

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

May 18, 2021

Questions for the Record Submitted to Ms. Tanya M. Trujillo

Questions from Ranking Member Barrasso

Question 1: While details from the White House infrastructure plan include references to resilience, drought and water recycling, many Western water users were disappointed that there was little direct reference to repair and construction of water storage and conveyance systems. The Bureau of Reclamation has aging projects across the West that are in need of major repairs. New water storage projects are in the works to help water users deal with a changing hydrology. Congress has passed legislation to help fund these projects, including creation of an Aging Infrastructure Account to provide low interest long term financing to help Reclamation project beneficiaries afford major repairs to their aging infrastructure.

Will you work with this Committee in ensuring that the Biden Administration supports adequate funding for western water infrastructure in the annual budget request and, in particular, an infrastructure initiative? How can we ensure that the Biden Administration will make these infrastructure projects a high priority for Reclamation as part of its central mission?

Response: As I stated at my hearing, water infrastructure is critically important. If confirmed, I will join the administration in working with members of Congress to help modernize and repair aging infrastructure, including new infrastructure when sensible and environmentally appropriate. If confirmed, I look forward to playing an active role as a member of the administration in the annual budget and appropriations process between the two branches of government. I recognize Congress' past actions in this area and, if confirmed, I look forward to playing a productive role in any future discussions in these issues.

Question 2: The Colorado River Basin is entering its 21st year of drought conditions. Later this year Lake Mead – the largest reservoir in the country and a vital water supply to millions across the Southwest –could fall to its lowest level since it was filled in the 1930s. Parties are preparing for the upcoming re-negotiation of the 2007 Colorado River operating guidelines. Agriculture must be represented in those processes. Many farmers and ranchers are concerned that agricultural water is being viewed as the “reservoir” that can be targeted to meet other growing, predominately urban and environmental water demands in the Basin. I am concerned that will be detrimental to food production, our economy, and our rural culture and communities.

- a. Will you pledge to help educate your fellow policy makers regarding the negative cascade of events that can occur when water is moved away from farms and ranches in the Colorado River Basin and other Western watersheds?**
- b. What will you do to ensure that agricultural interests will have a meaningful place at the table and can meaningfully contribute to upcoming negotiations in the Colorado River Basin?**

Response: Thank you for your commitment to Colorado River Basin and Western watershed issues. I have been personally involved in these issues for many years. I am pleased to have received the support from the Colorado River Basin states and the Family Farm Alliance which represents western agricultural producers to be confirmed in my position as Assistant Secretary for Water and Science. I have worked with these and other diverse stakeholder groups in good faith on water issues over the years.

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The current drought situation that we have now necessitates the development of additional creative and innovative programs. The federal government will play an essential role in the Colorado River discussions, but we look forward to input from states, including farmers, tribes, and members of Congress as we craft a way forward. I have always sought input from a variety of sources, including agricultural producers, and I will continue that approach in my role as Assistant Secretary, if I am confirmed.

Question 3: Most of the western U.S. is in the grip of a major drought this year, and it seems to be getting worse. Until we can begin to develop additional infrastructure in the form of water supply storage, we must deal with the resulting lack of water for crops, cities, and the environment. Some watersheds are simply dealing with major water shortages, while others (like the Klamath Basin and the Central Valley of California) have been pushed to the brink by biological requirements for ESA-listed species competing for the same shrinking water supply.

- a. In your opinion, what can Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey (USGS), do to help alleviate these challenges in the short-term?**
- b. Will you commit to working with this Committee and western water interests to bring long-term solutions to these devastated watersheds?**

Response: The approach to climate change is part of the priority actions that we are undertaking, and I have strong respect for the engineers, scientists, and managers at Reclamation who are developing those plans. They have tools available through the Water Smart Program and other drought relief programs, but we are continuing to look for additional resources and additional input from members of Congress, members of the public, and our strong foundation of stakeholders to improve upon our existing resources. I look forward to leading this team at Reclamation and to working with you and the Committee on those issues, if confirmed.

Question 4: Reclamation provides water for millions of agricultural and municipal and industrial irrigation customers west of the Mississippi River. The operations of Reclamation facilities can be controversial, which has led, in part, to a shift toward more support for nonfederal and alternative water supply projects in recent years.

- a. In your view, what should be Reclamation's strategy to help meet future water supply challenges, and where should funding be prioritized to address future water supply needs?**
- b. What is the proper balance between water supply projects in the form of traditional surface water storage (e.g., dams and reservoirs) versus alternatives to these projects (e.g., groundwater storage, water reuse, and recycling)?**
- c. How should BOR address the problem of aging infrastructure at federal facilities?**
- d. What is the role of innovative finance and public-private partnerships as it relates to addressing aging infrastructure issues at Reclamation facilities?**
- e. What is the role of Reclamation in helping non-federal water managers address their aging infrastructure issues?**

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Response: I support Reclamation working with its partners in the West to identify appropriate forward-looking adaptive actions that add resiliency and reliability to water management planning and practices, particularly considering the current drought in the western United States. If confirmed, I would take care that Reclamation continues to support reliable water deliveries through hundreds of ongoing construction activities, a range of water management improvements—from water reuse to software maximizing the amount of power produced with available water supplies—and building partnerships across the West to maintain streamflow for fish and improve habitat.

Where there are sensible and environmentally responsible opportunities to invest in new infrastructure we will, and where we need to devote additional resources to maintain and repair what we have, we will do that as well. I believe that we should do this in partnership with our project operators, so that when new investments trigger repayment obligations, we take on those responsibilities with a keen awareness of the financial implications to our partners.

I am also grateful for the leadership of this Committee in enacting the Aging Infrastructure Account as a part of the solution of repairing Aging Infrastructure and look forward to working with Congress to ensure it is implemented and funded. Reclamation has a long history of providing technical expertise on water infrastructure projects and look for opportunities to partner and provide technical assistance to non-federal stakeholders.

Question 5: The USGS’s Mineral Resources Program has responded to Executive Order (E.O.) 13817 *A Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals* and the accompanying Secretarial Order (S.O.) 3359 *Critical Mineral Independence and Security* by publishing a list of 35 critical minerals in the Federal Register (83 FR 23295) in May 2018 and initiating an Earth Mapping Resources Initiative to provide advanced topographic data needed to locate U.S. critical mineral resources, among other activities. President Biden issued an Executive Order on February 24, 2021 regarding America’s supply chains. Unlike the E.O. 13817, this Executive Order did not direct DOI or the USGS a role in addressing the Executive Order.

- a. Are there ongoing USGS initiatives that support the guidance provided in E.O. 13817 and S.O. 3359? Will the USGS play a role in addressing President Biden’s E.O. on America’s Supply Chains?**

Response: I believe that the USGS Mineral Resources Program’s Earth Mapping Resources Initiative remains a flagship federal/state partnership to modernize the Nation’s mapping. In response to E.O. 13817, the USGS committed to accelerate assessments quantifying mineral resources; as part of that effort the Mineral Resources Program has developed a training program to build capacity within several federal and state agencies, and is developing assessments for domestic potential resources both still in the ground and in mine wastes, as well as the resources of current and potential trade partners. For E.O. 14017, I support the USGS maintaining its longtime role providing data, global materials flow and supply chain risk analysis, and other technical advice to agencies that invest in minerals-related technologies and supply chains.

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- b. What role will USGS play in tracking critical mineral supply chains, especially as it may be disrupted by the effects of the pandemic?**

Response: By statute, the USGS is the Nation's provider of data on the supply, demand, and trade of non-fuel mineral commodities. I respect the fact that the USGS has built an extraordinary capability for supply chain analysis, and under the Energy Act is further building up their forecasting of the risks of supply chain disruptions, their understanding of long-term resources at home and abroad, and their data on the quality of both domestic and global supply chains. Ongoing studies are evaluating the impacts of the pandemic on mineral supply chains, as well as potential supply chain impacts due to other factors, such as climate change, natural hazards, and disruptive trade practices of other nations. I look forwards to working with Congress on critical minerals issues and ensuring that the USGS is meeting the Nation's needs, if I am confirmed.

- c. What will be the focus of future USGS mapping initiatives, including ones initiated to help determine the domestic potential of critical minerals, among other beneficial uses?**

Response: I believe that Earth MRI will continue to acquire data in areas targeted for their potential in connection with critical minerals. I support the USGS Mineral Resources Program plans to conduct a prioritized series of domestic critical minerals resource assessments to inform policy and decision makers. I also look forward to the USGS to expand its assessments to include above ground non-fuel mineral resources and the potential for extracting critical minerals from mine wastes.

Question 6: Landsat satellites have collected remotely sensed imagery of the Earth's surface at a moderate spatial resolution since the launch of Landsat 1 on July 23, 1972. Stakeholders use Landsat data in a variety of applications, including land use planning, agriculture, forestry, natural resources management, public safety, homeland security, climate research, and natural disaster management. Landsat 7 is expected to consume its remaining fuel by summer 2021, thus ending Landsat 7 operations. To reduce the risk of a gap in Landsat data availability, Landsat 9 development was initiated in March 2015, with a design that is essentially a rebuild of Landsat 8. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the USGS anticipate launching Landsat 9 in 2021. In 2020, a joint NASA-USGS Sustainable Land Imaging Architecture Study developed options for the follow-on to Landsat 9, known as Landsat Next, and NASA and USGS anticipate sharing information about Landsat Next in the President's FY2022 budget request.

- a. How will the Biden Administration work to ensure the timely launch of Landsat 9 so that there is no gap between operation of Landsat 9 and the decommissioning of Landsat 7?**

Response: Landsat 9's development is proceeding on schedule. I support USGS working to meet Landsat 9's current September 16, 2021 launch date, and anticipate its transfer to USGS control for operations in January 2022. USGS has continued to collect imagery from Landsat 7 and anticipates continuing operations until Landsat 9 becomes operational. At that point the decommissioning of Landsat 7 will begin. I appreciate the importance of avoiding a gap in operations and look forward to working with Congress on important earth science issues.

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- b. What differences, if any, will the Landsat Next mission have with Landsat 8 and 9 in regard to design and operation? When will the Administration inform Congress of the design of Landsat Next?**

Response: I understand that USGS is planning for Landsat Next to leverage new technologies to deliver significantly improved observing capabilities over Landsats 8 and 9 to meet identified user needs and emerging applications (e.g., water quality, cryosphere, wildfire, agriculture and climate). These include improved ground spatial resolution to monitor smaller agricultural fields and forests, more spectral discrimination to detect harmful algal blooms and critical minerals, and improved revisit over land areas to ensure detection of changes. More details on the planned approach are expected to be provided by the time of the President's FY 2023 budget request.

- c. Should the USGS and NASA work with the private industry and other nations to increase remote sensing coverage, both in frequency of coverage and coverage detail, and if so, how?**

Response: Yes, the USGS is committed to these types of external partnerships to enhance overall U.S. Government remote sensing capabilities, and I believe NASA is so as well. Both meet frequently with U.S. commercial providers and, in accordance with U.S. policy, seek to procure data with flexible licensing conditions for broad use by U.S. agencies. They also have multiple data access agreements with allied governments in Europe, Asia, Australia, and elsewhere to increase U.S. remote sensing coverage and capabilities. I believe that the USGS and NASA are leaders in international groups that coordinate satellite missions, data sharing, and data interoperability.

Question 7: USGS, through its Natural Hazards Mission Area, provides scientific information and knowledge necessary to address and mitigate the effects of natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, storm surges, and landslides. Congress recently enacted hazards related legislation including the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-307), the National Landslide Preparedness Act (P.L. 116-323), and Section 5001 of P.L. 116-9, authorizing a National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System.

- a. How do you work with other federal agencies and local partners to advance hazards science and monitoring in order to save lives and property?**

Response: USGS and the Department coordinate routinely with federal and local partners to prioritize geographical or research areas and identify opportunities and priorities for reducing risk. Operationally, this helps avoid duplication of efforts, concentrates work more effectively, and is crucial for implementing shared responsibilities. If confirmed, I will ensure that the USGS continues to coordinate closely with all of its partners.

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- b. How do the various authorities recently enacted by Congress integrate into the current activities of the USGS? Are there additional resources needed to carry out activities authorized in recently enacted legislation related to hazards science and monitoring?**

Response: The authorities you cited each conform closely to the capabilities and priorities of the USGS natural hazards research. The President's Budget will identify funding priorities for the USGS, including implementation of these authorities.

- c. Should USGS play a role in the social science associated with natural hazards?**

Response: I do believe that social science is important to fulfilling the USGS mission in this area. Understanding how people and society engage and interact with hazards' data and information is necessary for the efficient delivery and effective communications of USGS science. For example, the USGS, as part of a project called Strategic Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment, is using social science methodologies to assess the exposure of the Department's assets to hazards.

Question 8: USGS and Reclamation often collaborate on water and ecological science and technology research.

- a. Please describe the role your office could play in furthering water science and technology research and in increasing collaborative efforts between USGS and Reclamation.**
- b. Please describe the role your office could play in facilitating USGS and Reclamation collaboration on efforts to prevent, monitor, and manage invasive and nuisance species at federal water infrastructure projects and in conjunction with nonfederal partners facing similar challenges from invasive and nuisance species.**

Response: I support the ongoing implementation of the Secure Water Act and believe it is a great example of collaboration between USGS and Reclamation. Additional examples that the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science can help facilitate include coordinated research efforts relating to invasive aquatic species such as quagga and zebra mussels, coordinated research related to modeling and forecasting of stream flows and water availability, sediment transport analysis, salinity control efforts and other water quality programs. All of these programs involve close interactions with non-federal partners or entities that rely on successful collaboration.

Question 9: The current DOI Strategic Plan is scheduled to expire in 2022. What will be your priorities for the new Plan in the areas of water and science?

Response: If confirmed, I will be engaged in this planning process and look forward to laying out the priorities for the future in water and science which will include strengthening the scientific workforce, adapting to changing climate conditions, and building the next generation of scientific capabilities within the Department.

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Question 10: USGS has a broad portfolio of scientific research. What is your familiarity with parts of the USGS that are outside of the agency's Water Mission Area?

Response: I have worked closely with scientists and technical experts for the majority of my career. Many of USGS's mission areas overlap with my experience. For example, I began my career working with expert geologists and energy resource professionals. During my tenure as a Senior Counsel with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee I had oversight authority for the USGS portfolio in the areas of jurisdiction the within the focus of the committee. I also served as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science and was able to work directly with several offices and mission areas within USGS. Several programs such as the Landsat program include broad applications that include, but also expand beyond the water mission area.

Question 11: What is the appropriate balance between state and federal support for geologic and hydrologic studies?

Response: I believe that the USGS should conduct hydrologic and geologic studies in partnership with federal, state, and local partners using a variety of funding shares. Since 1905, the USGS has partnered with state and local cooperators to provide support in data, monitoring, and assessments related to water resource management decision-making. In FY 20, total funding for the USGS Water Resources Mission Area was \$554 million with 33 percent (\$185 million) of those funds coming through joint funding agreements with over 1,600 state and local partners. In addition, the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992 establishes the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program, defining it as a partnership between the USGS and State Geological Surveys to produce geologic maps for the Nation.

Question 12: What are areas of alignment between the government and the private sector to advance innovative fish passage technology and are you willing to work with the private sector on restoration efforts and fish passage?

Response: Yes, I am willing to work with the private sector on restoration efforts and fish passage and identify some of those areas of alignment.

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Questions from Senator Risch

Question 1: In my state of Idaho, we are working with the Bureau of Reclamation on constructing additional water supply storage at Anderson Ranch Dam on the Boise River. The WIIN Act has been instrumental in bringing federal funding to assist my state and our water users in raising this dam and provide the much needed additional water storage in an important economic river basin. Our water infrastructure is aging and in need of expensive rehabilitation repairs to extend its useful life for our future generations of Idahoans.

- **If confirmed, will you commit to work with us in continuing to implement the WIIN Act storage program to partner with our Western states in developing new water storage facilities to meet increasing demands for water for agriculture, cities and the environment?**
- **What programs will you support that could assist our water users in meeting the challenges of retooling their existing aging water infrastructure to help meet Idaho's future needs?**

Response: As I stated at my hearing, infrastructure is critically important. If confirmed, I will join the administration in working with members of Congress to help modernize and repair aging infrastructure and develop or expand additional tools and programs to ensure local communities are able to meet the challenges associated with a variable water supply.

Question 2: Idaho recently had two federal irrigation projects – A&B Irrigation District and Minidoka Irrigation District – successfully take title to their facilities from the Bureau of Reclamation. I led legislation in the Senate that was eventually enacted by Congress and the previous administration and view these title transfers as a huge success for our state – properly placing the ownership of irrigation water delivery infrastructure in the hands of Idaho water users.

- **Will you commit to work with this Committee to continue the title transfer program that was so successfully used to transfer title to these two irrigation districts in Idaho?**

Response: If confirmed, I will continue to uphold the laws you reference and will work with your staff and the Committee on future issues regarding title transfers of irrigation infrastructure where appropriate.

Question 3: In Idaho, we have a collaborative group including the Nez Perce Tribe, the Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District, and the local county, city, and Chamber of Commerce known as the Lower Clearwater Exchange Project. It was formed over a decade ago to resolve water supply issues for the irrigation district and endangered species and Tribal trust issues surrounding the Lewiston Orchards Project. This resulted in mediation and agreement to send water that would be diverted by the irrigation district back into streams for endangered fish as wells providing replacement water were drilled. The Bureau of Reclamation has assisted both technically and financially on this project over the last decade. If confirmed:

- **Can you commit to learning about this project?**
- **Will you continue to use Reclamation resources to support this project?**

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Response: Yes, I commit to continuing to learn about this project and to keep your office apprised of its status. I look forwards to working with Congress and the administration budget process when it comes to Department and Reclamation support for this project.

Question 4: Aquifer recharge is a point of pride in Idaho. Diverse interests in our state have come together and surpassed goals year after year to recharge an aquifer that provides water to a significant portion of our state. At the end of the last Congress, legislation I led in the Senate, the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act, was included in a larger bill that was signed into law. This bill allowed the use of Reclamation land and facilities for recharge, which could significantly aid in our recharge efforts.

- **If confirmed, will you work to effectively and expeditiously implement this legislation?**

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I will work to learn more about and implement this new authority.

Question 5: 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 resource?**
- **Do you support the continued use of already-operating hydropower projects, and do you support additional hydropower development?**

Response: As I stated at my hearing, hydropower is an important component of our nation's renewable energy portfolio. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies to support environmentally sustainable and resilient hydropower.

Question 6: There has been interest from various federal agencies in forming a Federal Water Campus in Boise on existing Department of Interior BOR and USGS property. This included the already authorized and funded eDNA labs in addition to eventual coordination and presence of other water related federal agencies. If confirmed, can you familiarize yourself with this concept and work to support its establishment?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to being fully briefed on this proposal and to look for ways to provide support for it.

Question 7: If confirmed, you will oversee the USGS, which is the premier research institution for the Department of the Interior. The USGS conducts vital resource assessments and research for non-fuel minerals, and designates minerals that are critical.

- **What are your priorities for advancing the USGS work on critical minerals?**

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Response: I look forward to working with the USGS Mineral Resources Program (MRP) which is the nation's provider of scientific information and research on critical and other mineral resources. I believe it is important for the MRP to conduct a prioritized series of domestic critical minerals resource assessments to inform policy and decision makers.

I also plan to support the Earth Mapping Resources Initiative to continue to acquire data in areas targeted for their potential to host critical minerals. I further support USGS plans to expand its assessments to include above ground resources and the potential for extracting critical minerals from mine wastes.

- **What role does the USGS have and how do you plan on advancing the President's commitment to addressing supply chains for critical minerals?**

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with the USGS and its extraordinary capability for supply chain analysis. Under the Energy Act of 2020 and the administration's direction, the USGS is further building up their forecasting of the risks of supply chain disruptions, their understanding of long-term resources at home and abroad, and their data on the quality of both domestic and global supply chains.

I look forward to supporting a robust role for the USGS in the administration's supply chain security work when it comes to critical minerals.

Question 8: The State of Idaho is a state rich in natural resources and has world-class deposits of gold and silver, as well as minerals listed by the United States Geological Survey as "critical minerals," including cobalt and antimony. The United States fails to produce important critical minerals domestically. In fact, imports comprised more than 50 percent of the U.S. apparent consumption for 46 nonfuel mineral commodities in 2020, and we are 100 percent net import reliant for 17 of those minerals. China supplied more non-fuel minerals than any other countries in 2020.

- **Do you agree the United States should utilize domestic resources and produce critical minerals?**
- **Do you agree that, in addition to utilizing domestic resources and producing critical minerals here at home, the United States should collaborate with trusted U.S. partners to build secure and resilient supply chains for any critical minerals that cannot be sourced domestically?**

Response: Environmentally responsible critical mineral development is an important component in unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy for which the President Biden and Secretary Haaland are advocating. In addition, ensuring secure and reliable supply chains for critical minerals will be a key aspect of supporting the secure energy economy of the future.

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Questions from Senator Daines

Question 1: Ms. Trujillo, the St. Mary's Milk River project is one of the oldest Bureau of Reclamation water systems in the country. The system is in dire need of repair, as evidenced by the catastrophic failure of a drop structure last summer. If confirmed, will you work with my office to adjust the federal cost-share to ensure rehabilitation of the system can move forward expeditiously?

Response: Updating our aging water infrastructure and ensuring reliable water supplies for rural communities are priorities of this administration. If confirmed, I will work with your office to continue to become familiar with the details of this issue and determine appropriate next steps.

Question 2: Ms. Trujillo, the Clean Water for Rural Communities was enacted last December and authorized the completion of the feasibility study for Dry-Redwater Regional Water System. DRWA has already completed several studies and has long awaited federal action. If confirmed, will you commit to expediting and streamlining the completion of this final study and using past studies to the maximum extent possible?

Response: Upgrading and modernizing America's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems across rural America is a priority of this administration. If confirmed, I will commit to continuing to become familiar with the status of this project and determining appropriate next steps.

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Questions from Senator Murkowski

Question 1: Hunting and fishing are two quintessential pastimes that are as deeply ingrained in Alaskan culture as it is possible to be. What are your personal and professional opinions of hunting, fishing, and trapping on Federal lands?

Response: I grew up fishing with my father and brother in streams and lakes in New Mexico. My brother is an avid fisherman who also enjoys pheasant hunting. I have additional friends and family members who enjoy fishing and hunting. I am aware of the deep attachment to fishing and hunting of many people around the country, including in Alaska. Over the past few years, I have been attempting to become a better fly fisherman, and I think it will be a life-long quest.

Question 2: The USGS is the Department's premier scientific agency, and one of the finest in the entire country. There are a number of USGS programs that are critical to Alaska, including mapping, 3DEP, oil, gas, and mineral assessments, and so much more.

- **Will you work with me, both through this committee, and through my role as an appropriator, to make funding and supporting the Survey's various mapping programs a priority for the Department?**

Response: Yes, I am ready to cooperate with you to further support the USGS in the Alaska Mapping Initiative as the administration budget and Congressional appropriations process move forward.

I recognize that a high quality, reliable geospatial foundation is fundamental to numerous applications and to informing policy decisions across Alaska, from increasing aviation safety, to improvements in understanding the impacts of climate change in underserved indigenous communities.

I am supportive of the leadership and interagency coordination the USGS has demonstrated through the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC) and am aware of the impressive results produced by the AMEC and look forward to mutually advancing this important initiative.

- **Specifically, will you make the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee a personal priority, and work with myself and my staff to provide regular updates on its status?**

Response: Yes, I am committed to prioritizing the important and valuable efforts of the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC), and I am honored to serve as AMEC Co-Chair. Together, and with your office, we look forward to building upon the successes of the AMEC in mapping elevation, topography, imagery, and gravity and to advance and accelerate the current AMEC priorities in mapping hydrography, shorelines, coasts, and wetlands, and will pledge to provide regular status updates toward those goals.

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- **Last year, the USGS completed an assessment of technically recoverable oil and gas resources on Alaska’s Central North Slope, demonstrating significant amounts of both resources. The USGS continues to play an important role across the country in oil and gas surveys. What role do you see the USGS playing in the years to come in this area?**

Response: I support the USGS continuing to conduct energy research and field activity throughout Alaska in coordination with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys. I expect that USGS energy research in Alaska will remain focused on improving our understanding of the geological characteristics necessary to produce accurate estimates of energy resource potential. Elsewhere in the U.S., I expect that the USGS will continue its assessment program focused on providing estimates of undiscovered, technically recoverable energy resources within geological basins throughout the Nation as well as geological, geophysical, and geochemical research that underpins the assessments.

- **What is your opinion on the development of new oil and gas resources on federal lands and waters?**

Response: I will support the USGS, as a federal science agency, providing the science necessary for resource managers and policy makers to make decisions on how best to manage the Nation’s resources, including those on federal lands. If confirmed, my role will not directly involve decision making on how resource development should take place, but I do expect to play a role in continuing to ensure the USGS provides assessments of undiscovered, technically recoverable resources on federal lands. As Secretary Haaland has stated, the Department is continuing to issue permits for new production on existing oil and gas leases while it reviews the leasing program, and oil and gas is expected to play a significant role for many years to come.

- **Can you commit to working with us in Congress and partners across the government to make hazards detection and early warning systems as secure and reliable as possible? If confirmed, how do you plan to implement the newly enacted National Landslide Preparedness Act and the National Volcano Early Warning System?**

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will support USGS, as a federal science agency, as it provides the science necessary for communities in Alaska to have as hazard warnings as early and as accurate as possible. Since serving in my current role, I have been engaged in Alaska hazard work with the USGS and I am committed to working with states, Tribes, Congress and communities to implement this important recent legislation effectively. Recent events from Alaska, to Hawaii, to the Caribbean have shown the importance of improving our hazard detection and warning systems.

Question 3: Mineral security is truly a national and economic security matter. The USGS has a crucial role to play here in helping the nation to identify mineral deposits that can be of value. Part of the problem that often goes overlooked is that we simply don’t know the entirety of what minerals do and do not exist in the U.S. The Survey’s EarthMRI initiative, beginning in 2019, was the first of many necessary steps in this fight.

- **Can you explain to me how you envision the USGS addressing the issue of mineral security?**

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- **Do you believe that we will need to expand the nation’s mining and processing capacity to accomplish the President’s stated goals?**
- **Do you believe that sourcing minerals and resources from overseas is preferable to domestic production and refinement of these resources?**

Response: Environmentally responsible critical mineral development is an important component in unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland are promoting. In addition, ensuring secure and reliable supply chains for critical minerals will be a key aspect of supporting the secure energy economy of the future. I am aware of projections by observers that production of minerals will need to increase significantly to support future energy and infrastructure efforts, and the administration is focused on supply chain security when it comes to sources of these resources.

Question 4: The President continues to push forward with his so-called “30 by 30” program, to conserve 30 percent of the nation’s waters and lands by 2030. ANILCA, passed in 1980, put nearly a quarter of Alaska’s land – 100 million acres – into new or expanded conservation units. Nearly 30 percent of Alaska is already conserved. With that being said, can you define what the administration considers “conservation” status? What considerations are being given to communities that rely upon resource development, subsistence, and other uses of nearby public lands for their livelihoods? What tribal consultation, including with Alaska Native Corporations, has occurred in Alaska in the course of developing this plan?

Response: I understand that the Department has been engaging with stakeholders on the America the Beautiful initiative. The initiative is intended to be an inclusive approach that affords opportunities for state and local participation, and for private landowners to participate voluntarily in conservation partnerships. I also understand that the Department has engaged with landowners, Tribes, hunters, anglers, farmers, ranchers and other key stakeholders in the development of the strategy. In the recent interim report produced for the White House pursuant to the President’s Executive Order, the authoring agencies recognized the input from Alaska leaders and stakeholders that their state has the highest proportion of protected land.

Question 5: I believe DOI career staff in Alaska are some of the finest in the nation, and they have had great working relationships with Alaskans, with myself and my staff, and other members of the delegation across administrations. Can you commit that you will rigorously consult with DOI career staff and experts in Alaska to understand impacts prior to making decisions that will effect Alaska?

Response: Yes. The Department’s dedicated career staff will be a critical component in the successful achievement of the President’s and Secretary’s goals for the Department.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

May 18, 2021

Questions for the Record Submitted to Ms. Tanya M. Trujillo

Questions from Senator Lankford

Question 1: Congress has continued to maintain the Hyde Amendment on a bipartisan basis each year in annual funding bills since 1976. If confirmed, will you continue to uphold and enforce the restrictions of the Hyde amendment – that no federal funding can pay for abortions except in the case of rape, incest or to protect the life of the mother – as enacted by Congress?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will follow the law.

Question 2: A report from the Obama administration in 2010 reinforced the importance of faith-based partnerships. Among the recommendations put forward in the report was to draw more on the local expertise and relationships of faith-based organizations as a way of filling gaps in the provision of essential services. Faith-based organizations are excellent, effective, and efficient at meeting the needs of our most at-risk populations. The report also highlighted the need to ease overly-burdensome reporting and regulation requirements placed on social service agencies. Do you agree that it is important to continue pursuing ways to engage and expand faith-based partnerships as a way of effectively addressing some of the most critical social service needs in our country?

Response: I have always been interested in hearing from perspectives that represent a variety of interests, and I appreciate the role that various organizations play with respect to the challenges that we face.

Question 3: The Supreme Court has, in multiple decisions, reiterated that religious organizations cannot be discriminated against in the distribution of a public benefit for which they otherwise qualify because of their religious beliefs or identity. Will you commit to ensuring that no policy of your Department will disqualify a religious organization from receiving aid or participating in grant programs simply because of the organization's religious beliefs or because the organization receives statutory protections for religious freedom like those in Title VII and Title IX?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will follow the law.

Question 4: An important part of prompting and expanding faith-based partnerships is providing clarity on the legal obligations that will be expected of faith-based organizations when they partner with the government. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects the ability of religious organizations to hire employees that support its religious beliefs and mission. Do you agree that it is both logical and appropriate that religious organizations should be able to hire employees that support the religious mission and beliefs of the organization? Do you agree that it is inappropriate for the federal government to dictate to a house of worship or a religious organization what tenets of the faith should be observed? Will you commit to ensuring that any nondiscrimination policy implemented by your agency will reinforce the hiring protections that Congress has passed in Title VII for religious organizations?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will follow the law.