, by 2021, of the law’s enactment, and a second lease sale is required within seven years, by 2024, of enactment. Each lease sale must offer at least 400,000 acres and must include those areas with the highest potential for discovery of hydrocarbons. The recent executive actions by the President indicate to me that the President intends to indefinitely delay these lease sales and development, which I do not think is legal.

- Do you agree that the federal government has a legal obligation under the plain language of these statutes to continue leasing and development?
- Given your past statements and sponsored legislation, will you recuse yourself from decision making on the oil and gas leasing and development in the 1002 Area and the NPR-A?

RESPONSE: As I mentioned during the hearing, I recognize that the role of a cabinet secretary is far different from that of a member of Congress representing one congressional district, and I take that fact seriously. If confirmed I will need to consider interests across the broad geographic spectrum of lands and resources the Department of the Interior manages. This will require adopting a different perspective, and you have my commitment to consider state and local views.

I know Arctic Refuge leasing means a lot to you and there are strong feelings on the issue. The President has issued an executive order pausing any oil and gas activity in the Refuge. If confirmed, I will get a full briefing on the legal status of this matter.

With respect to energy development in the NPR-A, I understand that the President’s recent executive order paused new leasing while the Administration reviews the leasing program, but that oil and gas development can continue under existing leases as these are valid existing rights.

If confirmed, I commit to consult with career ethics officials and to seek advice on whether particular matters require my recusal.

Question 24: Last year, a group of several tribes filed suit against the Department of the Treasury arguing Alaska Native Corporations (ANC) do not meet the legal definition of a tribe under the CARES Act and as such are not eligible for CARES Act funds allocated to tribes, despite the fact that Congress used a definition of tribe that clearly includes Alaska Native Corporations. In May, the United States District Court for the District of

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Columbia issued a preliminary injunction to stop the transfer of funds to the ANCs during the trial and to continue to administer funding directly to tribal governments. The Treasury, however, refused, claiming that the court “has not yet arrived at a determination.” In June, when funds had still not been distributed, the District Court issued another order to send the remaining \$679 million being withheld to tribes. You spoke out in support to the district court decision, tweeting “Tribes needed these funds right away, but the Trump Administration put corporations first & delayed the process,” referring to Alaska Native Corporations. Senator Schumer also attacked former Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney saying “Pres. Trump’s @ASIndianAffairs Tara Sweeney is diverting funds for tribal governments during coronavirus to for-profit Alaska Native Corporations. We can’t put these corporations before tribal governments & people. Sweeney used to be an exec for an ANC, and she wants to profit!” In May 2020, you led a letter with Chairman Grijalva to the DOI Inspector General (IG) requesting an investigation of then Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney. The letter asked the IG to investigate “whether Sweeney violated ethics rules, regulations, laws, or pledges as part of her involvement in the administration of \$8 billion in relief funding for tribal governments under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.” You also said of ANCs, “Unlike federally recognized tribal governments, ANCs do not have sovereign status, nor do they maintain a formal relationship with the federal government. They are for-profit companies that, in most cases, have continued to generate revenue during the pandemic.” The Treasury Department and the Alaska Native Corporations have appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court. Cert was granted and the case is pending.

- Given your past statements against Alaska Native people, in particular ANCs, which were created by Congress for the benefit of the Alaska Native people under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), will you recuse yourself from any involvement on the current Chehalis lawsuit before the Supreme Court?

RESPONSE: President Biden has asked all who serve in his administration to conduct themselves with the highest ethical standards. The Department has an Ethics Office which is there for employees to seek advice and guidance on ethics issues. If confirmed, I commit to consult with career ethics officials and to seek advice on whether particular matters require my recusal.

- I was truly shocked by your hostility towards Tara Sweeney, the first Alaska Native Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and your comments on Alaska Native Corporations. Do you stand by these criticisms of ANCs and former Assistant Secretary Sweeney?

RESPONSE: I do not carry any hostility to Ms. Sweeney and I respect her public service. I was acting in my capacity as a member of Congress, hearing from many of my constituents and tribal leaders who had serious concerns about this issue at a difficult time for many in Indian Country.

I know that Alaska is a unique situation with the Alaska Native Corporations, and I take seriously my commitment to you to better understand their history and range of purposes. I understand that ANCs provide services, health services, social services, to the Alaska Native people. I also understand, as I stated at my hearing, that ANCs are not like other corporations when we think of corporations. If confirmed, I look forward to working for Native communities in Alaska, including ANCs, Hawaii, and the lower 48 states.

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With regard to the Committee request into the decision-making by then Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney, my committee chairman and all subcommittee chairs asked for a review as part of our congressional oversight duties. Going forward, I want to seek solutions in the future that work for Tribal Nations and Alaska Natives, including ANCs.

What is your familiarity with ANCSA? Do you understand what Alaska Native Regional and Village Corporations are? How has your experience as a tribal member shaped your views on how for profit or corporate actions can provide support for tribes and Native Americans from healthcare and other social services to infrastructure? Haaland?

RESPONSE: I know that Alaska is a unique situation with the Alaska Native Corporations. I also understand that ANCs provide services, health services, social services, to the Alaska Native people. I also understand, as I stated at my hearing, that ANCs are not like other corporations when we think of corporations. If confirmed, I commit to learning more with your help to make sure that the Alaska Native people get the services that they need, whether through the Alaska Native Corporations or any other organizations.

Question 25: During your hearing, you stated multiple times that if confirmed, you would work and coordinate with me and my colleagues on the Committee. Please describe how you plan to work and coordinate with me.

RESPONSE: First, given the large role that the Department plays in Alaska and your senior role on three Senate Committees with oversight over the Department, it would be a priority of mine to speak with you regularly and communicate often.

While we will not always agree on the administration's policy, I want to be clear and open with you, and by communicating regularly I would hope that we and our respective leadership teams could identify areas of cooperation. I respect your reputation as someone who is thoughtful and civil and has a tremendous amount of experience working productively with administrations of both parties, and I will seek to do the same as I have done during my time in Congress.

If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the Department and its staff are responsive to you and that we provide information and notice about significant actions that the Department is taking that are important in Alaska. I would love an opportunity to visit parts of Alaska with you in order to get to know you and the people of Alaska better.

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Questions from Senator John Hoeven

Question 1: The Biden administration's early executive actions, including the Department of the Interior's 60-day moratorium, prevents the construction of the infrastructure needed to capture natural gas and prevent flaring. Our gas capture rate is 94 percent in North Dakota; however, it drops to 91 percent on Fort Berthold due to a lack of gathering infrastructure. Do you agree that we should reduce flaring, and if so, will you commit to supporting necessary infrastructure projects, like gas gathering pipelines, needed to capture natural gas and prevent flaring?

RESPONSE: **The Biden Administration wants to reduce methane emissions and flaring, and gathering lines are a part of the solution to these problems. Gathering lines can reduce the amount of methane that is released into the atmosphere. Less methane pollution is better for taxpayers, clean air, and our climate.**

Question 2: I've been working on mineral spacing reform legislation to ensure that states and local governments remain the lead permitting authority for oil and gas wells where the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has only a minority share in the subsurface mineral rights and no surface rights. My bill would remove duplicative permitting requirements and free up resources at the BLM, preventing unnecessary delays that we have seen in in high production areas, like North Dakota.

Will you work with us to remove duplicative permitting requirements where less than 50 percent of the minerals are owned or held in trust by the federal government, and the federal government owns no surface area?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed I would be glad to review your legislation and to continue the conversation with you and your office.**

Question 3: There are five tribes located at least partially within North Dakota. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I held a field hearing in North Dakota where we discussed best practices for public safety, drug enforcement, and ensuring the security of tribal members and their families.

We made important progress on tribal safety issues in the last Congress, from securing \$5 million over the last two years to fund specialized law enforcement trainings and help set up a new BIA law enforcement training center at Camp Grafton, North Dakota, to the enactment of Savanna's Act.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) law enforcement officer shortage continues to create substantial challenges for tribes in the Great Plains, who have the largest officer turnover and vacancy rate in the country.

If confirmed, how will the Department of Interior address the ongoing BIA law enforcement officer shortage?

RESPONSE: **If confirmed, ensuring adequate BIA staffing would be a high priority of mine and I would commit to the efficient and effective recruitment of qualified people.**

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Question 4: What do you see as the best course of action to address missing and murdered indigenous women and children?

RESPONSE: With respect to the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, I am grateful for the bipartisan work of Members of the House and Senate who have helped make progress to protect Indigenous women. To break the cycle of victimization and promote accountability, I support effective federal agency partnering with tribal leaders and tribal women's advocates. Tracking data and information sharing is necessary for effective law enforcement and social services action. The attention and effective action these partnerships bring can ensure tribal lands are safe and focus on ending violence against Native women and children, and ending the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I am confident that this Administration will take a comprehensive approach and ensure Native people are at the table, listened to, and part of the solution to this tragic crisis.

Question 5: How do you believe the Department of Interior should assist tribes in addressing substance abuse and mental health challenges prevalent on our reservations?

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that the Biden Administration will renew that commitment to healing and supportive services in Native communities by increasing the availability of addiction treatment, mental health and trauma recovery services, building on the Obama-Biden Administration's support for the Adult Tribal Healing to Wellness Programs and Juvenile Treatment Drug Court.

Question 6: Theodore Roosevelt National Park is North Dakota's #1 tourist attraction, and plans are underway to construct the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library on land adjacent to the Park. It's important that the infrastructure in the adjacent park be able to provide a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. If confirmed, will you work with me to coordinate efforts between the National Park Service and the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library so that we enhance the visitor experience?

RESPONSE: While I am not yet familiar with this proposal, I support opportunities for collaboration with the National Park Service when they are in the best interest of the NPS unit. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the opportunities for partnership between the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and the national park.

Question 7: The Great American Outdoors Act includes \$1.9 billion annually for the next 5 years to address deferred maintenance on our public lands. One such deferred maintenance project is the ongoing road repair of the Scenic Loop Drive in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. This road is critical to the mission of the park, and as such we worked to secure funding for this project in the Great American Outdoors Act's Fiscal Year 2021 priority funding list. If confirmed, will you work with my staff and I to keep us updated on NPS' progress on the project?

RESPONSE: I support the Great American Outdoors Act and, if confirmed, will work to ensure that the law is implemented as intended by Congress. If confirmed, I will also work with Interior staff to ensure that you and your staff are kept appropriately updated on its progress.

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Question 8: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has a large footprint in North Dakota through many National Wildlife Refuges and perpetual conservation easements. Landowners and farmers have continually expressed frustration with the Fish and Wildlife Service's enforcement of these easements. In some cases farmers and landowners have been taken to court and faced bankruptcy over supposed infractions.

Along with Senator Cramer, I worked with the FWS to modernize the enforcement of these easements by updating the landowner's maps, establishing clear setbacks for subsurface water management, and creating the first-ever appeals process at the Department of the Interior to create an administrative record and incentivize cooperation.

What are your general thoughts on FWS conservation easements, and do you see efforts to modernize regulations as a positive development?

RESPONSE: Conservation easements are voluntary conservation programs that help promote healthy habitats on privately owned lands. They provide cost-effective habitat conservation through the purchase of limited interests in private land from willing sellers. I know that this is particularly important in your state. If confirmed I will work to learn more about this issue and to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife. I am not yet familiar with this process that you have worked on, but I respect your engagement and will seek to foster further cooperation on this matter where possible.

Question 9: Do you believe the current Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) appeals process should be continued, and do you believe FWS enforcement is limited to the acreage the agency purchased when the easement was signed?

RESPONSE: I believe that conservation easements are an important part of habitat conservation. If confirmed, I will seek a collaborative approach to ensure good environmental stewardship. I will listen to all stakeholders and look forward to learning more about the issues raised in this question.

Question 10: If confirmed, will you work with me to help address additional landowner concerns pertaining to Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) easements?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will work hard to create a culture of collaboration across the Department, and to ensure that local landowner and stakeholders concerns are heard. I will work hard to strike the right balance on public land management issues.

Question 11: We must make sure that local landowners continue to have a say in Federal land acquired through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). I was disappointed to see the Biden administration's efforts to remove state and local oversight of land acquisitions within their borders, and have concerns that this policy change will lead to the federal government acquiring land and water resources without adequate local consultation. If confirmed, how will you ensure that communities who are most impacted by federal land acquisition have a voice in the process?

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RESPONSE: The Land and Water Conservation Fund is an important conservation tool, including for increasing access for hunters and anglers, and I am excited about the funds that Congress has provided for this program. I believe that local stakeholder collaboration is the best approach for conservation. If confirmed, I will make sure the Department will listen to local stakeholders, including you and your state's leadership, about specific project proposals.

Question 12: The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) provides extreme weather resilience and would help protect North Dakota communities from the devastating effects of drought. The estimated financial impact of a drought similar to the one North Dakota experienced in the 1930s is \$27 billion over a 10-year period. Surface water supplies in central North Dakota and the Red River Valley are limited and are threatened by drought, creating reliability concerns. The supplemental RRVWSP to central and eastern North Dakota during times of water scarcity will protect public health, help the economy, and provide for environmental benefits in the river systems. In December 2020, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) released its Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply Project (ENDAWS) and signed a Record of Decision in January, advancing an important alternate water supply for the RRVWSP.

Will you support BOR's important work to bring the extreme weather resilient RRVWSP, in particular the ENDAWS alternate water supply, online?

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that BOR has been working to advance this important project. If confirmed, I would look forward to ensuring that BOR was working with the State of North Dakota and the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District on the next steps in the project to help the State meet its goals related to resilient water supplies, including managing and developing water resources in an environmentally sound manner.

Question 13: As part of the administration's infrastructure goals and related infrastructure investments, will you support maintenance and repair of existing Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) infrastructure?

RESPONSE: Maintaining and addressing aging infrastructure across bureaus is a top priority for the Department right now and is important to BOR's mission. The bureau's asset management program assesses the condition of its infrastructure and plans for and addresses maintenance needs to ensure the reliability of its water and power resources. I also understand that, where appropriate, BOR is also looking for opportunities where repairs can be used to improve and modernize infrastructure. I look forward to working with Congress on infrastructure funding issues within BOR and the Department.

Question 14: Garrison Diversion is negotiating a repayment contract rate for the Garrison Diversion Unit, which is well understood to be a system with different priorities than were originally intended. Do you support negotiating a reduced, affordable repayment rate for stakeholders in order to put this underused infrastructure to positive, profitable use for the federal government and the taxpayer?

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RESPONSE: If confirmed I would look forward to learning more about this matter and to consulting with subject matter experts in the Bureau of Reclamation to determine if we can find a productive path forward that is in the public interest.

Question 15: Like New Mexico, upon statehood, North Dakota was granted school trust lands scattered across our state designed to fund education and other vital functions of state government. The creation of several Tribal Reservations within the State subsequent to statehood and the creation by Congress of the Little Missouri National Grassland resulted in the capture of approximately 31,583 acres of surface lands and 192,610 acres of minerals lying within the Reservations and another 108,840 acres of surface lands and 149,073 acres of minerals lying within the National Grasslands. That is over 480,000 acres of lands that cannot be utilized for their intended purpose. I am preparing to introduce legislation that would allow our state trust lands to be traded out of the Reservations and the National Grasslands for other Federal lands or minerals within the state. The lands and minerals relinquished by the State within the Reservations would be held in trust for and on behalf of the underlying Tribes. This legislation will provide greater ownership and control of the reservations for the Tribes and help fulfill promises to our Tribal communities. Likewise, this exchange will further preserve the National Grasslands.

If confirmed, will you make this effort a priority within your Department, and will you dedicate Department level staff to help us resolve any possible concerns so that we can enact this legislation?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the Department is responsive to any Congressional requests for technical assistance or briefings on this issue. I respect that you are putting time and attention into this issue and I appreciate your engagement on behalf of your constituents. I will commit to working with you and learning more about these underlying issues and your proposed legislation.

Question 16: Last Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina Recognition Act (H.R. 1964) by voice vote. Companion legislation (S. 1368) was introduced in the Senate by Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis and was referred to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, a committee I chaired for the last four years and of which I remain a member. Do you support the goals of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina Recognition Act? Specifically, do you support extending federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina?

RESPONSE: I recognize that federal recognition is extremely important to communities seeking to establish a government-to-government relationship with the United States. The administrative federal recognition process is complex and may take many years. I am familiar with the decade's long pursuit of federal recognition by the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and supported this legislation as a Member of the House of Representatives. As I testified, I recognize that being a member of the Cabinet is a different role and one I take seriously. If confirmed I commit to carefully considering this issue in the context of the Department's federal recognition process. Additionally, I respect that Congress has the power to recognize tribes, and if confirmed, I commit to working with Congressionally recognized tribes.

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Questions from Senator James Lankford

Question 1: Access to critical and rare earth minerals is essential for expanding our use of renewable energy technologies, as you and President Biden advocate for. We must mine for many of these materials to build a sufficient supply.

For many years, the U.S. has taken a “not in my backyard” approach to mining minerals, all while increasing our usage of renewable energy and advanced technologies – this has led to the US growing ever more dependent on foreign sources for these essential materials that we need to keep our economy running. Reliance on some of these foreign sources jeopardizes our national security and may require Americans to unwittingly finance companies and nations with poor labor standards.

While there are efforts to produce these materials domestically, we need an aggressive strategy to secure our supply chains, and we need an Administration that supports the work private companies are doing to become mineral independent.

- Would you agree that our environmental standards and labor standards exceed, and in some cases far exceed, the environmental and labor standards in many countries we currently rely on for these materials?
- Do you believe our federal lands should be used to support a future in which the US generates more of its power from renewable sources?
- In your view, can we reach net-zero emissions by 2050, as President Biden has advocated for, without domestically producing more of the mineral resources needed to support renewable technologies? If so, how do you propose we acquire the needed volume of resources?
- Would you support projects developing these critical resources on federal lands?
- Do you believe the permitting process on federal lands should be efficient? If so, will you commit to working with Congress to streamline the mineral permitting process on federal lands to support the growth of renewable technologies?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I am not familiar with the environmental standards of other countries, but support strong standards to protect workers, clean air and clean water in this nation.

America’s public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations. When it comes to any resource development, I support smart planning on public lands to ensure that development occurs in the appropriate areas.

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Question 2: As you know, there is a lot of concern around the Biden Administration's leasing moratorium on federal lands and Secretarial Order 3395 suspending delegated authority for permitting actions.

- Do you believe that allowing only political appointees to approve rights-of-way, applications of permits to drill, or easements, is efficient or appropriate?
- In your view, does limiting these decisions to political appointees, rather than allowing those who have more fully reviewed and studied the prospective action, result in decisions that are based more on politics or more on facts? Please explain.

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that this order is a temporary elevation of the process for reviewing permits and other actions during the transition. It is my understanding that permits, and other matters are being reviewed and approved in a timely way by qualified senior leadership at the Department. I know there have been many questions about the process, and if I am confirmed I am committed to ensuring certainty and transparency in these processes.

Question 3: Through Secretarial Order 3395 and the Executive Order entitled "Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," the Biden Administration has demonstrated that it intends to change the landscape of energy development on federal lands. I have concerns that some of the actions being discussed would hamper our ability to stay energy independent and would only result in increased imports of oil and gas resources. Please answer yes or no to the following questions and explain.

- Would you support measures to restrict oil and gas development on federal lands, such as requiring additional review time for approvals of energy development actions?
- Would you support requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS) for every development action instead of an environmental assessment (EA), as is allowed currently in some cases?
- There are some drilling spacing units that have private land and a little bit of federal land in the same unit. Would you support requiring federal permits to drill on these tracts, even if the drilling occurred on the private portion of the tract?
- Building additional renewable energy resources will take years. Do you agree that drastically reducing our oil and gas development without other generation sources in place would result in the US importing more oil and gas from foreign nations, some of whom have environmental and human rights standards that are more lax than ours?

RESPONSE: The President's executive order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved.

There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore

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under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing.

My understanding is that permits continue to be reviewed and approved in a timely on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

I believe that any activity like oil and gas development that has the potential for significant environmental, health and safety impacts should go through the appropriate review process, consistent with applicable law.

When it comes to parcels with mixed land use or split estate, if I were confirmed, I would direct Department leadership to consult with Department legal and subject matter experts to ensure that Department is making reasoned, consistent and clear decisions on how to handle these situations. I understand that these issues are important in Oklahoma and other states and appreciate your raising it to my attention.

Question 4: Recent controversy over several pipelines would lead Americans to believe that there are hardly any operational pipelines in this country. This is far from the case as nearly 200,000 miles of petroleum pipelines and 2.4 million miles of natural gas pipelines are currently in the ground we walk on every day. They transport products that our economy depends on to keep running, and our families depend on to stay warm as we saw demonstrated so starkly last week. Many of these pipelines cross federal lands and require rights-of-way that may periodically need to be renewed. These rights-of-way are needed to ensure operators have access to perform maintenance.

- Representative Haaland, do you agree that pipeline operators should be able to access their lines in the event of any urgent or routine need?
- Do you agree that federal agencies should work to keep these rights-of-way up to date to ensure this access?
- Do you believe that pipelines that have been operational without incident, in some cases for decades, should be enabled to continue operations without the threat of being shut down?
- Do you believe that the expiration of a right-of-way represents an opportunity to re-litigate whether that pipeline should exist?
- In your understanding, does DOI have any authority to deny right-of-way renewals for existing pipelines that are compliant with all applicable laws and regulations? If so, which authorities?

RESPONSE: As I said at the hearing, I am not at the Department yet, so I cannot answer specific questions that require interpreting the Department's legal authority to regulate and review pipeline rights-of-way. I do believe that access to pipelines for urgent or routine maintenance for safety makes

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sense, consistent with applicable law. If issues with pipeline rights of way arise, I will consult with the relevant Department legal and technical experts on these issues and carefully consider any decisions that might come before the Department.

Question 5: Do you believe that “threatened” species should be afforded the same protections as “endangered” species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)? Do you believe that it is appropriate for the federal government to impose the compliance cost of “endangered” listings on small communities developing local infrastructure because a species in the region may face a threat in 50 years?

RESPONSE: I recognize that threatened and endangered species require management under the ESA. If confirmed I commit to upholding the law and following science and seeking conservation partnerships and solutions that strike the right balance. I think that we can support species recovery and rural economies at the same time.

Question 6: In the past, Interior has had trouble tracking and evaluating their programs that conserve endangered species, like conservation banks and in-lieu fee programs.

- Representative Haaland, if confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, how would you propose to better monitor the DOI’s conservation programs and ensure they have accountability measures in place and clear metrics for accomplishing their stated purpose?
- How would you ensure that project sponsors are paying for actual mitigation rather than wasting their money just to “check the box”?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I commit to being more fully informed on the issue to ensure effective management of FWS’ conservation programs. As a general matter, I agree that conservation programs should deliver habitat benefits on the ground for the benefit of species recovery.

Question 7: Do you have any expectations or preferences for potential legislation relating to the Supreme Court’s recent *McGirt v. Oklahoma* decision?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will support efforts to work cooperatively toward an agreement among all parties, including affected Tribal Nations, on how to move forward.

Question 8: Are there ways to improve how BIA law enforcement partners with tribal and state authorities and streamline the cross-deputization process?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the Department’s experts regarding this issue. I understand that this is an important issue for you and the State of Oklahoma.

Question 9: Do you support legislation in response to the 2009 Supreme Court decision *Carcieri v. Salazar*? If so, what would be your policy preference for that legislation?

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RESPONSE: President Biden has stated that he will call on Congress to enact a clean *Carciari* fix to make it easier to place land into trust. If confirmed, I will work to advance that position.

Question 10: Do you intend or expect to make any changes to the Department's rules concerning the Indian Child Welfare Act? If so, what changes would you make?

RESPONSE: President Biden has promised to fight to defend and fully implement the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA), a law that he was proud to support and that established standards for the placement of Native American children in foster and adoptive homes and sought to protect Native families and involve tribes in child welfare cases. If confirmed, I will work to support the implementation of ICWA and enforcement of its regulations. As we discussed, I understand that complex and sensitive situations can arise, and I look forward to working with you to ensure we strike the right balance between tribal interests and the best interests of children consistent with the law.

Question 11: If confirmed, will you commit to publishing a map showing generally (and without divulging confidential information or specific addresses) where and how much land is held in trust throughout the country?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will confer with my legal and policy team to understand all of the options before me and factors to consider regarding this question.

Question 12: Should land-into-trust applications be approved automatically?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will respect and follow the law regarding approval of land-into-trust applications.

Question 13: Do you support off-reservation tribal gaming?

RESPONSE: I support tribal economic development as provided in the laws covering this topic. I look forward to learning more on the specifics of this topic but my understanding is that an established legal process for considering this topic exists within the Department. I will not prejudge any specific situation that might arise in this area.

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Questions from Senator Bill Cassidy

Question 1: Section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act includes a consultation requirement with affected Governors as each leasing program is developed. You mentioned to Senator Hoeven yesterday you were concerned about tribal consultations for the Dakota Access Pipeline.

- Can you tell the committee your view of what it means when there's a consultation requirement with an affected stakeholder and what you think is necessary for the consultation to be meaningful?
- If confirmed, will you commit to complying with NEPA, to consult with the Governors of affected states, and to consult with directly impacted stakeholders – including leaseholders – before making another decision to halt or reduce lease sales?

RESPONSE: I appreciate hearing from you how important these issues are to affected States. I am aware that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act contains consultation provisions, some mandatory, for the Secretary during preparation of a proposed offshore program, and I support these public processes. However, it is different than consultation with Indian Tribes, which is a distinct process requirement set out by law and Department regulation. If I am confirmed as Secretary, I will work cooperatively with all of the Department's stakeholders and I will follow the law.

Question 2: One of the most important laws for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). That law says, it's the national policy, subject to environmental safeguards, to expeditiously and orderly develop the national resource reserve. My constituents are concerned the Administration has already begun moving away from the stated policy of this law.

- What do the words expeditiously and orderly mean to you?
- You said permitting continues even after the 60-day pause and President Biden's Executive Order, but I'm told that's not entirely true for some permits. Do you believe it would expeditious or orderly if issuance of permits were to delay resource development?

RESPONSE: I understand that 60-day time period is within the Department's Secretarial Order, not the Executive Order. Although I am not at the Department yet, it is my understanding that permits are still being processed with only one layer of additional review, which is being completed on a timely basis under the Secretarial Order.

The oil and gas industry currently has an inventory of approximately 7,700 approved permits to drill. In addition, I understand that offshore over 77% of the area under lease is currently non-producing. In light of this existing surplus inventory of permits and acres under lease, the President's pause on new leasing seems highly unlikely to impair any obligation to expeditiously and orderly develop the national resource reserve.

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When it comes to the text of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, I will consult with the Department's experts and work to fully understand the legal status of leasing plans as we move forwards with the review directed in the President's Executive Order.

Question 3: The Administration has recently been using the talking point 77 percent of the available acreage offshore is either unleased or non-producing. First, this talking point is being used to somehow suggest a lack offshore interest from industry. Second, "non-producing" does not mean inactive. Putting an offshore lease in to production takes years and requires sizable investments and regulatory compliance along the way. This talking point about unleased or non-producing areas is also designed to suggest the Administration's actions to indefinitely pause leasing is insignificant. *Importantly, the Administration's talking point also ignores the fact that companies have an obligation to develop leases or the lease is returned to the federal government. And companies are paying rental fees of varying amounts during this time so there is no incentive to just sit on a lease and do nothing with it. In other words, this "use-it-or-lose-it" argument is actually already in law.*

There is concern this Administration will find ways to halt all new leasing for the next four years. This would surely result in American job losses, a decline in American energy production, an increase and reliance on foreign energy, an increase in global greenhouse gases, an inflict significant harm on conservation programs and other federal programs funded from U.S. offshore energy.

- For the Outer Continental Shelf, do you plan to conduct remaining lease sales under the current 5-year plan through 2022 and issue a new national five-year program that meets the Outer Continental Shelf Land Act's purpose?
- What is the administration's long-term goal for offshore oil and gas exploration and production?

RESPONSE: The President's Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. As a nominee, I am not prejudging the outcome of this review, which will consider the interests of taxpayer, the need to address climate change, and other factors, including ones raised by your question. This new leasing pause doesn't affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved.

There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing. My understanding is that permits continue to be reviewed and approved in a timely on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

I understand that nonproducing does not mean inactive and agree that it means that activities can continue on these existing leases and I recognize that this can take time.

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Question 4: The Department’s recent Secretarial Order to pause certain Department activities for 60-days states “This does not impact existing operations under valid leases.” You told Senator Hyde-Smith yesterday valid existing leases would be okay.

- We’ve been told that’s not entirely true for non-producing leases where operators are seeking certain permits to conduct certain seismic activity. What assurances and clarity can you provide to those operators with leases either still being developed or now producing?

RESPONSE: I am not currently in the Department so cannot speak with personal knowledge of the implementation of this Secretarial Order but as I testified at the hearing, it is my understanding that permits are still being reviewed and approved, with an additional last level of review taking place in a timely way.

Question 5: In this most of unusual times, we are working to bring all of our government’s resources to bear in support of our nation’s economic recovery. The Department of the Interior, in coordination with the Department of the Treasury, oversees a longstanding and successful economic development incentive that has promoted private investment, created jobs, and revitalized neighborhoods.

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, administered by the National Park Service, has leveraged over \$102 billion in private investment toward the reuse of more than 45,000 nationally significant historic buildings. The most recent National Park Service report on Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings notes the HTC has helped rehabilitate or create more than 172,000 units of low-and moderate-income housing over the life of the program. In times of crisis, Congress has increased this incentive to spur economic recovery after natural disasters.

- As Secretary of the Interior, what will you do to ensure the tools at your disposal that support community revitalization and recovery, like the historic tax credit, are fully brought to bear in support of our nation’s economic recovery?

RESPONSE: President Biden is committed to supporting our nation’s economic recovery. Although I do not know all the details of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program, if confirmed, I will work within the Administration to do all I can to support our economic recovery.

Question 6: As Interior Secretary, you would oversee a department with decision-making authority over public lands and waters that significantly contribute to the U.S. economy and meet critical needs of the American people.

- Do you believe that potential conflicts between ocean users can be managed and addressed through a multi-use management approach under existing laws?

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RESPONSE: I believe that we can work together to strike the right balance between multi-use management and the appropriate conservation to ensure that ocean resources are available for future generations in abundant ways.

- Do you believe that there any uses that are simply not suitable for US waters, and if so which ones and why?

RESPONSE: I am not aware of every potential use but I will closely consult with the Department's ocean experts, scientists, and a wide variety of stakeholders.

- Would you agree that any effort to overhaul how ocean uses and resources are managed should be carried out by Congress, not the Executive Branch?

RESPONSE: I am committed to following the law and understanding the authorities provided to the Department for managing ocean resources.

- If confirmed, how would you ensure that decisions at the Department do not stand in the way of access to the clean American conventional and renewable energy that is necessary for our country to affordably, reliably, and effectively function, including resources in the Gulf of Mexico that provide nearly 20% of the nation's crude oil production?

RESPONSE: I will carefully consider the factors and strive to strike the right balance in utilizing public waters for energy purposes. The pause on new offshore leasing will allow for a review process that will consider a variety of factors including the interests of taxpayers, climate change, and the factors that you raise in this question.

- Given the importance of exploration activities in enhancing our understanding of the ocean and its resources, would you commit to continuing the Interior Department's continued participation in interagency efforts overseen by the Ocean Policy Committee to increase the efficiency of permitting for ocean exploration, mapping, and research activities and implement a national strategy to map, explore, and characterize U.S. waters?

RESPONSE: As I said at the hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and to following the law, if I am confirmed as Secretary. I am interested to learn more about this interagency group and ensure that the Department is playing a positive role in the important topics raised in your question.

Question 7: As an example of a recent federal ocean policy success, the interagency Ocean Policy Committee was codified into law earlier this month pursuant to the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Under this law, the Committee is charged with continuing the activities of the Committee as it existed before the law was enacted, including engaging stakeholders like regional ocean partnerships, facilitating coordination and integration of federal ocean and coastal-related activities in policy, research, technology, and data needs, and implementing the National Oceanographic Partnership Program.

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- As a prospective Interior Secretary and member of the Ocean Policy Committee, do you agree that this development represents a success for U.S. ocean policy, and would you commit to fully supporting and carrying out Ocean Policy Committee activities as Congress intended?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and to following the law, if I am confirmed as Secretary. I am interested to learn more about this interagency group and ensure that the Department is playing a positive role in the important topics raised in your question.

Question 8: In an Executive Order issued on January 27, President Biden directed the Interior Secretary to recommend steps that the United States should take to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 (“30x30”).

- Given existing science and participatory-based processes designed to ensure responsible development that is consistent with a healthy environment – including through the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and National Marine Sanctuaries Act, among others – do you not agree that we already have sufficient protections for marine species, habitat, and biodiversity?
- As Interior Secretary, what steps would you take to ensure that any such 30x30 effort is balanced, inclusive, reflective of existing and ongoing conservation efforts, and not destructive of the full potential of the Blue Economy?
- As Interior Secretary, how would the Department engage ocean industries that could be impacted by such an initiative?
- Do you believe areas already subject to conservation and/or protection measures, including through actions taken by statutorily authorized entities like Regional Fishery Management Councils, should be counted toward the 30x30 goal?

RESPONSE: As I understand it, the 30 by 30 goal includes areas already under protection. Going forward, I understand that the 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can’t be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations—a bipartisan idea that is very popular with the American people. It is my understanding that ocean conservation can have a positive impact on fish populations, which can then benefit commercial fishing in nearby areas. If confirmed I will seek to ensure that the Department collaborates with other federal ocean agencies to develop conservation strategies in consultation with States and stakeholders.

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Question 9: The cloud of uncertainty created by the absence of clear guidance on financial assurance requirements for the offshore oil and natural gas industry dates back to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's ("**BOEM**") Notice to Lessees 2016-N01, in which BOEM overhauled the financial assurance process for oil and gas infrastructure on the OCS (the "**2016 NTL**"). The Department of Interior sought to provide the clarity needed by the industry by issuing proposed regulations. The goal of the updated regulations are to safeguard the American taxpayers from ever being responsible for offshore decommissioning, while, at the same time, ensuring that the Department of Interior accomplishes its statutory obligation to make the "vital resource" of the OCS available for the "expeditious and orderly development." The Proposed Regulations establish the guidance and rules that the industry sorely needs and has been lacking for years. At such an uncertain time for the offshore oil and gas industry, finalizing the Proposed Regulations would give the industry the regulatory certainty it needs. Unfortunately, the Department of Interior has signaled that it is pulling back the proposed Trump Administration's regulation on this.

- Can you please provide me with a status update on the BOEM/BSEE financial assurance regulation: "Risk Management, Financial Assurance and Loss Prevention, RIN 1082-AA02." Is the Dept. of Interior withdrawing the proposed regulation?
- If so, will the Department issue a new proposed regulation?

RESPONSE: I am not at the Department yet, so I cannot provide a status update on pending rulemakings, but I agree that providing clear guidance to the offshore oil and gas industry is important, just as it would be for any significant stakeholder or regulated community. If confirmed I commit to learning more about this issue and considering these issues carefully to ensure that the interests of taxpayers are protected. I am familiar with the problem of thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells onshore and the economic and environmental burden that poses.

Question 10: Representative Haaland, I believe we both can agree that we want a Federal government that is transparent and provides up-to-date information to the public at large. In light of the Acting Secretary's Order, I have concerns that regarding permits, of all kinds, whether Exploration and Development Plans (EPs) at BOEM or Applications for Permits to Drill (APDs) at BSEE or the various other permits issued by those sub agencies. For instance, currently, BOEM and BSEE provide information on number of permits approved each month, but not on the number that have been submitted or that are pending.

- Can you please provide me with a number of all pending permits at either BOEM or BSEE? Please also indicate whether each individual pending permit needs approval at the elevated Secretarial level and when action either approving or denying permit will be taken by Interior?
- Will you commit to work with my office to ensure that we have a full and transparent picture of the number of pending permits (of all kinds) waiting for approval at BOEM and BSEE in the future?

RESPONSE: I am not at the Department yet, so I cannot provide information about the status of individual pending permit applications, but I agree that transparency is important and will be a focus for

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me if I am confirmed. Congress is a co-equal branch of government and I will take care to ensure that we are sharing the appropriate information with members of this committee.

Question 11: Modern forestry's sustainable management practices improve forest health and resilience, while providing jobs, climate benefits, water quality and wildlife habitat.

- With regards to these benefits, and especially wildlife habitat, how can the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue to collaborate with private forest owners as a partner to achieve the agency's conservation goals?
- Modern forestry's sustainable management practices improve forest health and resilience, while providing jobs, climate benefits, water quality and wildlife habitat. With regards to these benefits, and especially wildlife habitat, how can the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue to collaborate with private forest owners as a partner to achieve the agency's conservation goals?

RESPONSE: Private landowners can play a positive role in forest conservation. President Biden's vision for conservation provides opportunity for many Americans to participate in conserving land and water resources. Voluntary private conservation should be encouraged, complements the President's conservation goals, and can be a critical part of protecting species and wildlife habitat. If confirmed I will consult with fire and habitat professionals and listen to stakeholders to seek common ground.

Question 12: Do you believe it is an environmental injustice if conservation programs and the citizens that depend upon the funding of those are deprived as a result of an indefinite halt on leasing activities or a delay in issuing permits to explore for oil and gas or develop lease sites?

RESPONSE: The President's Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn't impact existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved so revenue and thus funding for activities supported by that revenue are expected to continue. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

As I said during the hearing, the Earth is here to provide for us. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations. During the review of the oil and gas leasing program during the pause on new leasing, the Department can consider factors raised by members of this committee, including those in your question.

Question 13: You once said, *"It's time to stop all fossil fuel infrastructure in America. No new pipelines."* However, we just passed a bill in December to direct the Department of Energy to begin a lot of R&D on CCUS.

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- What would you propose as a better solution to transport CO2 to sequester it?
- What would you propose as a better solution to transport natural gas in order to help produce hydrogen?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, we need to move forward with technology and innovation for our energy needs. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.

I will support the Biden Administration's plan to consider pipelines in light of climate change and their efforts to support carbon capture as one of many technologies to address climate change. When these issues are before the Department, I will carefully consider factors such as the ones you raise in this question.

Question 14: The President says he wants to introduce a social cost of carbon in to various government policies.

- Do you believe this policy should apply to oil imported from other nations?
- How do you believe the Administration should weigh environmental benefits of domestically produced energy versus energy imported from other nations?

RESPONSE: Until I am confirmed, I am not a part of the Administration and not a part of any discussions about social cost of carbon policy. It is my understanding that this would fall under the White House and the Council on Environmental Quality.

Question 15: Do you consider other countries weaponizing their natural resources, such as oil/gas and even the critical minerals needed to develop clean energy technology a national security threat to the United States?

RESPONSE: I support energy independence and believe that advancing clean energy technology can help us address climate change, create jobs and lead to a more secure energy future for our nation and consumers. Regarding oil and gas, while new leasing is paused for a review of the program, existing leases are moving forwards and thus production will continue.

Regarding minerals, as I said during the hearing, America's public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

Question 16: As you know, the Chinese Communist Party poses a significant national security threat, especially its growing control of critical minerals, including rare earth minerals. China currently supplies more than 80 percent of the rare earths imported by the United States and research shows China is home to at least 85 percent

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of the world's capacity to process rare earth ores into material manufacturers can use. Unfortunately, the methods the Chinese use to acquire these critical minerals and rare earth come at environmental and humanitarian costs troubling to anyone. In some regions, poisoned water and soil have caused abnormal disease rates in "cancer villages" from which impoverished residents cannot move. Crops and animals have not spared. In fact, Amnesty International says it has traced cobalt used in batteries for household brands to mine in DRC (before being processed in China) where children work in life-threatening conditions where human rights violations occur. While significant efforts were made to prioritize the reestablishment of a full U.S. based rare earth supply chain by the previous administration, it is clear developing a secure rare earth supply chain remains a national security priority.

- What role do you believe the Department should play to address our future critical mineral needs, especially as demand for clean energy technologies increase?
- Do you believe it should be the policy of the United States to rely on minerals that have been mined or processed with weaker environmental or labor standards (i.e., child labor)?
- What can be done to prevent these atrocities from happening elsewhere?
- Do you support on-shoring efforts, particularly on public lands managed by the Department of the Interior?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, America's public lands have long been – and will continue to be – an important source of the minerals that power our economy, from gold and copper to the critical minerals that we use in our advanced technologies. If confirmed, I will look to take a balanced approach to oversee mining on our public lands. I believe we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment for future generations.

I am firmly opposed to child labor and other abusive labor practices and support the Biden Administration's efforts to address human rights abroad. I am committed to working collaboratively with other federal agency partners involved in critical minerals issues.

Question 17: The United Houma Nation has been fighting for federal recognition for four decades. Knowing the decades-long struggles of the Tribe, I wrote to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs back in 2014 to express my support for the new federal acknowledgment regulations ([25 CFR Part 83](#)). However, there are concerns about the 2015 regulations being properly implemented and the overall process being an adversarial one, which was not the intent.

What actions would you take to ensure that the 2015 regulations are properly implemented?

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RESPONSE: I recognize that federal recognition is extremely important to communities seeking to establish a government-to-government relationship with the United States. The administrative federal recognition process is complex and may take many years. If confirmed, I commit to evaluating the status of this process and careful implementation of the relevant regulations for the Department's federal recognition process.

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Questions from Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

Question 1: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) within the U.S. Department of the Interior Department often disagrees with other federal agencies that are charged with implementing Congressionally approved infrastructure projects, such as transportation and flood control. Congress spends hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars for federal agencies to study potential fish and wildlife impacts associated with such projects, including extensive studies conducted as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permit process for major federal construction projects. Still, the USFWS frequently demands more information from lead agencies, leading to significant delays to important projects. If confirmed, what will you do to assure that the USFWS cooperates more smoothly and efficiently with other federal agencies?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, including other federal agencies, and to following the law efficiently and effectively. If I am confirmed as Secretary this will be a priority with me at the Department of the Interior, and I will work with partners in the administration to support the development of environmentally responsible infrastructure to create good paying jobs across this nation.

Question 2: If the United States ends fossil energy production from federal lands, how would the administration replace vital sources of funding that support basic public services and other important work, such as conservation, environmental recovery, and climate mitigation along our Gulf Coast?

RESPONSE: The President's Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved, so revenue from royalties will continue. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing. Permits continue to be reviewed on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

Question 3: In 2019, Gulf of Mexico energy production supported 345,000 jobs nationwide. Cutting off leasing in federal waters would result in the loss of approximately 200,000 jobs nationwide over the next 20 years. Factoring in a permitting ban would eliminate roughly more 90,000 jobs. How do you anticipate communities across the Gulf Coast to recover from this level of job loss?

RESPONSE: I also come from a state where oil and gas jobs are important in the community, and I know they are important part of our economy in the years to come. As I noted in the above question, production activities continue on existing valid leases.

President Biden's plan aims to create millions of new jobs and if confirmed I will work hard to make sure that the Department of the Interior is playing a big part including in states involved in energy production. Communities and states that have historically produced fossil fuels know the difficult history

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of booms and busts and it is important that we work together to address the challenges that we have ahead and to make sure no one is left behind.

Question 4: The courts have awarded billions of dollars in restitution when the government has breached its obligation to allow companies with oil and gas exploration and production leases to explore offshore. Companies could also potentially seek billions in additional damages for loss of expected revenues. The offshore contractors, including hundreds of companies such as vessel service operators and fabricators, could also have a claim to billions in additional damages under the “takings” clause. What evaluation will you or the Administration do to determine how much money American taxpayers could be responsible for if the Department restricts or cuts off offshore oil and gas development?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause does not affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore is not producing. I believe we will continue to use oil and gas for many years as we work to get to net zero carbon. During the review of the oil and gas leasing program, the Department will consider many issues, including the ones raised in this question.

Question 5: Do you believe that potential conflicts between ocean users can be managed and addressed through a multi-use management approach under existing laws? Do you believe that there are any uses that are simply not suitable for U.S. waters? If so, please identify them and explain why.

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, including other federal agencies, and to following the law. If I am confirmed as Secretary, I would look forward to learning more about the underlying laws and potential conflicts that you reference and how the Department is involved in those matters.

Question 6: Do you agree that it is the responsibility of the Congress, not the Executive Branch, to overhaul ocean use and resource management policies?

RESPONSE: I believe that both Congress and the Executive Branch have important roles and responsibilities in evaluating the nation’s laws and policies and, if I am confirmed as Secretary I would look forward to working with you, the Committee, and other relevant federal agencies to ensure that our laws and policies are both effective and up to date.

Question 7: Given the importance of exploration activities in enhancing our understanding of the ocean and its resources, would you commit to continuing the Department’s continued participation in interagency efforts overseen by the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) to increase the efficiency of permitting for ocean exploration,

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mapping, and research activities and implement a national strategy to map, explore, and characterize U.S. waters?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, if I am confirmed I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, including other federal agencies, and to following the law. I look forward to being more fully informed on the Department's plan for participating in this interagency group and I believe the Department should engage effectively in all interagency coordination, including that directed by Congress.

Question 8: The interagency OPC was codified into law pursuant to the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Under this law, the OPC is charged with continuing its activities as it existed before the law was enacted, including engaging stakeholders, like regional ocean partnerships, facilitating coordination and integration of federal ocean and coastal-related activities in policy, research, technology, and data needs, and implementing the National Oceanographic Partnership Program. As a prospective Interior Secretary and member of the OPC, do you agree that this congressional act represents a success for U.S. ocean policy, and will you commit to fully supporting and carrying out OPC activities as Congress intended?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and to following the law, if I am confirmed as Secretary. I look forward to being more fully informed on the Department's plan for participating in this interagency group and I believe the Department should engage effectively in all interagency coordination, including that directed by Congress.

Question 9: In an Executive Order issued on January 27, 2021, President Biden directed the Interior Secretary to recommend steps that the United States should take to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 ("30x30"). Given existing science and participatory-based processes designed to ensure responsible development that is consistent with a healthy environment – including through the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and National Marine Sanctuaries Act, among others – do you agree that we already have sufficient protections for marine species, habitat, and biodiversity? If not, please explain what additional protections are needed.

RESPONSE: I believe the President's 30 x 30 conservation initiative is intended to be a locally-engaged, science-based approach that is respectful of private land landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. It is also not about locking up land, but is intended to be a national goal that can be met with cooperative efforts from many levels of government and voluntary private action.

Question 10: As Interior Secretary, what steps would you take to ensure that any 30x30 effort is balanced, inclusive, and reflective of ongoing conservation efforts, and not destructive of the full potential of the Blue Economy?

RESPONSE: I believe the President's 30 x 30 conservation initiative is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations. It is inclusive, including state

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and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers, and it cannot be a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers.

Question 11: Do you believe areas already subject to conservation and/or protection measures, including through actions taken by statutorily authorized entities like Regional Fishery Management Councils, should be counted toward the 30x30 goal? If not, please explain why.

RESPONSE: I believe the President's 30 x 30 conservation initiative is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. It cannot be a top-down approach but must be locally engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers.

Question 12: Under an Executive Order issued on January 20, 2021, President Biden directed the Interior Secretary to review a 2020 decision allowing commercial fishing within the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument and to determine whether to restore the commercial fishing prohibition that existed under the original monument designation. If confirmed as Interior Secretary, how would the Department conduct this review? Given that we need a solution that proves durable over time and across administrations, will you commit to utilizing the review as an opportunity to ensure fishermen's input and create a solution that fishermen support?

RESPONSE: As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and to following the law, if I am confirmed as Secretary. The President's Executive Order sets forth a process for this review and the final decisions on how to move forward are the prerogative of the President under the Antiquities Act.

Question 13: Section 102(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act establishes the policy of the United States on stewardship of federal lands and resources. Among other objectives, it states "Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States that...the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use planning process coordinated with other Federal and State planning efforts." In the past, the interests and concerns of states have not been sought out or respected. How will you incorporate and include state planning efforts in land management decisions and processes?

RESPONSE: As I said many times during my hearing, it is important for local communities to weigh in on important decisions that affect them, and if confirmed I would seek communication with states, with Tribes, and with local communities to ensure effective collaboration on land management decisions.

Question 14: The Obama Administration prepared a report that looked at greenhouse gas emissions from offshore operations under various leasing scenarios. Under the no leasing scenario, the report concluded that net greenhouse gas emissions would actually increase as the country simply turned to imported oil, produced in

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areas with less environmental controls, to satisfy the demand for oil. Given this, how does pausing lease sales and slowing permitting help the administration reach its climate goals? Where will the U.S. get its oil and natural gas if domestic production is curtailed significantly or permanently?

RESPONSE: I am not familiar with the report that you reference and there have been significant changes in energy markets in recent years. President Biden’s energy and climate policy is based on advancing clean energy technology and making it more affordable with more innovation and new technology. The President’s Executive Order paused new oil and gas leasing so that the Department can review the program including for taxpayer and climate change interests and so issues raised by this Committee can be considered as part of that review.

Question 15: Section 10115 of the 2018 Farm Bill concerning pesticide consultations under the Endangered Species Act also required the Interagency Working Group to seek substantive stakeholder input, recognizing the variety of viewpoints on how best to balance the needs of endangered species, while recognizing the need for farmers, homeowners and others to use pesticides to protect crops, homes and other green spaces. Will you, if confirmed, provide resources to establish the means to obtain meaningful stakeholder input on Endangered Species Act reviews for pesticides, including input from industry, landowners, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties? If not, please explain why.

RESPONSE: I know that this issue is important to you and your constituents. As I said at my hearing, I am committed to working cooperatively with stakeholders and to striking the right balance on this particular issue and the many important issues before the Department, if I am confirmed as Secretary. On this matter, the Department should participate and engage effectively in any interagency processes directed by Congress, including this one on pesticide reviews.

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Questions from Senator John W. Hickenlooper

Question 1: Ute Mountain Ute Law Enforcement Issue

There have been persistent concerns among Ute Mountain Ute Tribal leadership around law enforcement capacity and public safety on the reservation. For a few decades, the US Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement have been critically understaffed and underfunded, creating challenges for managing community safety.

Will you commit to exploring solutions to address the US Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement capacity and funding issue?

RESPONSE: Thank you for bringing the concerns of the Ute Mountain Tribal leadership to my attention on this important public safety issue. If confirmed, I commit to conferring with Departmental staff to understand the BIA law enforcement capacity and funding issues, as well as all options before me. If confirmed, BIA staffing would be a high priority and I would commit to the efficient and effective recruitment of qualified people.

Question 2: Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan

As both a geologist and former governor, I believe that it is critical that both science and community input help guide how we use our public lands. Unfortunately, under the last Administration, we didn't always see this play out, including with the BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office's Resource Management Plan released last April.

The Governor of Colorado has expressed concerns that this Resource Management Plan is not in line with state plans and policies, and the state ultimately filed a lawsuit challenging the plan. I have also heard from local elected officials that the plan wasn't responsive to community concerns about public health, environmental risks or impacts to the region's agriculture economy.

Will you commit to reviewing this plan to make sure it's truly responsive to local communities' wishes and in keeping with the best available science?

RESPONSE: I understand that this recently released plan has generated serious concerns in your state and I am committed to listening closely to them and working with you to try and find a path forward. I am committed to consulting with states, Tribes, and local stakeholders and to public land decisions that are grounded in the best available science. If I am confirmed, I commit to getting more fully briefed on this issue so that I can make an informed decision about moving forward.

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Questions from Senator Roger Marshall

Question 1: According to the US Department of Agriculture, direct and indirect energy costs can account for 36% to 48% of total production costs for crops including corn, wheat and soybeans. Do you know if the Administration has conducted an analysis of the potential implications that the federal leasing ban could have on the food production costs in the United States? How will these increased costs be defrayed?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order temporarily paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn’t affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. Permits continue to be reviewed and approved on existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore are not producing.

Question 2: As you know, natural gas accounts for roughly 75% to 85% of fertilizer manufacturing costs. Considering that 12% of US natural gas production occurs on federal lands it is safe to assume that a leasing ban will eventually lead to higher natural gas costs and in turn raising the cost of fertilizer production in this country. How does the administration expect to counter this? Is it logical to raise the cost of such a vital element of the US domestic agricultural industry? Does the administration expect US farmers to bear the brunt of this or will the American consumer?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order temporarily paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn’t affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. Permits continue to be reviewed and approved on existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill. There are currently 26 million acres of public lands onshore and 12 million acres of public lands offshore under existing leases. Of that, over 13 million acres onshore and 9 million acres offshore are currently not producing. As such, about 53 percent of all public lands under lease onshore and 77 percent of all public lands under lease offshore are not producing.

My understanding is that permits continue to be reviewed and approved in a timely manner on these existing leases and there are approximately 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.

Question 3: President Biden has started the process to get feedback on the proposal to conserve “30 percent of American lands and waters by 2030”. If confirmed, what do you think Interior’s role would be in achieving that goal? Does this goal include the purchasing of new private lands? In the pursuit of conservation of that 30%, what does “conservation” mean to you? Do you believe it includes things that allow for continued multiple use?

RESPONSE: As I understand it, the 30 by 30 goal includes areas already under protection. Going forward it, the 30 by 30 goal is inclusive: it will include state and local parks, tribal lands, voluntary private conservation, and working lands cared for by generations of farmers and ranchers. This can’t be

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a top-down approach but must be locally-engaged, science-based, and respectful of private landowners, Tribal Nations and existing user groups like hunters, anglers, farmers and ranchers. 30 by 30 is about setting a goal and bringing people together on conservation to conserve lands for future generations.

Question 4: Representative Haaland, over the past couple of years several rules implemented at the Department of Interior opened and expanded almost 4 million acres of DOI lands to the public for hunting and fishing opportunities. Will you commit to me today that you will keep these rules?

RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, multiple use is a tenet of our public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.

Question 5: If confirmed as Secretary, will your general philosophy lean towards expanding, maintaining, or reducing the level of public access to all public lands and public trail segments under DOI jurisdiction?

RESPONSE: As I said in response to the previous question, multiple use is a tenet of management of our public lands. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders, with the folks on the ground, and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.

Question 6: In 2020 there was an agreement reached between USFWS and a local Groundwater Management District in Kansas on a state water right concern. Can we get the Biden Administration's commitment to continue to work with landowners and local citizens to continue along a voluntary path to reach an amicable solution regarding Rattlesnake Creek? Will you agency promise to consider and balance the economic livelihood of local stakeholders in agency actions?

RESPONSE: If confirmed I will obtain briefings on this matter to learn more about the work within the Department on conservation plans across many states. As I mentioned at the hearing, I want to support collaboration with states, tribes, and local stakeholders on policy decisions that have local impact, and I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and tribes.

Question 7: Promoting sportsmen activities is a top priority for me. The Sunflower State's 527,000 hunters and anglers spend \$629 million annually and support 9,331 jobs (according to the [Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation](#)). In addition to economic benefits, hunting and fishing are integral to conservation and wildlife management.

- A. In general, what are your views on sportsmen's activities on and around Federal lands?
- B. If confirmed, what would your sportsmen priorities be for DOI?
- C. What is your view on the Second Amendment? How does that view inform your sportsmen priorities?

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RESPONSE: As I said during the hearing, I am a Pueblo woman. We have been hunting wild game for centuries. In fact, the reason that I'm sitting here today is because my ancestors sustained themselves through those practices. My dad, my grandparents, my brother, they all hunt. In fact, I was fortunate to harvest an Oryx from the White Sands missile range. It fed my family for about a year. I absolutely understand and respect the sportsman and the anglers and their traditions. If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that all Americans have those kinds of opportunities that my family and I have had.

If confirmed, one of my priorities that would benefit hunters and anglers is the effective implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act as intended by Congress. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a source of improving access for hunting on our public lands. I also believe that the hunting and fishing communities are great partners for collaborative habitat conservation.

I respect the Second Amendment and the rights it affords all Americans, including to hunt for recreation and provide for their families.

Question 8: Do you still support H.R.1296 - Assault Weapons Ban of 2019, legislation that you cosponsored in the 116th Congress, knowing its impact would severely harm sportsmen's ability to hunt large game and defend themselves from predators while on public lands?

RESPONSE: I absolutely understand and respect the sportsmen and the anglers and their traditions. If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that all Americans have those kinds of opportunities that my family and I have had. As I said at the hearing, I advocated for my constituents in Congress, but I understand that being a Cabinet Secretary is a different role and I take that seriously. I am not aware of a role for the Department of Interior in regulating the types of firearms that can be sold.

Question 9: What is your understanding of the Chronic Wasting Disease issue, and if confirmed, what existing authorities would you utilize to address it? Are there new authorities needed to address your priorities in this area?

RESPONSE: I am aware that Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal disease that is a major threat to wildlife, including deer, elk, and moose. I am aware of the urgent concern this disease causes in the hunting community and if confirmed I will be briefed on this issue to learn more about the role of the Department of the Interior in efforts to address the disease. I look forwards to working with Congress to improve wildlife health and fight this disease.

Question 10: Millions of Americans still lack access to broadband services, particularly in the rural and Native communities. The access required to virtually connect schools, health care systems, emergency services and small businesses during the last year underscored the critical need for and reliance on broadband infrastructure and services.

- A. Do you agree that access to information and communication through broadband infrastructure remains a high priority?

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- B. In the recent past, an executive order was issued (EO 13821 – Streamlining and Expediting Requests to Locate Broadband Facilities in Rural America) and a memo directing DOI to identify federal assets/property managed by DOI that would support the order. If confirmed, will you prioritize identifying federal lands managed by DOI that could support broadband? Will you continue to prioritize and support efforts to advance the National Tribal Broadband Strategy?

RESPONSE: I worked hard in Congress to improve broadband Internet access for rural areas and tribal communities, and during this pandemic we have seen the disparities that a lot of communities face with regard to broadband Internet service. I agree that access to information and communication, such as educational opportunities for Native children and telehealth for everyone, will be a high priority for me, if I am confirmed.

Question 11: For agencies under the direction of DOI Secretary, processing a permit or use for broadband is considered a land impact and use, triggering lengthy environmental reviews, clearances, and studies, particularly on federal lands near or adjacent to rural communities and Indian Reservations. If confirmed, how would you work to streamline processing of requests and balance multiple use in support of broadband infrastructure on federal lands?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will confer with my legal team to understand all of the options before me regarding the processing of permits for tribal broadband. As I testified at the hearing, expanding rural and Tribal broadband opportunities will be a priority for me if confirmed.

Question 12: Like other technology and innovation, broadband infrastructure, installation and operation relies heavily on the use of our nation’s energy production and resources. How does the Biden Administration’s oil and gas lease moratorium constrain opportunities to support broadband opportunities on federal lands to close the communication gap on tribal lands and in rural communities?

RESPONSE: The President’s Executive Order paused the issuance of new leases while the Administration reviews the fossil fuel leasing program. This pause doesn’t affect existing, valid oil and gas leases where permits continue to be reviewed and approved. As a result, I am not aware of any impacts on opportunities to support broadband on federal and tribal lands. During the review of the program, the Department will consider a variety of factors, including those raised by members of this Committee.

Question 13: EO 3395 places a moratorium on a number of actions, including granting of rights-of-way (EO 3395, Section 3(c)). This action effectively halts any and all broadband authorization actions on federal lands that would support the National Tribal Broadband Strategy and contradicts EO 13821 – aimed at streamlining broadband in rural America, including Indian communities. How do you reconcile these elements of EO3395 that outright conflict with actions you’ve gone on record to support? If confirmed what immediate steps do you plan to take to support granting important rights of way in support of access and communication?

RESPONSE: It is my understanding that this order is a temporary elevation of the process for reviewing permits and other actions and is a normal feature in a transition. I am not aware that it halts any

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permitting process, including broadband. If I am confirmed, I am committed to ensuring certainty and transparency in these processes and the expansion of broadband to Tribal Nations and Native communities will be a priority for me if confirmed.

Question 14: You were an original cosponsor of the Green New Deal. If confirmed, do you plan to implement parts of this radical agenda? If so, which aspects specifically?

RESPONSE: If confirmed, I will be work to implement President Biden's plan to combat climate change while creating millions of good-paying jobs in clean energy as part of his Build Back Better plan. As I stated at the hearing, I took positions as a candidate and a Member of Congress to advance the interests of my constituents and I recognize that a cabinet secretary has a very different role that I take seriously.

Like President Biden, I believe it is fundamental that we tackle the climate crisis by innovating, harnessing our technology and creating jobs. The president's agenda demonstrates that America's public lands can and should be engines for clean energy production. President Biden also knows that restoring and conserving our lands through a Civilian Climate Corps has the potential to spur job creation. As I said during the hearing, together we can work to position our nation and all of its people for success in the future. And I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and all of Congress to strike the right balance going forward.

Question 15: Senate Majority Leader Schumer recently called upon President Biden to issue an emergency declaration related to climate change, potentially expanding executive branch authority.

- A. Do you agree that President Biden should issue an emergency declaration related to climate change?
- B. What metrics would be used to determine when a climate emergency has ended?

RESPONSE: If confirmed and this action was advanced by the administration, I would consult with the White House and Department experts to understand the potential effects and roles for the Department.

Question 16: DOI includes the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, a critical entity for water supply reliability in the West, including a handful of reservoirs in Kansas.

- A. Do you intend to ensure the recent establishment of the Interagency Water Subcabinet remains a priority within DOI?

RESPONSE: In general, I support transparent cooperation among Departments and agencies in carrying out activities with related mission areas, particularly with regard to issues as important as water in the west. If I am confirmed as Secretary, I would look forward to learning more about the Interagency Water Subcabinet and its functions and how it can benefit inter-agency coordination.

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Question 17: Implementation of the ESA should focus on maximizing the conservation and recovery of species, increasing regulatory certainty and reducing conflict.

A. There were a number of implementation improvements made to the ESA under the last Administration. What is your position on these regulatory changes?

B. There is broad agreement around the goal of species protection and multiple positions on paths to achieve that goal. What is your view of collaborative conservation and how do you see collaborative conservation playing a role in making the ESA work better for both species and the regulated community?

RESPONSE: The Endangered Species Act is one of the most important environmental laws and I am committed to implementing it in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species. I will carefully consider regulatory changes from the past administration when deciding on any future actions. As part of that I look forward to full briefings by Department scientists and experts to identify best practices and challenges and working with Congress, states, tribes, and other important stakeholders. If confirmed I will work to support collaborative approaches to conserving wildlife, including supporting the stewardship efforts of farmers, ranchers, states, and Tribes.