

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 29, 2021 Hearing: *The Nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Tommy P. Beaudreau

Questions from Ranking Member John Barrasso

Question 1: I respectfully ask that you respond to the following questions in their entirety.

- 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.**

Response: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. As I said at my hearing, the oil and gas leasing program needs reform and modernization in order to address the climate crisis and to achieve a fair return to the public, two considerations referenced by the President in Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. My understanding is that existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. I understand that climate change is a global crisis that requires actions by all nations, including our own. I am aware that the President has re-engaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

- 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: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. My response to this question is similar to my response to the previous question. The President's Executive Order 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new leases, pending completion of the review of the program. Existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. While I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review, I am aware that the President has reengaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

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

Response: I am not aware of specific analysis on this question. My response to this question is similar to my response to the previous questions. The President's Executive Order 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new leases, pending completion of the review of the program. Existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not impacted by the President's Executive Order. I understand that climate change is a global crisis that requires actions by all nations, including our own. While I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review, I am aware that the President has reengaged with other countries to work toward international solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

Question 2: Many Tribal Nations 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. I respectfully ask that my questions be answered in their entirety.

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- 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: Honoring the nation's trust and treaty obligations to Tribes is a priority for Secretary Haaland and it is for me, too. If I am confirmed I would take my role and the Department's role with regard to economic development and all other activities on Tribal lands seriously. As I said at the hearing, the government's trust obligation covers the full range of responsibilities, and includes respecting Tribal sovereignty and honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship with tribes, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and recognizing that self-determination is the path to strengthening Tribal communities. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- 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: I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- 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: Again, I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

- 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: As I said in response to the previous question, I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty, honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship, participating in regular, meaningful and Robust consultation, and to ensuring that Department policy meets the high bar set by the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes. That extends to issues related to natural resources development by Tribal Nations.

Question 3: 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. Based on agency studies, renewable energy projects also create impacts to individual species, populations and their

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habitat and creates visual impacts over vast landscapes. Over the long term, renewable energy projects also restrict the use of those federal lands for other activities. I respectfully ask that the following questions be answered in their entirety.

- 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 promote smart planning and to strike the right balance so that we can increase the amount of renewable energy generated on public lands and waters.

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

Response: Among other things, President Biden has made clear his intention to address the climate crisis, and the Department's renewable energy programs are a significant component of the Administration's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create good-paying union jobs, and build a strong, clean-energy economy. If I am confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders and with Congress to strike the right balance going forward, including when it comes to developing renewable energy on federal lands and waters.

- 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: That is an interesting question and, if confirmed, I look forward to hearing the views of Congress, states and other stakeholders.

- d. **Does the current fee structure for renewable energy projects on federal lands provide an equitable return for long-term singular use of those lands?**

Response: If confirmed, I will study this issue and look forward to hearing the views of Congress, states, and other stakeholders.

Question 4: **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. Is it important to protect coal production in order to continue AML programs across the country? If not, how will you propose to compensate AML programs and safeguard the communities, Indian reservations, and jobs created by reclamation activities?**

Response: As I said at my confirmation hearing, the AML program is a success story. While I am not currently part of the Administration, I am aware that President Biden has supported AML activities through the American Jobs Plan. I am also in agreement with Secretary Haaland who has supported a long-term reauthorization of the program. If I am confirmed I will work hard to implement the administration's policies and to ensure that these communities realize the environmental safeguards and job opportunities that are a part of that plan.

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Question 5: Please elaborate on your views on hydroelectric power.

Response: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy. Hydropower operations should support healthy rivers and the communities that rely on them.

Question 6: 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. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring BOR assistance continues to be available to nonfederal partners?

Response: The drought situation is dire in many of our western states. I agree with Secretary Haaland that consensus-based solutions work best and, if confirmed, I will do all that I can to support such a framework and the Department and Bureau of Reclamation's efforts.

Question 7: 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. 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, how would DOI work with states, localities, and tribes to manage federal lands? For example, how would DOI use authorities which allow nonfederal partners to conduct resource management work on federal lands?**

Response: My approach to decision-making throughout my career has been based on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, Tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach, if I am confirmed. I also believe that partnerships with nonfederal partners are important to accomplishing the Department's mission. I would make efforts like this a priority.

- b. **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, counties, cities, and towns?**

Response: Regulatory processes should be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I also believe that it is important to be transparent and to work with stakeholders, including states, Tribes, and local governments in developing and implementing regulation, and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

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Question 8: 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. **Many BLM 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?**

Response: As I have said, input from and communication with state and local communities, Tribes and the public are essential to informing the Department’s land management decisions planning process.

- b. **What role should the public and nongovernmental entities play in influencing the appropriate multiple use and sustained yield standard on federal lands?**

Response: Similar to my previous response, I believe that input from and communication with state and local communities, Tribes and the public are essential to informing the Department’s land management decisions planning process.

- c. **Should input from affected citizens in the local geographic area where land use decisions are made be given more weight than input from outside interests?**

Response: As I said in my previous responses, input from and communication with local communities and Tribes are important to Department’s planning and land management decisions concerning resources owned by the public.

Question 9: The BLM manages grazing on approximately 155 million acres of land in the western United States.

- a. **Can grazing be used to reduce the threat of wildland fires?**

Response: I look forward to working with the Department’s fire and grazing program experts, including on this question.

- b. **Should grazing be classified as a “surface disturbing” activity?**

Response: I look forward to hearing from a variety of stakeholders, including Congress, on this question.

- c. **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?**

Response: As I noted at the hearing, I believe strongly that working with ranchers and farmers is important to the Department’s work. I support multiple use and respect the role grazing plays on our public lands.

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- d. **President Biden signed an executive order banning new oil and gas lease sales on federal lands and waters. Many ranchers fear that a similar order could be issued to curtail livestock grazing on Federal lands. Will you urge the President, his advisors in the White House, and the Secretary of the Interior against the issuance of such an order or any other constraints to livestock grazing?**

Response: I am not aware of plans for such an order.

- e. **Is there room for improvement in the way BLM works with grazing permittees?**

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's land managers on grazing policies, and in general I believe in working to seek improvements in all of the Department's programs.

Question 10: Overgrazing by wild horses on and around BLM lands have created challenges 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. **How should the Congressional directive outlined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 be implemented?**
b. **What changes to BLM policies 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?**

Response: This is a longstanding and difficult issue. I agree that horses and burros need to be appropriately managed for the benefit of wildlife and other important factors, and I believe this should be done in a humane way and in coordination with Congress. If I am confirmed, I will work the BLM experts on this issue.

Question 11: 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. **How should forests be managed to protect from disease and improve species diversity?**
b. **How should forests be managed to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire events?**
c. **How can active forest management be used to reduce wildfire risk, including the devastating effects of megafires in the West?**

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and Tribes.

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Question 12: 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. **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. If confirmed, will you provide us information on the impacts of the wildfire adjustment on DOI operations and budgeting?**

Response: Yes, if I am confirmed I will work with the Department to provide the Committee with available information, as appropriate.

- b. **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. Are you familiar with this order? How should the Biden Administration address the issues identified in the order?**

Response: I am not yet part of the Administration and I am not familiar with the order referenced in your question, but I believe that coordination among federal agencies on this issue is critical to success, and if I am confirmed I will make that a priority.

Question 13: 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. It can also 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. 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: Energy development, including conventional and renewable energy sources, often has environmental impacts. The Department of the Interior bureaus have a role in ensuring that the impacts of all energy development are analyzed, minimized and mitigated. If confirmed, I will work to strike the right balance and promote smart planning so that we can increase the amount of renewable energy generated on public lands and waters in an environmentally responsible way.

Question 14: One of the provisions of President Biden’s E.O. 14008 tasked the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with others, to develop a report with recommendations on actions the United States should take to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 (commonly referred to as 30x30).

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a. When will this report be shared with this committee?

Response: I am not at the Department and not part of this process. I am aware that Executive Order 14008 directs the submission of the report to the White House National Climate Task Force by April 27, 2021. It is my understanding that the report was released on May 6, 2021.

b. Please define conservation.

Response: I understand that conservation in this context is one of the issues that the Department has been engaging with stakeholders on and intends to address for the purposes of the Biden Administration's conservation goal.

c. How much land and water in the United States is currently being conserved?

Response: As noted in the previous response, "conservation" in this context is one of the key issues on which the Department has engaged stakeholders. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that only 12% of lands are permanently protected. Studies show that roughly 23% of America's ocean is currently protected. However, those categories do not encompass all actions that benefit nature and wildlife habitat, thus the ongoing process to flesh out that concept in a collaborative way for purposes of reaching the administration's goal.

d. How can DOI spearhead the 30x30 effort while still ensuring it meets its other responsibilities, such as managing access for energy production, grazing, and motorized recreation?

Response: I understand that the President's initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and Tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

Question 15: On April 16, 2021, Secretary Haaland signed Secretarial Order 3399, "Department-Wide Approach to the Climate Crisis and Restoring Transparency and Integrity to the Decision-Making Process," which established the Departmental Climate Task Force, among other actions.

a. As its co-chair, will you commit to providing this committee with regular updates on the work of the Task Force?

Response: Yes.

b. When do you think the Task Force should begin providing recommendations?

Response: The Deputy Secretary is responsible for ensuring implementation of the Order. If confirmed, I would begin work on implementation immediately.

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c. What is the timeline for completing the Task Force's mission?

Response: The Order establishing the Task Force is effective immediately. The Order does not set a timeline for completing the Task Force's mission, and addressing the climate crisis is a priority for this Administration and the Department.

d. Describe the efforts of public and private consultation that, if confirmed, you would ensure occur as co-chair of the Task Force.

Response: While I am not yet at the Department and have not been a part of the work of this Task Force, I have stated previously my belief in ensuring transparency and communication with stakeholders. If I am confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will work cooperatively with all of the Department's stakeholders.

Question 16: DOI administers energy leasing and permitting on onshore and offshore federal lands. DOI and the President also have various statutory authorities to withdraw federal lands from energy leasing. Some stakeholders have proposed new withdrawals or a complete ban on oil, gas, and coal leasing on federal lands, while others have proposed that currently withdrawn or unleased lands be made available for leasing.

On January 27, 2021, President Biden issued E.O. 14008, directing multiple administrative actions to address climate change. Section 208 of the order directed the Secretary of the Interior to "pause new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters pending completion of a comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices...." The executive order stated that this review must evaluate "potential climate and other impacts" associated with federal oil and gas leasing, as well as whether to adjust royalties paid to the federal government from onshore and offshore oil and gas production to account for "climate costs." The required pause and review must be "consistent with applicable law."

a. In your view, does DOI have the legal authority to suspend new onshore and offshore oil and gas lease sales indefinitely while undertaking the review?

Response: While I am not in the Department and have not been involved in any discussions concerning the leasing pause directed by Executive Order 14008, my understanding is that the Administration believes that the relevant authorities provide the Department with the discretion necessary to carry out the broad review of the federal oil and gas leasing programs as directed by the President.

Question 17: Some states rely on disbursements from oil, gas, and coal development on federal lands to help fund various state programs. Some federal conservation programs also are funded partly or wholly from traditional energy revenues.

**a. How do you see future trends in federal energy revenues affecting federal and state programs?
How will DOI assist states if future revenue streams decline?**

Response: As I stated at my hearing, I am not at the Department and thus not part of the program review or discussions related to that review directed by the President under Executive Order 14008, but I am aware that existing oil and gas leases, as well as coal leases, are not affected by the EO. If I am confirmed I would look

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forward to working on this issue and participating in the review as directed by the EO. I also appreciate the actions taken by Congress in providing historic funding for the Department's land management agencies' maintenance backlogs as well as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

- b. E.O. 14008 directed DOI to consider, in its review of the federal oil and gas leasing program, whether to adjust royalties associated with coal, oil, and gas extracted from public lands and offshore waters to account for corresponding climate costs. What is your view on whether royalty adjustments are needed?**

Response: Again, I am not yet part of this review, but I agree with the President that it is appropriate to review the programs to ensure, among other things, that the taxpayers receive fair return from the federal oil and gas program. I look forward, with your consent, to participating in the review of the program and charting a path forward.

Question 18: According to a 2020 GAO report, BLM estimated it would cost approximately \$510 million to complete the inventory of abandoned hardrock mining features on lands BLM manages. BLM estimated it would cost \$4.7 billion to fill in, gate, or address the physical safety hazards posed by those abandoned mine features. Additionally, GAO reported total future costs associated with addressing environmental hazards from 50 contaminated abandoned hardrock mines on lands managed by NPS ranged from \$21 million to \$35 million. GAO also reported that the NPS was not able to provide a cost estimate for an additional 19 sites, because the work was in the early stages or the NPS is not likely to fund the cleanup.

- a. The financial needs to inventory abandoned hardrock mining sites and address environmental and safety hazards remain an ongoing issue for DOI. Given this, how would you prioritize federal funding to complete the reclamation of these sites? How should the government assess whether the funding level is sufficient to address the scope of the task?**

Response: I agree that this is a very important and, because of the scale, a substantial issue that the Department and Congress will need to work together to address. The President's American Jobs Plan contains significant funding to create jobs cleaning up abandoned mine lands and orphan wells, so it will be important to have an efficient way to prioritize and allocate funding to the wells and mine lands presenting the most risk and to most accurately determine necessary funding moving forward. I would want to work with the experts at the BLM and other agencies, if confirmed, on these issues.

- b. Would you undertake actions to pursue funding from responsible parties to support necessary remedial activities? If so, what actions would you take?**

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to exploring all available options to support remedial activities, including seeking funding from responsible parties. I look forward to working with the experts at the BLM and other agencies, if confirmed.

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Question 19: Under federal law, local governments (usually counties) are compensated through various programs for reductions to their property tax bases due to the presence of certain federally-owned land. Federal lands generally cannot be taxed but may create a demand for services such as fire protection, police cooperation, search and rescue, or road construction/maintenance.

The most widely applicable program, called Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), is administered by DOI. In recent years, PILT has been funded through either discretionary appropriations or mandatory spending, or both.

a. Please describe your views on the PILT program.

Response: The PILT program is important to local governments, providing them with a key source of revenue to help offset the inability to collect taxes on federal lands. These payments are important not only for vital services in these places but also to rural economies. Like Secretary Haaland, I am a strong supporter of the PILT program.

b. PILT payments are calculated based on the formula specified in statute. Is the formula sufficient for compensating local governments for the presence of federal lands in their jurisdictions? In what ways, if any, would you suggest modifying the formula?

Response: I would need more information, including about the program's funding and other trends, in order to have an informed opinion on any potential changes. I also look forward to working with Congress on any proposed changes to the statutory formula for calculating PILT payments.

Question 20: 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 encourage 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. Do you agree that sufficient takeaway capacity helps reduce venting and flaring?

Response: I understand the importance of gathering lines to help reduce venting and flaring. The President has been clear that his intention is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, including methane from public lands, and if I am confirmed I will work to develop solutions to achieve those reductions.

b. If so, do you commit to permitting takeaway infrastructure necessary to reduce venting and flaring?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will work to develop solutions to address the President's policy to reduce GHG emissions, and I will have an open mind about all potential solutions to accomplish those goals.

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Question 21: The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act was important landmark legislation for this committee but there are still items that need to be completed. Can you give us a status update on The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act and will you commit to ensuring completion of these priorities directed by Congress?”

Response: Yes, if I am confirmed I will work with career staff at the Department and in its bureaus to ensure that the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act is implemented properly. I also commit to updating the committee as to the status of implementation.

Question 22: In southwestern Wyoming, the Bureau of Land Management estimates there are over 5,100 wild horses across five Herd Management Areas—more than double the Appropriate Management Level for these populations. Such severe overpopulation causes damage to federal lands and waters, jeopardizes responsible uses of the land, such as grazing, and puts the wild horses at risk. I was pleased to see a recent Bureau of Land Management plan that calls for the removal of excess wild horses in Wyoming. Last week, I and the Wyoming delegation sent a letter to Secretary Haaland encouraging full and timely implementation of this proposed action. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the Department’s plan is fully implemented in a timely fashion?

Response: Wild horse and burro management is a challenging issue. If I am confirmed, I would look forward to working with all concerned stakeholders to determine humane and effective strategies to address the situation, including working with the BLM on its proposed plan.

Question 23: Less than one percent of Bureau of Land Management lands are located outside of 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. That’s why I, and others on this Committee, applauded the Trump Administration’s decision to move BLM’s Headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Grand Junction, Colorado. Do you support BLM’s headquarters move to the West? And if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that BLM’s headquarters will remain in Grand Junction?

Response: I believe it is a priority that BLM has a full and accessible team to ensure that it can most effectively and efficiently carry out its mission activities. I understand that the BLM headquarters move is being assessed. If confirmed, I look forward to being involved in that assessment as well as other efforts to ensure that the BLM is an effect agency and that BLM staff are involved appropriately in decision-making. I also agree with the Secretary about hearing from career BLM staff and taking their views into account moving forward, along with other stakeholders, including Western States and Tribal Nations.

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Questions from Senator Ron Wyden

Question 1: During Secretary Haaland’s hearing I raised the importance of building coalitions to get things done. In Oregon, I have worked with local ranchers, tribes, and environmentalists on a bill to establish wilderness on Bureau of Land Management lands in Eastern Oregon, increase public participation in land management decisions, and increase economic development in Malheur County. I have legislation that was the result of dozens of meetings with local and regional stakeholders to identify common ground and a shared vision for a healthy landscape. The Department of Interior is a critical partner to accomplish the goals set out in my bill.

Will you work with me and this committee to move the legislation forward this year?

Response: Like you, I believe that input from and communication with state and local communities, stakeholders, and Tribes are an important part of the Department’s decision-making process. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with you to advance priorities that incorporate that framework.

Question 2: In Oregon, the Klamath Basin is shaping up to have one of the worst water years on record. A drought emergency has already been declared by the Governor and a more comprehensive solution is going to be needed. There are going to be competing water needs in the region that are focused around farming, fish, wildlife, and conservation. We greatly appreciate the work the Interior has done so far securing up to \$14 million for the Drought Relief Program for Klamath farmers. However, more funding will be needed.

Will you commit to working with us on long-term solutions on Klamath’s water issues?

Response: This is an important issue and it needs full attention. I am aware that the Administration recently announced the formation of an Interagency Working Group that will be chaired by the Department to address worsening drought conditions in the West and to support farmers, Tribes, and communities impacted by ongoing water shortages. I support the Department’s commitment to using every resource available to ensure that Tribes, irrigators, and their communities receive adequate assistance and support.

Question 3: I have a bill to create a 21st Century Conservation Corps that has the opportunity to create thousands of jobs. This legislation focuses on funding hazardous fuel and thinning treatments that are shovel ready and environmentally reviewed. This will maximize rural communities' wildfire reduction efforts and it creates critical new programs for job development and COVID relief. This legislation will add more money to existing programs at the Interior, that have proven track records of getting money on the ground and employing workers in the woods.

Can you support the creation of 21st Century Conservation Corp? And will you work with me on this legislation?

Response: I know that President Biden is committed to putting Americans to work conserving and restoring public lands and waters, protecting natural treasures, increasing reforestation, improving access to recreation and increasing resilience to wildfires and storms. This is a tenet of his American Jobs Plan, addressing the

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nation's climate crisis and creating new jobs. If confirmed, I look forward, along with Secretary Haaland, to working with you and members of the Committee on legislation to move these policies forward.

Question 4: Whether its drought or wildfires, water needs are only growing in Oregon and we need the support of the Department. Tribes in Oregon have been suffering from inadequate water infrastructure for decades. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs' water infrastructure has been failing and has led to unsafe drinking water--all in the midst of a Pandemic.

What actions can the Department of Interior take to support long term solutions and the critical water infrastructure needs for tribes?

Response: Safe and accessible drinking water is a critical resource that is not only a health and safety issue but is important for economic development on Tribal lands. It is important for the Department to work with Tribes, particularly those Tribes that have struggled for so long with basic infrastructure issues, as the Administration moves forward to create jobs and repair and improve our country's infrastructure.

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Questions from Senator James E. Risch

Question 1: In Idaho, we have always had the most success with locally-driven, consensus-building initiatives and very little success with top-down federal mandates. If confirmed, will you consult with our Congressional leadership, locally-elected officials, and local communities before agreeing to any land use designations, including National Monuments?

Response: As I discussed at my confirmation hearing, I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency with state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and will have an open door and an open mind on the important challenges that we face. I agree with Secretary Haaland that conservation works best when it has local support and I agree with her approach to consult with state leaders on monuments matters.

Question 2: In your view, is the goal of the Endangered Species Act to delist a species?

Response: I believe that the Endangered Species Act is one of our most important environmental laws and has the goal of recovering species. As I said at my hearing, there have been great successes along these lines, including the American Bald Eagle.

Question 3: What role do you believe science should play in the determination to list or delist a species under the Endangered Species Act?

Response: I believe that science plays a fundamental role in the determination to list or delist a species under the ESA, consistent with the law.

Question 4: In administering the Endangered Species Act, how would you engage states as critical partners?

Response: As I have said, I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency with impact state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state and tribal wildlife agencies, which are primary managers of wildlife with significant expertise, to implement the ESA.

Question 5: Do you support delisting a species if prescribed population targets have been achieved?

Response: I support delisting a species when a species meets the criteria for recovery and no longer meets the standards for listing under the law, as supported by the science.

Question 6: We have over 12 million acres of BLM land in Idaho managed for multiple use under congressional mandate. Can you describe your understanding of the term “multiple use” and how this understanding would guide your role should you be confirmed?

Response: The Bureau of Land Management’s multiple use mandate is contained in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and it recognizes that public lands have many resources and many uses. This mandate also directs

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these resources and uses be used in a balanced way that enables sustainability for future generations. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will strive to achieve an appropriate balance of these uses and to ensuring that the Department is engaging with stakeholders as decisions regarding management of the public lands are made.

Question 7: As you are familiar, 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. After years of back and forth, we finally have a plan with local buy-in back in place. We know that top-down management in this regard simply does not work. When it comes to management of this species, can you commit to working with individual states to recognize differences in landscapes and supporting a collaborative process?

Response: As I mentioned at the hearing, I believe that states and state plans are essential to sage grouse conservation. I believe in the importance of close communication and transparency with state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the FWS, as well as state and Tribal wildlife agencies, in a collaborative fashion in order to manage the species.

Question 8: 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, what management strategies would you employ to reduce fuels and prevent another catastrophic fire season?

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire events. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. If confirmed, I would serve as the chief operating officer of the Department and effective prevention and response to wildfire will be an important priority.

Question 9: At the hearing, when discussing renewable energy projects on federal lands, you stated, of your philosophy, that there... “has to be strong leadership to really drive coordination through the permitting process and ensure that all the regulatory requirements and legal requirements are strictly adhered too in the interests of the defensibility of those permits, but it takes an enormous amount of leadership, effort, and coordination to make sure that those projects are permitted in a timely way and properly.”

If confirmed, would you work with hardrock mining companies as earnestly as you have with renewable energy stakeholders in the past to encourage, incentivize, remove barriers to, and enact push forward permitting reforms that will support and enable President Biden’s clean energy goals without increasing our mineral imports from other countries? Additionally, would you prioritize domestically-produced raw mineral projects and supply chains for clean energy at the same level as permitting clean energy itself?

Response: It is important to promote environmentally responsible critical mineral development, which is central to unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland are promoting. If I am confirmed, I would look forward to taking a balanced approach to overseeing mining on our public lands, including for critical minerals, ensuring that those resources would be responsibly developed in a way that is considerate of and avoids impacts to cultural and historic resources.

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Question 10: Do you believe that resource development projects on federal lands and waters deserve the same level of prioritization as conservation and recreation?

Response: I believe it is important, and appropriate, that the Department and its individual bureaus fairly implement the statutory authorities that Congress has passed and under which they must operate. With regard to federal lands and waters managed by the BLM under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act specifically, those lands should be managed in accordance with multiple use and sustained yield principles under the processes and procedures established under that Act.

Question 11: In January, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule to amend Section 7 consultation regulations under the Endangered Species Act. This was a bipartisan issue during the Obama administration and has unnecessarily halted conservation and management across the West. If confirmed, will you complete this rulemaking process?

Response: If confirmed, I will be committed to implementing the ESA in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species.

Question 12: 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.

a. Do you agree hydropower is a clean and renewable resource?

Response: Hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an important part of our energy future.

b. Do you support the continued use of already-operating hydropower projects, and do you support additional hydropower development?

Response: President Biden strongly supports clean energy generation, including from hydropower sources. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on our public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

Question 13: 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 the one piece we can control on the ground is fuel loading. Forest management and grazing are not only statutory components of our public land agencies' multiple use, but they are also key tools in reducing fuel loads. If confirmed, how would you utilize forest management and grazing to address catastrophic fuels and fires?

Response: Forest health is important for a number of reasons, including species health and to reduce risks associated with wildfire events. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and stakeholders on matters related to grazing policies and the factors raised in this question.

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Question 14: The vague “30 by 30” initiative has been of increasing concern for my constituents in Idaho, where over 60% of our land is already managed by the federal government.

- a. Can you define what conserve functionally means under “30 by 30” and what standards land would be held to?

Response: I understand that conservation in this context is one of the issues that the Department has been engaging with stakeholders on and intends to address for the purposes of the Biden Administration’s conservation goal.

- b. If confirmed, could you commit that “30 by 30” will not be used to change use designation or acquire additional land in Idaho without support from local communities?

Response: I understand that the President’s initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

- c. If confirmed, will you ensure that “30 by 30” is not used to erode multiple use on our public lands?

Response: As I said in response to the previous question, I understand that the President’s initiative is envisioned to include not just federal land, but also partnerships to promote voluntary work to support state, local, private, and tribally-led conservation and restoration efforts. This initiative is not intended to lock up land. If confirmed, I will continue to support multiple uses on the public lands and commit to following science-based best practices for responsible management.

Question 15: We have a number of projects in Idaho that have been completed in the last five to six years. Many of these have spanned multiple administrations and were likely on your desk the last time you were at Interior. Before terminating or altering a project or permit in Idaho, can you commit to first, informing me, and second, hearing from stakeholders on both sides of the issue on the ground before making a decision?

Response: Yes, as I said at my confirmation hearing I strongly believe that good communication and transparent decision-making processes are important to accomplishing the Department’s mission.

Question 16: This administration—as recently as last night—has made renewable energy and Buy American both priorities, including supply chains for semiconductors, critical minerals, and other sectors. At the same time, we have orders from the White House and Interior to slow down permitting and NEPA. We can all agree that we should and do have strong environmental laws and permitting in this country. But, if we want to build wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles, or grid-scale battery technology, we need minerals to do so. If we want these supporting American jobs and held to America’s high standards, we can’t take a decade or more to permit every project. This issue expands beyond

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minerals—we've had cases in Idaho with permitting delays on transmission lines, conservation projects, and more. If we go back to the old NEPA timelines, it's just not possible to do what needs to be done for clean energy. If confirmed, what would you do to ensure NEPA and permitting timelines are not inhibiting our domestic, clean energy supply chain?

Response: As I stated at my hearing, I believe it is important that America maintain its energy security and that we can strike the right balances among environmental protection and responsible energy development to do so. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that projects are responsibly and timely authorized to support, among other things, the President's expanded renewable energy effort.

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Questions from Senator Maria Cantwell

Question 1: WILDLAND FIRES

- **Senators Manchin, Wyden and I introduced legislation that would increase prescribed fire activities. If confirmed, can you commit to working with us on passing legislation like the National Prescribed Fire Act and supporting funding and policies that increase healthy forest management activities?**

Response: I know that forest health can be a life or death matter in so many areas of the country that are susceptible to wildfire risk. Implementing best practices guided by science to prevent disease, improve species diversity and protect communities and habitat from catastrophic wildfire is important, as is collaboration with our federal partners and with states and tribes. I support these actions and, if confirmed, am committed to working with you, with Congress, and with affected communities to find ways to address this growing threat.

In 2019, I worked to pass the Wildfire Management Technology Advancement Act, which directed the Department of Interior and the Forest Service to acquire and use a number of widely available technologies like GPS locators, smoke forecasters and drones. It's my understanding that the Department of Interior has moved forward with some of these technologies, but not everything that was included in the bill.

- **If confirmed, can you commit to providing me an overview of how Interior has implemented the bill and plans to continue to acquire these lifesaving technologies?**

Response: Yes.

In Spokane, there is a CLT manufacturing center and most recently, the Town of Darrington started work on the Darrington Wood Innovation Center which will host companies that manufacture CLT and Mass Timber.

- **How can Interior support CLT manufacturing in the U.S.?**
- **If confirmed, can you commit to working with me on finding ways to promote and increase CLT manufacturing in the U.S.?**

Response: Jobs that rely on natural resources from the public lands are important to many communities, particularly rural and remote communities. Like Secretary Haaland, I believe that we can use our natural resources, create new jobs, and protect our environment. If confirmed I look forward to learning more about Cross-laminated timber (CLT) and to working with you to determine how the Department can participate in this process.

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Question 2: OUTDOOR RECREATION

- **How will you ensure the full \$900 million authorized for LWCF is part of the Department of Interior's budget request and the funding is appropriately divided between both federal and state projects?**

Response: The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act is truly one of the cornerstone environmental laws enacted by Congress, and now that it is fully funded it provides incredible opportunities for recreation and conservation on our public lands. The Act provides the formula for allocating resources between federal and state projects. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the Department complies with the intent of Congress in implementing this important conservation statute.

- **How will the Department ensure agencies have the resources to put dollars to work? Specifically, are there enough staff on the ground to begin work on improving our parks and forests?**

Response: As I noted in my statement for my confirmation hearing, my previous experience at the Department showed me the value of the Department's dedicated career staff. If confirmed, I look forward to working with offices and programs across the Department and its bureaus to ensure that they have the tools necessary, including the staffing that they need, to implement the Great American Outdoors Act and to begin addressing the maintenance backlogs of our land managing bureaus and improving our federal lands.

Question 3: WATER INFRASTRUCTURE / YAKIMA BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a basin wide water project that focuses on balancing and fulfilling the needs of a robust agricultural sector, flood risk management, and salmon recovery. It's vital the Bureau of Reclamation continues to fund these projects.

- **If confirmed, will you work to promote the need for water projects, like the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and other irrigation and water conservation projects, to be considered in any infrastructure legislation?**

Response: If I am confirmed I would look forward to working with you, with Congress, and with stakeholders to ensure that these vital water infrastructure projects are properly considered. I know that water projects like this are becoming more important than ever as our western states are impacted by long term drought.

- **Will you commit to including funding for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan in the Department of Interior's proposed budget?**

Response: Because I am not yet at the Department I cannot commit funding to particular projects, but I understand that the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is an important project for the Bureau of Reclamation and I am told that the FY21 budget included funding toward the project. If I am confirmed I would look forward to working with you, with Congress, and with stakeholders to ensure that these vital water infrastructure projects are properly considered.

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- **Additionally, I would like to work with you and the Department on ways we can address water storage needs and how to implement technologies like pumped storage and aquifer recharge to address these needs.**

Response: If confirmed, I would look forward to having those discussions and to working with you and other members and stakeholders on this matter.

Question 4: TRIBAL QUESTIONS

29 federally recognized Tribes are located in Washington state, and each Tribe is culturally unique and face complicated economic and resource challenges that need to be addressed. As part of the end of year COVID package, we were able to secure a new \$1 billion grant program at the National Telecommunications Information Administration dedicated to increasing broadband connectivity and adoption on Tribal lands.

- **If confirmed, can you commit to continuing your work to increase broadband access in Indian Country?**

Response: During the pandemic we have seen the disparities that a lot of communities face with regard to broadband Internet service. I understand that access to information and communication, such as educational opportunities for Native children and telehealth for everyone, is a high priority for the Department. I know that broadband access in Indian Country is a very high priority for Secretary Haaland and, if I am confirmed, it will be a high priority for me as well.

70 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in urban settings, and they rely on Urban Indian Health programs for their health care. However, unlike IHS and Tribally-operated health facilities, these organizations do not receive a 100% FMAP. This affects organizations like the Seattle Indian Health Board and the NATIVE Project in Spokane. It also includes First Nation Community Healthsource in New Mexico.

- **If confirmed, can you commit to supporting efforts to provide Urban Indian Health Organizations 100% FMAP?**

Response: The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. IHS runs the 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) reimbursement program. If confirmed, I look forward to working with IHS and Indian Country on this issue.

Indigenous women and children are experiencing violence at alarming rates.

- **Can you talk about what the Department is doing to take actions to address the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls crisis?**

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Response: In April, Secretary Haaland announced the formation of a new Missing & Murdered Unit (MMU) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to provide leadership and direction for cross-departmental and interagency work involving missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Department is also designating new positions to support the investigative needs of the MMU, including the collection and analysis of performance data and coordination of services with the families of victims. Secretary Haaland has also announced that she is moving forward to implement the *Not Invisible Act*, which calls for the Department to coordinate prevention efforts, grants, and programs related to missing and murdered Indigenous peoples. I look forward to becoming more involved in these important issues, if I am confirmed.

- **If confirmed, can you commit to working with myself and other advocates to provide more resources to our Tribes and Tribal organizations that are on the ground serving victims and victims' families?**

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I would look forward to becoming more involved in these efforts to provide important services to victims and victims' families.

Question 5: COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

The Columbia River Treaty impacts the Pacific Northwest hydropower system, flood control in the Columbia River basin and the habitat of endangered Columbia River salmon and other species. Interior plays a critical role in the negotiations with Canada and it is greatly important that this Administration make the Treaty a high priority.

- **If confirmed, will you commit to making the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty a priority for the Department of the Interior?**

Response: I know this issue has been a priority for you for and that negotiations on modernizing the Treaty between the United States and Canada are ongoing. If confirmed I would commit to learning the current status of the negotiations, which I understand are being led by the Department of State. I would also work with Secretary Haaland to ensure the priorities and interests of the Department are considered as this important process moves forward.

Questions from Senator Lisa Murkowski

Question 1: Department of Interior career staff in Alaska provide a wealth of technical and practical expertise across the full spectrum of complex land management issues unique to our state. They have been strong voices for the people and lands of Alaska throughout multiple administrations, and have deep and trusted boots-on-the-ground relationships with Alaskans. Can you ensure that you will work with career DOI staff in Alaska to understand fully the impacts of your decisions that affect the state, prior to making any decisions?

Response: As I noted in my statement to the Committee at my hearing, my previous experience at the Department showed me the value of the dedicated career staff there. The expertise and technical knowledge of Departmental and bureau career staff will be invaluable to decision-making and the implementation of the Department's programs.

Question 2: Alaska has world-class deposits of many of the minerals that make up the building blocks of our modern life. Do you believe that the lack of domestic production of critical minerals is 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 mining in Alaska?

Will you support the continued work of the USGS in preparing and updating lists of critical minerals and their partnerships with state geological surveys?

Response: Critical minerals play a role in advanced technology development as well as renewable energy and are central to unlocking the renewable energy potential and clean energy economy that President Biden and Secretary Haaland are promoting. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work on the Department's role in overseeing hard rock mining, including critical minerals, wherever they are located to ensure those resources are responsibly developed, in an environmentally sensitive way that is considerate of and avoids impacts to cultural and historic resources. I also support the work of the USGS on this important topic.

Question 3: I have been working for almost two decades now to secure authorization to build a small gravel road between the Aleutian communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. This life-saving road will allow the Aleuts in King Cove to have access to an all-weather airfield. For far, far, too long, King Cove has been denied ease of access to basic healthcare and other essential services. I was, to be completely frank, appalled at former Secretary Jewell's callousness and indifference to the people of King Cove when she visited the community with me and ultimately decided not to authorize the road. With your Alaskan background, I know you can appreciate how difficult it is to live off of the road system. Do you think the King Cove road should be built?

Response: I agree that all our people should have access to adequate medical services and that this can be a very serious matter for those living in remote areas and under difficult conditions. It has always been my hope that a solution that works for all can be achieved, and I am committed to making that happen, if confirmed.

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If confirmed, will you advocate within the Department for the people of King Cove to have their road constructed and continue to defend the Interior's current position on the pending litigation?

Response: As I stated in the response to the previous question, I agree that everyone should have access to adequate medical services and that this can be a very serious matter for those living in remote areas and under difficult conditions. It has always been my hope that a solution that works for all can be achieved, and I am committed to making that happen.

I was frustrated to hear that FWS delayed the issuance of special use permits to the State of Alaska this spring. I've asked them to work quickly to issue the permit, and am counting on support from the Department as well. Are you familiar with section 1110(b) of ANILCA, which was used to declare King Cove an inholding?

Response: I am aware of the ANILCA authority you reference in your question.

If you are confirmed, will you work to bring the Fish and Wildlife Service up to speed on that authority, and exercise your authority as Deputy Secretary to order the FWS to grant such permits as necessary for the road to be constructed?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with the Solicitor's Office and career staff on these issues.

Question 4: I have been upset with the Fish and Wildlife Service's treatment of the Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation. Earlier this year, FWS announced that they were not able to issue a special use permit to KIC for their IHA application due to KIC's supposed lack of submitting information in a timely manner. KIC strongly denied that accusation, and after the Alaska delegation sent a letter expressing our frustration, FWS acknowledged that KIC was not at fault. The Service has yet to issue a retraction of their statement.

Can you commit to providing a full accounting of the proceedings between KIC and the FWS on the recent application process before the FWS, as it concerns their application for Incidental Harassment Authorization permits in the 1002 Area?

Response: Yes. If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it.

Can you commit to holding follow up meetings, including yourself, senior career and appointed staff overseeing the USFWS, and KIC and the Alaska delegation?

Response: If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it and I believe the Department should stay engaged with these stakeholders.

Can you commit to ensuring the permit is issued in time for KIC to participate in the 2022 winter season?

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Response: If I am confirmed I will work with FWS and stakeholders to fully understand this matter and the facts that underly it. I commit to be responsive to requests from stakeholders and will maintain communication with your office regarding the issue.

Question 5: Section 207 of the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act of 2004 (ALTAA) mandated a Secretarial review of outstanding d(1) withdrawals, which were created 50 years ago, in section 17(d)(1) of ANCSA. The review and subsequent report under this section was produced in 2006 in which the Bureau of Land Management recommended revoking the d(1) withdrawals on approximately 50.1 million acres.

What is your understanding of ANCSA withdrawals? Are they supposed to be revoked once their purpose has been fulfilled?

Response: I would want to be fully briefed on this issue, if confirmed. I understand that the Public Land Orders issued pursuant to ANCSA withdrew and removed lands from operation under the public land laws while the ANCSA corporations made their land selections. The PLOs required those lands not conveyed to ANCSA corporations remain withdrawn for study and classification for future uses. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing this issue with the BLM.

Are you aware if the Bureau of Land Management has changed their recommendation?

Response: While I am not at the Department or involved with this matter, I look forward to discussing this issue with BLM.

Do you believe that the Federal government has an obligation to expeditiously execute these withdrawals in order?

Response: Yes, and I look forward to discussing this issue with the BLM.

How do you plan to expedite the conveyance and patent of Statehood and ANCSA entitlements, and can you commit to making Native veterans' allotments a priority?

Response: I know that land conveyance and entitlement issues have been a priority for many years. Secretary Haaland is committed to working on these efforts and, if confirmed I will also commit to ensuring that the Department is addressing these matters so important to the State of Alaska and to Alaska Natives in an expeditious manner.

Question 6: As I know you are personally aware, Alaska's oil and gas resources are the foundation of our state's revenues, jobs, wages, and development. These benefits are pronounced in communities, such as across the North Slope Borough, where oil and gas investment has brought services such as modern healthcare, education, lodging, and infrastructure to a place where they were scarce or did not exist prior to North Slope development. The average upstream oil and gas worker in Alaska makes over \$150,000 a year.

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What is your opinion on oil and gas development in Alaska?

Response: I am the son of an Alaska oil and gas worker, so I have a deep appreciation for the importance that the energy industry carries in the State and the support that it provides for working families and rural Alaskan communities.

Conoco's proposed Willow project was developed under the Obama administrations IAP and has gone through years of review and public process. Do you believe the pause on the Willow project should be lifted?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to overseeing an objective permitting process, consistent with law and regulation, for all projects on BLM lands in the State and to keeping your office informed. I understand that this project is in litigation and was specified for review in the fact sheet that accompanied Executive Order 13990.

Question 7: Do you believe that states should retain supremacy in their right to manage fish and game?

Response: While the Endangered Species Act provides the Secretary of the Interior with certain authorities in administering the Act, in general the states are the primary managers of fish and wildlife. I believe that states are critical partners in species conservation and recovery and they bring important expertise and resources to the table in the overall effort of wildlife and habitat management and conservation. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department engages with states, Congress, Tribal Nations, and other important stakeholders as we carry out our responsibilities for wildlife management.

Question 8: We have a big milestone coming up this year – the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This landmark legislation “settled” the aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives and intentionally set up a different structure compared to the tribes in the Lower 48. This structure allows for a unique version of self-determination and economic empowerment. When Alaska Natives settled their land claims, part of the bargain was that services to them would not be cut off. ANCSA was amended to eliminate all doubt whether the federal service obligation to Alaska Natives remained after the passage of ANCSA. ANCs, along with the sovereign tribes and tribal nonprofits, provide a wide array of services and benefits to Native people.

What is your understanding of their role in Alaska? How have they supported communities across the state and what essential services do they provide?

Response: Having grown up in Alaska and worked at the Department, I am very familiar with ANCs and their unique role in the State and on behalf of their Alaska Native shareholders. ANCs are corporations that carry out important functions and provide important services at the village and regional scale for the Alaska Natives, including providing jobs and economic opportunity for their shareholders. ANCs are one of the important stakeholders and partners in Alaska.

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What is Interior's role under ANCSA?

Response: Generally, I understand that ANCSA created the framework for the corporations, establishing regional boundaries. The Department had an early role in assisting in the determination of Alaska Native eligibility for participation in ANCSA. It also established the land selection process, managed by the Department, that continues today. This includes the conveyance of approximately 40 million acres of land to the ANCs. The Department also exercises its trust responsibility to Alaska Natives and will consult, including with Alaska Native Corporations, when considering an action that may affect their interests.

Question 9: The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act was enacted more than two years ago. Sec. 1113 of that Act, which required the Chugach Lands Study, Recommendations for Land Exchanges, and Report to Congress, was due to Congress more than 7 months ago. Completing the Study/Recommendation/Report to Congress is a top priority for me and my colleagues in the Alaska Congressional Delegation because the provision creates a realistic pathway for the Alaska Native people of the Chugach Region to finally see fairness and equity achieved in the fulfillment of the promises of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) for Chugach Alaska Corporation, the ANCSA Regional Corporation for the Chugach Region. Will you commit to working with me in doing all you can to bring this to an expeditious conclusion and to provide for racial equity for the Native people involved?

Response: Yes. If I am confirmed I will work to ensure that the Department complies with the law and releases this report as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

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Questions from Senator Mazie K. Hirono

Question 1: May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, which serves to highlight the contributions and influence of AAPIs to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

What activities does the Department have planned for AAPI Heritage Month and if confirmed, will you and the Department work with me and my office on some of the planned activities?

Response: I am not yet at the Department, so I am not aware of the plans the Department has to celebrate AAPI Heritage Month. If confirmed, I look forward to working with your office and joining in honoring the history, culture, and achievements of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

Question 2: During the previous administration there were countless allegations of political appointees interfering with the communication and use of science all across the federal government, including at the Department of the Interior. I appreciate the Secretarial Orders that were issued by Secretary Haaland earlier this month to establish a Climate Task Force and to provide guidance on how science will be used in the decision-making process.

As Deputy Secretary you will be responsible for the day to day activities at the Department. What steps do you think are necessary to restore morale within the agency?

Response: It is really important for the Department, which houses the U.S. Geological Survey as well as scientists across the Department and its Bureaus, to have a strong and active scientific community providing reliable science, free from political interference, to support sound policy and decision-making. The President and Secretary have made science and scientific integrity a top priority, and it will be a top priority for me as well. The Department's senior leadership must make it clear that science is valued and that attitude and focus must guide management decisions.

Question 3: Congress and the Administration have historically struggled to identify adequate pay-fors for economic assistance under the Compacts. For example, in 2010 the United States agreed to provide \$216 million in financial assistance to Palau through 2024. However, from 2010-2018, the federal government was only able to provide approximately \$13 million annually to Palau. It was not until 2018 that an agreement was reached to fulfill the U.S.' funding commitments to Palau. This called into question the US' credibility as an ally and a reliable partner in the region.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with your interagency partners and Congress to identify acceptable pay-fors to fulfill commitments made to the Freely Associated States under the renewed Compacts of Free Association?

Response: Among the most important responsibilities that Department and the Secretary have are with respect to the U.S. territories in the freely associated states, subject to those compacts. I believe it is extremely important to make sure that those relationships are supported, healthy, and that the compacts work for the communities. If confirmed, I look forward to working on this issue.

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Question 4: After the Second World War, the United States was charged with promoting the social, economic, and political development of what are now the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

If confirmed, how will you and the Department work to advance these goals and strengthen our alliances with the Freely Associated States?

Response: It is one of the Department's most important responsibilities to make sure that these relationships are supported, healthy, and that the compacts work for the communities. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Department's staff in the Office of Insular Affairs about the Department's specific role and responsibilities with regard to the Freely Associated States and ensuring our duties are executed in a way that advances national goals and strengthens alliances.

Question 5: You served as the first director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

What lessons did you learn about leasing areas of the Atlantic for offshore wind projects that you would apply as Deputy Secretary in supervising BOEM's process for leasing areas in the Pacific for offshore wind development? If you are confirmed as Deputy Secretary, will you commit to working with other federal departments and me to address any issues related to potential offshore wind leasing near Hawaii?

Response: Yes, if confirmed I look forward to working with you, other departments, and stakeholders on issues related to potential wind energy leasing near the State of Hawaii. I believe that transparency and communication are important considerations in moving these types of projects forward. Given the complexity of the federal permitting process it is important to have strong leadership to carry out this type of coordination, to meet the regulatory requirements, and to ensure that this is carried out in a timely fashion. Secretary Haaland has an excellent team working on these issues, and I look forward to joining that effort, should I be confirmed.

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Questions from Senator James Lankford

Question 1: 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?

Response: President Biden has made clear that he supports a clean *Carcieri* fix to make it easier to place land into trust. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Haaland, the Department, and Congress on these issues related to the *Carcieri* decision.

Question 2: 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 supports the Indian Child Welfare Act. If confirmed, I will work to support the implementation of ICWA and enforcement of its regulations. I understand that complex and sensitive situations can arise, and I will work to support the best interests of children and Tribes, consistent with the law.

Question 3: 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 look forward to working with appropriate personnel in the Department to evaluate options in consideration of this question.

Question 4: Should land-into-trust applications be approved automatically?

Response: Placing land into trust for the benefit of a Tribe is an important responsibility. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Solicitor's Office on fulfilling this responsibility.

Question 5: Do you support off-reservation tribal gaming?

Response: I support tribal economic development, including off-reservation gaming, as may be provided under the law. I look forward to working with the Department through its established legal process for considering off-reservation gaming.

Question 6: As we discussed in our earlier conversation, the American burying beetle was downlisted from endangered to threatened last year; it remained on the list because Fish & Wildlife Service determined that at some point in the future it could be threatened by climate change. Basing these decisions on what *could* happen in the future would create an environment in which no species would ever be delisted because there's always a chance the circumstances for that species will decline.

- a. **Mr. Beaudreau, do you believe that species should maintain protection because of a theoretical threat they may face 20 years into the future? 50 years into the future? 100 years into the future?**

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Response: I am committed to implementing the Endangered Species Act in an effective way to achieve its goal of recovering species. If confirmed, I will work with the FWS and follow science and the law on listing questions.

- b. Do you believe that species should be de-listed if they've reached their population target? If not, what type of success metrics would you propose to set at the time of a listing decision?**

Response: If confirmed, I will work with the FWS and be guided by the science to understand criteria necessary for delisting a particular species and how those criteria would inform the delisting decision.

Question 7: In parts of the country that have large swaths of federal lands, there can exist something of a checkerboard of jurisdiction in which private lands, state lands, and lands under the jurisdiction of multiple federal agencies all exist in the same region. Some drilling spacing units are actually split between two different federal agencies. This creates a lot of confusion for operators in that region.

- a. Mr. Beaudreau, does it make sense to have a myriad of different federal rules governing federal lands, as is the case throughout much of the federal lands in the West?**
- b. Would you support DOI making regulations and permitting more streamlined for companies operating on this checkerboard?**

Response to a. and b.: It is important to ensure that the various actions and activities that Congress has authorized on the public lands are managed in a manner that meets the requirements of the applicable authorities and is systematic, fair, and efficient. I also agree that it is important to ensure that regulatory processes that are put in place should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient, and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

Question 8: 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 confirmed I will follow the law.

Question 9: 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?

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Response: As I mentioned at my confirmation hearing, like Secretary Haaland I support engaging with stakeholders and the public, and I believe that partnerships are essential to realizing many of the Department's priorities and fulfilling its responsibilities.

Question 10: 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 confirmed I will follow the law.

Question 11: 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 confirmed I will follow the law.

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Questions from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto

Question 1: In recent years, the BLM has spent an inordinate amount of time and resources offering vast acreages for oil and gas development on lands where the oil and gas industry doesn't really have any development interest, and on lands that have little to no potential for development.

Making these lands available for leasing only fuels the speculation industry and wastes BLM resources while locking up the land from being managed for other purposes, like wildlife habitat preservation, outdoor recreation and grazing.

I introduced the End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act that prohibits BLM from offering leases on lands determined to have low or no drilling potential.

- a. Do you think we should reevaluate the policy when it comes to allowing these low potential lands be available for oil and gas leasing? Should we outright focus leasing on lands with higher potential and reprioritize management of lands with low development potential?**
- b. If the federal oil and gas leasing program focused its resources on lands with higher potential for development, how would that benefit BLM's mandate to administer lands for multiple-use purposes?**

Response: As was discussed at my hearing, the federal oil and gas leasing program needs reform and modernization. I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking and looking at, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands. I appreciate your interest in reviewing these programs and proposing reforms, and I look forward to learning more about your legislation and to working with you on these issues, if confirmed.

Question 2: **When oil and gas leases are bought for speculative purposes, they are hardly ever developed for actual oil and gas production. How does speculative leasing impact better management of our federal lands? If confirmed, how would you take action within the Department to curb speculative leasing?**

Response: As I noted in response to the previous question, I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands.

Question 3: In many cases, speculators purchase leases on the non-competitive market. If parcels that were put up for potential lease at a quarterly lease auction and do not receive a minimum bid, then leases for those parcels can still be available on a non-competitive basis for another two years at a reduced price.

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- a. **How is non-competitive leasing harmful to multiple-use management? What is the impact on the taxpayer? And what methods and safeguards should BLM consider to eliminate the adverse effects of non-competitive leasing?**

Response: As I noted in response to the previous questions, I am not part of the ongoing review of the program that the Secretary has ordered in response to the President's directive, but issues like these that you raise are appropriate questions to be asking, as well as the question of what impact any changes that might be recommended would have on the BLM's management program on the public lands.

Question 4: Regarding the large military installations in Southern and Northern Nevada...both the Air Force and Navy have sought to significantly expand the footprint of their installations, which would have substantive impacts on lands managed by the Interior Department, including the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, popular recreational areas, federally-owned grazing lands, and important tribal and cultural resources. The Department of the Interior must be actively engaged in these discussions and finding reasonable, workable, and collaborative solutions with the military and local stakeholders.

- a. **Can I have your commitment that in your role as Deputy Secretary, that you will work with all stakeholders to find such solutions?**

Response: Yes. My approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach in this instance, if I am confirmed, including ensuring the Department is engaged with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy to reach collaborative solutions.

- b. **In the FY21 NDAA, I included an amendment creating Inter-governmental Executive Committees between the military and the Interior Department to allow local, state, and tribal governments a public forum to collaborate with the military in providing advice and exchanging information on the management of natural and local resources on federal lands in Nevada currently used for military purposes. Will you ensure that Interior is an equal and active partner in these Committees?**

Response: Yes, I will.

Question 5: As included as part of the FY20 Omnibus, the Energy Act of 2020 established a national goal for renewable energy production on federal land. In collaboration with relevant federal agencies, the Interior Secretary is tasked with issuing permits that authorize the production of no less than 25 gigawatts of electricity from solar, wind, and geothermal energy projects on public lands by 2025.

- a. **If confirmed, what actions would you take to support Secretary Haaland in achieving this goal?**

Response: If I am confirmed, I will support Secretary Haaland and her team in the Department to achieve the ambitious goals that President Biden has set for addressing the climate crisis and creating good-paying union jobs by developing renewable energy on our public lands and waters.

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Questions from Senator Bill Cassidy

Question 1: During a 2018 event at the University of Chicago, you said it didn't sit well with you when Obama political staff said things such as "*Republicans won't like anything we do so we should do X regardless of the detrimental or unnecessary impact it may have.*" You said, "*that's not what we're here to do.*"

- **How will you ensure hasty, politically driven decisions are not made which may negatively impact U.S. workers, the economy or programs funded by activities managed and regulated by the Department?**

Response: To clarify, the portion of the interview you cite did not reference "Republicans" but was a general discussion of my belief that decisions should be made on the merits, not based on whether elected officials from a particular part of the country may or may not support the administration politically. As your question notes, I do not believe that decisions affecting millions of Americans should be politically motivated. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of a team that makes decisions based on sound policy, the law, and that are informed by science.

Question 2: In May 2017, you were a guest on a podcast hosted by Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy to discuss an executive order signed by President Trump in April of that year titled "Implementing an American First Offshore Energy Strategy". On that podcast, you and the host began discussing the BP Gulf oil spill and you said,

"Industry has stepped up in a big way to improve safety and performance of drilling operations to help ensure this doesn't happen again."

- **Do you still stand by your 2017 statement about industry efforts? Please expand further on how industry has "stepped up."**

Response: Yes. The discussion surrounding this issue in the podcast was focused on the previous administration's review of the well control rule. My comments reflected my view that, following the Deepwater Horizon incident, industry and government had responded in a largely positive way to increase drilling safety standards, culminating in the issuance of the well control rule in 2016. The dialog in the interview explored, in part, my hope at the time that safety would be kept front and center in the oversight of offshore oil and gas activity.

Question 3: The Department of the Interior is still operating under the 5-year OCS drilling programs finalized when you previously served there. A November 2016 report published by the Department on potential lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions and social cost of carbon from OCS oil and natural gas said,

"America's GHG emissions will be little affected by leasing decisions under BOEM's 2017–2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program ... and could, in fact, increase slightly in the absence of new OCS leasing ... for purposes of this analysis and the analysis that forms the basis of the

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2017-2022 Program, foreign sources of oil will substitute for reduced OCS supply, and the production and transport of that foreign oil would emit more GHGs.”

- **Do you believe the United States is in a stronger place to lead the world in emission reductions if we are producing domestic energy rather than importing fuel from a country with fewer environmental regulations?**

Response: While I am not currently in a position to evaluate other countries’ environmental regulations related to oil and gas production, if I am confirmed I commit to ensuring domestic energy production overseen by the Department of the Interior is done in an environmentally responsible way including with respect to GHG emissions, is informed by science, is subject to strong safety oversight, and incorporates the best available technologies and practices. I fully support the administration’s review of the oil and gas leasing programs on federal lands and waters, to ensure they are operating in the best interests of the taxpayers and the need to respond to the climate crisis. I am not aware that this administration has any intent to replace domestic oil production with foreign imports.

Question 4: During a recent hearing this Committee held on the onshore oil and leasing program, the BLM witness repeatedly said existing permits and applications have not been adversely impacted despite internal memos which direct and elevate certain Departmental reviews and decisions from the career to the political staff. However, Occidental’s CEO said roughly 300 lease extension requests have been submitted and none have been approved.

- **What assurances can you offer to those lease holders concerned the Department is going to take action that adversely impact permits and applications or through inaction accomplish the same?**

Response: I am not at the Department and I am not aware of the circumstances of the extension requests you mention. However, my understanding is that the Secretary’s Order 3395 provided for the temporary suspension of delegated authority, which expired in March. It is appropriate that leadership in the Department continue to track permitting issues and have the opportunity to review them as necessary. If confirmed I will seek to avoid any undue delay of decisions that I am involved in.

Question 5: One of the most important laws for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is the Outer continental shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). OCSLA says the national policy for the Outer Continental Shelf is, subject to environmental safeguards, to expeditiously and orderly develop the national resource reserve. My constituents are concerned the Administration is moving away from the stated policy of this law.

- **What do the words expeditiously and orderly mean to you?**

Response: It is appropriate that the Department review of its federal oil and gas programs, including through the lens of climate change and ensuring a fair return to the taxpayer, as articulated by the President. President Biden supports America’s energy security, and as Secretary Haaland has stated oil and gas development will be a part of that mix for years to come. I understand the significance of offshore oil and gas production to

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Louisiana, and I know that the administration takes jobs and the economy very seriously.

Question 6: The Administration has been, when referring to the OCS, using the talking point that more than 12 million acres of public waters are under lease and over 9.3 million (or 77%) of those acres are non-producing.

As you know, it takes several years, a sizeable investment and significant regulatory compliance to make an offshore non-producing lease productive. This is very different from an inactive lease where there is no effort being made to bring the lease in to production.

- **If you are confirmed, how will ensure mischaracterizations such as these do not continue?**

Response: I understand that nonproducing does not necessarily mean inactive, and that activities to bring leases into production can take time. In my communications I will always strive to explain myself and the administration's policies with the facts. I also understand that the pause on new leasing directed by Executive Order does not affect operations on existing leases, including production and new permitting. Among other things, this means existing leases that are not currently producing may be brought into production through diligent development consistent with law and regulation.

Question 7: The Department has said, "*it is time for the Interior Department to take steps to better manage our public lands*" criticizing the last Administration for offering more than 78 million acres offshore for oil, gas and mineral development.

First, these 78 million acres encompass roughly 5 percent of the total offshore acreage around the entire country including the territories and possessions and was available acreage in planning areas where lease sales were authorized under the current Obama-era 5-year OCS program. Second, during the Obama Administration the Department of Interior changed the OCS leasing policy for lease sales to include entire leasable areas region wide across the Gulf, meaning more acreage could be made available in a single lease sale.

The Department also routinely says just 5 million acres were purchased in lease sales. In a 2018, you wrote a paper for Columbia's Center on Global Energy Policy regarding one of the Department's lease sales where you said,

"... the offshore industry has mostly moved away from bidding speculatively on acreage in the GOM. This more strategic, value-driven approach to leasing decisions also has contributed to the decline in recent years in the number of tracts that receive bids, as well as the number of tracts that receive multiple bids. Companies are focusing on lease blocks that are in prospective areas, fit well with their portfolio, and are close to existing, accessible infrastructure and facilities ... [Lease Sale 250] should not be viewed as a disappointment or sign that the GOM is not attractive for industry investment. On the contrary, last month's region-wide GOM lease sale reflects an industry that evaluates the GOM in the context of a diverse set of global opportunities, remains disciplined in managing costs even as

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commodity prices have ticked upwards, and is focused on making strategic investments in pursuit of value. Those are all positive signs.”

- **Is this criticism about the amount of offshore acreage made available by the previous administration fair given the small percentage it encompasses of total offshore acreage and that it was already available under the current 5-year OCS drilling program?**
- **Do you believe making less acreage available could hinder the ability for companies to make strategic, value-driven decisions when bidding on leases thus potentially impacting the return to taxpayers?**

Response: At my hearing I noted that, in my view, it is appropriate for the Secretary to undertake this review of the oil and gas programs, including through the lens of climate change and ensuring a fair return to the taxpayer, as articulated by the President. It would be appropriate for that review to include how lease sales should be structured.

Question 8: Do you agree that Geophysical and Geological permitting remains integral to development on existing leases and providing data for future hydrocarbon development and locating places for carbon capture and storage, alternative energy siting and infrastructure monitoring?

Response: In general, the acquisition of G&G data is an important part of the offshore oil and gas exploration process.

Question 9: If confirmed will you commit to the timely issuance of Geophysical and Geological permits in the Gulf of Mexico?

Response: The Secretary has made clear that the Department will continue to advance permits and plans associated with existing leases.

Question 10: Section 18 of OCSLA includes a consultation requirement with affected Governors as each leasing program is developed.

- **What is 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 rather than merely telling someone what’s going to happen?**
- **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 cancel or otherwise modify the number of future lease sales?**

Response: As I said at the hearing, my approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. If

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confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department complies with NEPA and the requirements under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and Coastal Zone Management Act.

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Questions from Senator Cindy Hyde Smith

Question 1: Mississippi is home to a rich and varied cross section of our Nation's history. Part of that history tells the painful story of the trade in enslaved people, including the Forks of the Road Slave Market, which is part of the Natchez National Historical Park. In 2017, Congress authorized the National Park Service to acquire land at Forks of the Road. In FY2021, we appropriated \$400,000 within the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase private property within the authorized park boundary. The City of Natchez is also donating city property to support this effort. Remaining updated on the status of NPS's due diligence relating to this donation of city property is highly important. If confirmed, will you commit to work with me to see the bipartisan Forks of the Road project come to fruition?

Response: Yes, if confirmed I will work with you to see that the land acquisition at the historic Forks of the Road site, including the proposed donation by the city of Natchez, is completed and that your office is updated on the process. The site makes an important contribution to telling the full, and in this case painful, story of our nation's history.

Question 2: Do you agree that the offshore leasing plan requires consultation with the coastal governors, and if confirmed, could you explain how you would incorporate said consultation within the Department of Interior on offshore lease sales?

Response: Yes, I agree that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act contains consultation provisions for the Secretary during preparation of a proposed offshore program. As I said at the hearing, my approach to decision-making throughout my career has placed a high value on transparency and communication with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments. I will continue that approach and follow the law, if I am confirmed.

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Questions from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Mr. Beaudreau, the Little Shell Tribe in Montana is the most recent federally recognized tribe in the nation. There were three months between federal recognition and a global pandemic and this has left the Little Shell Tribe in a tough situation as they are still in the process of establishing themselves. Will you commit to reaching out to the Little Shell Tribe and working with them to establish services for their tribal members?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Indian Affairs works with the Little Shell Tribe to support their new Tribal government and operations.

Question 2: Mr. Beaudreau, there is an ongoing public safety crisis in much of Indian Country. BIA law enforcement is severely understaffed and infrastructure problems have created highly unsafe environments. Places like Northern Cheyenne need your support. The Northern Cheyenne are working diligently to reopen the Lama Deer Jail as a holding facility. Can you commit to working with the Tribe to get the holding facility open as quickly as possible?

Response: If confirmed, I would look forward to learning more about this specific facility, as I know that Tribal justice facilities have serious staffing and infrastructure needs that I believe the Department must take seriously. I would be briefed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department and would ensure that we are working with the Tribe as we determine how best to address the issue.

Question 4: Mr. Beaudreau, the Biden Administration has yet to respond to the request by myself and 13 other Senators for a briefing on the 30 X 30 Initiative. The Department of the Interior has been exceedingly sparse on details for what this initiative will encompass which has many Montanans concerned about what it means for working lands, private property rights, and how the Administration intends to utilize authorities under the Antiquities Act. If confirmed, will you commit to communicating with my office frequently on this initiative?

Response: I understand that the 30x30 initiative is meant to be an inclusive approach to comprehensive conservation, that would take into account the good conservation work that does exist on working lands. The administration's report on this initiative was released on May 6. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with your office, and other stakeholders, to accomplish the Administration's goal of conserving 30% of lands and waters by 2030.

Question 5: Mr. Beaudreau, if confirmed will you advocate to include working lands, such as those being managed for grazing or timber or reclaimed lands, in the 30 X 30 initiative and will you commit to a no-net-loss policy for sportsmen and recreational access under this initiative?

Response: As I discussed at the hearing, the 30x30 initiative is intended to be an inclusive approach – providing opportunities at the state and local levels, as well as for private landowners to participate voluntarily in conservation partnerships if they wish to. I also understand that the Department has engaged with landowners, Tribes, hunters, anglers, farmers, ranchers and other key stakeholders in the development of the 30x30 strategy. If confirmed, I would look forward to becoming involved in the 30x30 conservation initiative.

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Question 6: Mr. Beaudreau, the 2015 Cottonwood decision was decided while you were Chief of Staff at the Department of the Interior. Following the case, the Obama Administration filed a petition of certiorari that stated the case had the potential to “cripple forest management.” What was your role in determining how the Obama Administration responded to this lawsuit and do you agree with this assessment on the impacts to forest management?

Response: My recollection is that the Department was not a party to that lawsuit, which primarily involved the U.S. Forest Service. While it would be important to understand the specific legal and program impacts of that decision on the Department’s forest management programs in recent years, I agree that efficiency and predictability are important factors for effective, science-based forest management programs.

Question 7: Mr. Beaudreau, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a joint draft rulemaking last January seeking to address the implications of the 2015 Cottonwood decision via rulemaking. The majority of comments received on the rulemaking have been supportive. If confirmed, what factors will you consider when determining whether to proceed with finalizing this draft rule?

Response: I am committed to finding collaborative, science-based approaches to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests. While I’m not yet at the Department, I understand that the FWS is in the process of responding to comments on the proposed regulation and is determining next steps forward. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of the team involved and learning more about next steps on this matter.

Question 8: Mr. Beaudreau, Western states have invested unprecedented resources and time to conserve sage grouse. Wildlife biologists report, however, that the benefits of habitat conservation efforts won’t be realized for around thirty years due to ecosystem and sage grouse dynamics. If confirmed, how will you consider state conservation efforts—particularly those expected to yield longer term species’ benefits—in listing decisions?

Response: I share a deep appreciation for the importance of close communication and transparency in making decisions that affect state, localities, tribes, and other Department stakeholders. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state and tribal wildlife agencies, which are primary managers of wildlife with significant expertise to offer, to implement the ESA. As I mentioned at the hearing, states and state plans have been essential to sage grouse conservation, in my view.

Question 9: Mr. Beaudreau, last month the Fish and Wildlife Service released the 5-year status review of the grizzly bear in the lower 48-states. The review concluded that the grizzly bear had biologically recovered in the Northern Continental Divide and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystems. The status review only provided a status recommendation for the bear in the lower 48-states since that is how the species is listed, however, the agency can and frequently has moved to list and delist distinct population segments. What is your perspective on the Fish and Wildlife Service’s distinct population segment policy?

Response: As we discussed at my hearing, I would be guided by the science and the law, and would want to understand better what the outlook is for recovery, management, and resiliency for the species. If I am

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confirmed, I would work with the FWS to fully understand these criteria and how they inform the decisions on this particular species and its population areas.

Question 10: Mr. Beaudreau, since the Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the grizzly bear has biologically recovered in the NCDE and GYE and met recovery criteria, do you foresee anything that would prevent the Department of the Interior from moving forward with delisting these two population segments?

Response: The ongoing recovery of the grizzly bear is a remarkable success of the Endangered Species Act. As we discussed at my hearing, I would be guided by the science and the law, and would want to understand better what the outlook is for recovery, management, and resiliency for the species. If I am confirmed, I would work with the FWS to understand these criteria and how they inform the decisions on this particular species and its population areas. It is my understanding that the status of the listing has been the subject of recent litigation and I look forward to learning more about that as well.

Question 11: Mr. Beaudreau, 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. What actions should the department take to streamline permitting and attract more renewable energy projects on federal lands?

Response: President Biden has made clear his intention to address the climate crisis that we face, and the Department's renewable energy programs are a significant component of the Administration's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and build a clean-energy economy. Regulatory processes that are put in place should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I also believe that it is important to be transparent and to work with stakeholders, including states, tribes, and local governments, when making these decisions and I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed.

Question 12: Mr. Beaudreau, 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 should the Department take to facilitate storage projects on federal lands?

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

Question 13: Mr. Beaudreau, when speaking of a clean energy future, would you include hydropower as important component in a carbon free energy grid?

Response: Yes. As I noted in the response to the previous question, hydropower is a source of clean, renewable energy that is an important part of our energy future, and it can also help support the deployment of other renewable technologies on our electricity grid.

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Question 14: Mr. Beaudreau, when speaking of a clean energy future, would you include a coal or natural gas plant fitted with CCUS technology as an important component in a carbon free energy grid?

Response: Like Secretary Haaland, I believe it is fundamental that we tackle the climate crisis by innovating, harnessing our technology and creating jobs. I understand that the Biden Administration is open to many technologies that support carbon capture and sequestration, and other technologies to meet the net zero goal by 2050. I support that approach and I understand that the administration is working to support the development of CCUS technology.

Question 15: Mr. Beaudreau, 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: I do not believe this is an either/or proposition. President Biden strongly supports clean energy generation, including from hydropower sources. At the same time, some dams could be appropriate candidates for removal based on age, impact on other resources, or other factors. If confirmed, I will work to support hydropower on our public lands in a way that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change, and consider specific situations as they arise in their own specific circumstances.

Question 16: Mr. Beaudreau, do you support the breaching of hydropower dams in the Columbia Snake River System?

Response: I am aware of the proposal that you reference, and I look forward to working with experts at the Department and with stakeholders to the extent that this issue arises, if confirmed.

Question 17: Mr. Beaudreau, do you believe we should streamline permitting for offshore marine and in-stream hydrokinetic power?

Response: As I said in response to an earlier question, regulatory processes should always be coordinated, transparent, and efficient and they should follow the law. I will work to ensure that is the case, if confirmed, including for offshore marine and hydrokinetic power.

Question 18: Mr. Beaudreau, where else do you see opportunities to streamline permitting on federal lands?

Response: I believe that the Department's leaders should always be looking for opportunities to make the permitting and other processes that the Department and its bureaus carry out more effective and efficient. If confirmed, I commit to taking this approach in my role at the Department and to ensuring that our regulatory processes are always coordinated, transparent, and efficient.

Question 19: Mr. Beaudreau, 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: That is an interesting question and, if confirmed, I will look forward to discussing this issue further.

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Question 20: Mr. Beaudreau, What actions should the Department or Congress take to ensure communities get a fair return from renewable energy projects on federal land?

Response: It is important that the public get a fair return for the use of its land and resources for energy development. If I am confirmed I would look forward to exploring specific examples and ideas that may be appropriate for renewable resources.

Question 21: Mr. Beaudreau, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture were incorporated into a “wildfire subcabinet” during the Trump Administration to increase coordination with 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: I am not yet part of the Administration and I am not deeply familiar with the specific action referenced in your question, but throughout my career in federal service I have been clear in my belief that coordination among federal agencies is critical to success, and that is particularly important with regard to wildland firefighting efforts. If I am confirmed I will make communication and coordination with the USDA and state and local agencies a priority. I would encourage strong, high level coordination among wildfire agencies and look to learn from best practices from across past administrations.

Question 22: Mr. Beaudreau, as ranking member of the National Parks subcommittee and growing up in the shadow of Yellowstone National Park, I know how important our park system is for conservation and tourism.

a) **How can we better promote our smaller, less visited parks?**

Response: Our parks and public lands are a national treasure. If confirmed, I would encourage these parks to continue the work that many are currently engaged in, such as working with tourist agencies to promote visitation, hosting special events, developing more robust online information, and taking advantage of programs such as Every Kid Outdoors. The Department of the Interior and its leadership have a platform and we can use that to promote all of our public lands, not just the most visited ones, to broaden the economic benefit and equitable access to the outdoors across the nation.

b) **What actions will you take to implement the Great American Outdoors Act?**

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to getting to the Department and working with career staff to ensure that they have the tools necessary to implement the Great American Outdoors Act and to begin addressing the maintenance backlog and improving our federal lands. I will also ensure that the Department in implementing the Land and Water Conservation Fund program. The passage of the Act was a bipartisan success and if confirmed I would be honored to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that implementation is as successful as possible.

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c) How can the Park Service be better partners with gateway communities?

Response: Understanding the interdependency between parks and gateway communities, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the National Park Service leadership, and individual park managers, continually look for ways to work together with gateway community leaders on issues that affect the quality of life for residents, park employees, and visitors. The Park Service can benefit from partnerships with local communities that can leverage resources and in turn, engage in close communication and collaboration on matters of joint interest like planning.