



Western Caucus Interior Omnibus Priorities 3.1.18

1) Fire-Borrowing Fix and Active Forest Management Policies

Position: Include a forestry package that contains both a fire-borrowing fix and active management reforms.

Summary: Members of the Western Caucus want a forestry package that includes both a fire-borrowing fix and active forest management reforms. Catastrophic wildfires are a significant threat to wildlife, watersheds and communities throughout the West. 2017 was one of the worst wildfire seasons on record. More than 58,000 fires burned more than 9.2 million acres. The Forest Service spent more than \$2.5 billion on suppression costs this fiscal year alone - a new record. The House Committee on Natural Resources reports that in 2016, wildfires destroyed 4,312 structures, including 3,192 residences. As a result of 2017 wildfires, Seeley Lake, Montana set a record for the worst air quality ever recorded there - 18 times greater than EPA's safe particle limit. Our Members would like to see a package that mirrors provisions like those in H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act, introduced by Rep. Bruce Westerman. This bill is bipartisan, comprehensive legislation that simplifies the cumbersome planning process and reduces the cost of implementing proactive forest management strategies in order to improve forest health throughout the country. It empowers local stakeholders and decision-making while advancing a forward-thinking active management strategy to combat wildfires before they get started. This bill includes regulatory expedition for forest management projects, an arbitration pilot program for court cases in which an injunction against forest management projects is sought as well as new incentives for agencies to coordinate with state and local governments to seek forest management solutions. The bill also seeks to address the fire-borrowing issue and has passed the House multiple times. Several of our Members also strongly support the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. This legislation could be included for the fire-borrowing fix. While there may not be 100% agreement on the mechanism for the actual fire-borrowing fix, there is almost unanimous agreement amongst our Members that we need a two-prong approach that includes both a fire-borrowing fix and active forest management reforms. In a nutshell, the majority of our Members are open to negotiating but our basic framework starts with a two-prong approach similar to that embodied in H.R. 2936.

2) WOTUS

Position: Retain Section 431 or [an updated version](#) in the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 431 of the House Interior bill seeks to address the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule by authorizing the EPA Administrator and Secretary of the Army to withdraw the Obama Administration's WOTUS rule. The Obama Administration's WOTUS rule attempted to assert Clean Water Act jurisdiction over nearly all areas with even the slightest of connections to

water resources, including man-made conveyances. Farmers, ranchers, job creators and private property owners would suffer under this overreaching water grab. WOTUS contradicts prior Supreme Court decisions and seeks to expand agency control over 60% of our country's streams and millions of acres of wetlands that were previously non-jurisdictional. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a nationwide stay and temporarily blocked implementation of this rule. In June 2017, the EPA proposed a repeal of the Obama rule when it released a proposed rule that sought to re-codify the Clean Water Act as it existed prior to 2015 Obama Administration rule. In January of 2018, the EPA also finalized an applicability rule that sought to delay the 2015 Obama rule by two years to February 6, 2020. Eleven attorney generals and two environmental groups have filed separate cases in the New York court challenging delay of the applicability date and the January 2018 rule. There is also another environmental lawsuit against this delay in South Carolina. Further, in its January 22, 2018 decision, the Supreme Court held that challenges to the WOTUS Rule belong at the district rather than appellate court level, overturning the Sixth Circuit's decision. The Supreme Court subsequently remanded the case to the Sixth Circuit, with instructions to dismiss the case. On 2/28/18, the 6th Circuit lifted the nationwide stay of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule as a result. Without the nationwide stay, if the January 2018 applicability rule is overturned in court, WOTUS would technically take effect immediately for the majority of the country. Accordingly, Congress must act in the upcoming omnibus or other must pass legislation to end litigation and halt the incredibly onerous and overreaching rule from taking effect. In recent years, the House [has voted at least five different times](#) to block or reduce the damage associated with the Obama WOTUS rule. **Further, in January 2016, the House and Senate passed legislation blocking WOTUS utilizing the Congressional Review Act and put a bill on President Obama's desk that he subsequently vetoed.** Retention of Section 431 or an updated version of Section 431 is necessary to address this pending uncertainty for Members and their constituents. Our Members have received technical assistance from the Administration and worked with Leg. Counsel to draft updated and additional language options which can be found [HERE](#).

3) **Ozone Rule**

Position: Retain Section 432 of the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 432 addresses the implementation of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone States that continue to face the burden of implementing two different standards simultaneously. Most states are just beginning to adopt the 75 parts per billion ozone standard proposed in 2008 as the EPA didn't announce implementation guidance and a final rule until March 6, 2015. Rather than allowing time for that standard to be implemented, the Obama Administration moved the goal posts and unilaterally sought to dramatically lower the ozone standard once again to 70 parts per billion on October 1, 2015. According to Obama Administration data, 241 counties will violate the 70 ppb standard. Industry analysis projects a significantly higher number, with an estimated 958 counties falling into nonattainment under the 70 ppb standard. More than [260 organizations](#) representing businesses of all sizes, oppose the 70 parts per billion standard. Including Section 432 will give states and businesses the needed time to fully implement two different ozone standards sequentially in a more realistic and coordinated manner. In June 2017, the Trump Administration proposed to delay the October 2015 Ozone Rule promulgated by the Obama Administration's EPA. However, the EPA reversed course and canceled this one-year delay in August 2017. Further, on March 1, 2018, the EPA [issued a final rule](#) establishing the air quality thresholds that define each of the five Clean Air Act classifications for areas designated nonattainment for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone; and establishing the attainment deadline associated with each classification. While the March 1st rule deals mostly with timeliness, and there will be

at least one other final rule, this action shows the agency is currently taking steps to implement the burdensome October 1 rule as a result of court direction. Retaining Section 432 is a top priority for Members of the Western Caucus and their constituents as a result. For more information, click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

4) Wolves

Position: Retain Section 116 and an [updated Section 117](#) of the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 116 directs the Secretary to reissue two final rules that will remove recovered wolves in Wyoming and the Great Lakes from the endangered species list. The Wyoming rule is consistent with the D.C Circuit Court of Appeals decision. Section 117 prohibits the treatment of gray wolves range-wide as an endangered or threatened species. On June 13, 2013, Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a proposed rule that would remove the Gray Wolf from the “List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.” This determination was made after the FWS “evaluated the classification status of gray wolves currently listed in the contiguous United States” and found the “best available scientific and commercial information indicates that the currently listed entity is not a valid species under the Act.” Fully delisting the Gray Wolf under the Endangered Species Act will allow state wildlife officials to more effectively manage wolf populations – as we have seen is possible in states such as Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Even extreme environmentalist groups agree that, “The return of gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains and the Great Lakes has been an incredible success story.” This [updated Section 117](#) language is necessary as technical advice from the Department of the Interior indicated that the current Section 117 “language does not delist the species, it simply prohibits DOI from using appropriated funds on wolves. Technically the species would still be listed and take would be prohibited so a 3rd party could take an action against the Department.” For more information, click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). As previously mentioned, our Members have received technical assistance from the Administration and worked with Leg. Counsel to draft updated and additional language options which can be found [HERE](#).

5) Wild Horse and Burros

Position: Retain Section 114 of the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 114 permits the humane transfer of excess wild horses and burros for work purposes. The provision begins to address the numbers problem by allowing the BLM to transfer any wild horses to any requesting federal, state or local government requesting a work animal. This provision prevents horses transferred for work purposes from being used for commercial product purposes and also prevents horse slaughter. There are more than 68,000 wild horses on the ranges, twice as many as the BLM recommends. That number is growing by 20 percent a year, and due to the overpopulation, horses are inhumanely dying of thirst and starvation. The BLM continues to take horses off the ranges, but their own numbers estimate that it will cost more than \$1 billion to care for the wild horses they already have in captivity. For more information, click [HERE](#).

6) [Long \(MO\)](#), [Westerman \(AR\)](#), [Gosar \(AZ\)](#), [Costa \(CA\)](#) Livestock Amendment

Position: Retain this amendment that passed the House in the omnibus.

Summary: This bipartisan amendment adopted by the House on a voice vote makes clear that

day-to-day farm activities are not subject to regulation under industrial toxic waste cleanup laws. When Congress enacted CERCLA and EPCRA several decades ago, it did not intend for family farms to be treated as hazardous waste cleanup sites, and this amendment makes that clear. Thousands of farms and ranches across the nation will be forced to report their daily emissions to the EPA or face liability of up to \$53,907 per day. Congress must act to ensure that the EPA is not required to implement this overly burdensome court decision. Representative Long circulated a letter in December signed by numerous Members of the Western Caucus asking appropriators to retain this amendment. The amendment also has significant support from the Ag industry. For more information, click [HERE](#).

7) [Jason Smith-Gianforte EAJA Amendment](#)

Position: Retain this amendment that passed the House in the omnibus.

Summary: Passed the House by voice vote. The amendment prevents federal agencies from using funds to pay legal fees under any lawsuit settlement regarding a case that arises under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. In recent years we have seen a sharp increase in a practice called “Sue and Settle”. This happens when a federal agency accepts a lawsuit from an outside advocacy organization and then, rather than defend itself, proceeds to settle that lawsuit in a closed-door agreement. Through this process; the advocacy group, often motivated by a radical agenda, as part of the settlement gets to dictate the priorities and duties of that agency resulting in new regulations through legally-binding, court-approved settlements. If that isn’t bad enough, taxpayers are responsible for footing the legal bill for the attorneys of the radical organizations who filed suit. Subject to little to no oversight, this process shuts out the public and Congress from participation in the regulatory process. Nowhere are these settlements more costly in their outcome than in the environmental regulatory context. Between 2009-2012 the EPA chose not to defend itself in over 60 of these lawsuits with outside environmental advocacy groups. The resulting settlements were responsible for more than 100 new regulations and billions of dollars of taxpayer money squandered.

8) [Payments in Lieu of Taxes \(PILT\) program](#)

Position: Ensure the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program is fully-funded.

Summary: Page 52 of the House Interior bill includes \$465 million in funding for PILT for FY18. PILT provides critical resources to nearly 1,900 counties across 49 states to offset lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions. These dollars go toward supporting many critical services that counties are required to provide on federal public lands, despite their inability to collect property taxes on federal lands. As counties across the United States work to balance their budgets, it is essential that we act to reaffirm the federal government’s long-standing commitment to local governments and fully fund PILT. For more information, click [HERE](#).

9) [Pearce BLM Venting and Flaring Amendment](#)

Position: Retain Pearce Section 460 that passed the House in the omnibus.

Summary: Passed the House by a recorded vote of 216-186. The (BLM) Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule – colloquially known as the Venting and Flaring Rule or the BLM Methane Rule – represents one of the Obama Administration’s most egregious abuses of executive power designed to stifle responsible energy

production on federal lands. This 2016 Obama rule included numerous administrative and regulatory burdens that are not necessary and would have significantly hindered job creation, energy production and economic growth. Further, the revised analysis by the Trump Administration found that the Obama rule's compliance costs for industry and implementation costs for the BLM would exceed the rule's benefits by nearly a billion dollars over a ten-year period. Obama's BLM exceeded their statutory authority with this new regulation by attempting to regulate air quality – an authority that by law is vested solely with the EPA. Methane emissions from oil and natural gas have significantly declined in recent decades without the blunt cudgel of duplicative federal regulations - and at a time when oil and gas production in the U.S. has surged. Given ongoing legal challenges, retaining this provision in the omnibus is a priority for Western Energy Alliance and small producers. In February, a San Francisco-based judge granted extremist environmentalist groups' preliminary injunction, meaning the 2016 BLM venting and flaring rule is technically in full effect immediately if Congress doesn't act. H.J. Res. 36, a Congressional Review Act bill by Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop that sought to block the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Venting and Flaring Rule passed the House 221-191 with a bipartisan vote on 2/3/17. Western Caucus Members support updating this language to say, "None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce the rule..." or simply repealing the rule. For more information, click [HERE](#).

10) [Mullin](#) EPA Methane Amendment

Position: Retain this amendment that passed the House in the omnibus.

Summary: Passed the House by a recorded vote of 218-195. The amendment prohibits funds for enforcing the Obama Administration's EPA methane rule. On March 28, 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13783; directing federal agencies to review existing regulations and policies that potentially burden domestic energy production. The Executive Order specifically required the EPA to review the Obama Administration's June 2016 EPA Methane Rule. The June 2016 Obama regulation went into effect in August 2016. However, several industry groups petitioned EPA to reconsider, "arguing reconsideration was mandatory because the final rule included provisions not set forth in the proposed rule. Finding the petitions raised at least one objection warranting reconsideration, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced that EPA would issue a 90-day stay." The D.C. Circuit vacated EPA's 90-day stay on July 3, 2017. On July 31, 2017, the D.C. Circuit ruled [EPA must enforce the methane rule](#). The Obama EPA methane rule is unnecessary; given methane is a product that industry is in the business of selling, not wasting, but also because it is duplicative, costly, and detrimental to our economy. By the Obama EPA's own numbers, methane emissions decreased while production increased over the same time period. The current status of this matter is the EPA is obligated to enforce the Obama rule as a result of July 31, 2017 decision by the D.C. Circuit Court. As a result, Congress must act to block this job-killing regulation estimated to cost our economy \$530 million annually. Given ongoing legal challenges, retaining this provision in the omnibus is a priority for Western Energy Alliance and small producers. Western Caucus Members would also support updating this language to simply repeal the rule. For more information, click [HERE](#).

11) CEMEX Soledad Mine issue and Feinstein Section 124(a) rider

Position: Members of the Western Caucus **are strongly OPPOSED** to inclusion of the Senate's Section 124(a) in the omnibus. 44 members of the House sent a [letter](#) on 2/16/18 asking that this provision not be included. Members of the Western Caucus are also **OPPOSED** to including a possible land exchange on behalf of Steve Knight on this issue in the Omnibus that would trigger the earmark rule and that has not gone through regular order.

Summary: The Senate Interior Appropriations bill includes Section 124(a) that purports to withdraw the mineral estate of two CEMEX contracts approved by the BLM. This misguided provision, included at the behest of Senator Feinstein, represents another political attempt to short-circuit CEMEX's Soledad operations and prevent the company from fulfilling two contracts issued by the BLM. A similar amendment put forth in the House was withdrawn due to overwhelming opposition and impending failure. Help us stop the Feinstein land grab that aims to prevent a mine from opening that is expected to produce 56 million tons of sand and gravel that is critically important to American infrastructure. For more information, click [HERE](#).

12) Address the Obama Administration's 240,000 acre land grab in Minnesota with Rep. Emmer Provision

Positions:

- Western Caucus Members **are strongly OPPOSED** to this language included in the Committee Report. "*Superior National Forest — The Committee encourages the Service to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management to complete a thorough environmental impact statement evaluating the proposal to withdraw nearly 235,000 acres of National Forest System lands in the Rainy River Watershed from mineral leasing for a period of 20 years, considering the economic, environmental, public health, and other related issues raised during the scoping process.*" This EIS withdrawal review language places an immediate two-year moratorium on mining in this massive area while the 20-year moratorium is being considered. Time is money and this additional review is unnecessary. NEPA requires a full environmental review once a mining plan has been proposed and that is the proper review process.
- Western Caucus Members **SUPPORT** retaining Rep. Emmer's Section [449](#) or including his bill H.R. 3905, both of which reject the previous Administration's MN land grab.

Summary: Just before leaving office, the Obama Administration proposed a land grab that will cause significant harm to Minnesota communities in the form of 234,328 acre mineral withdrawal of National Forest System (NFS) lands, for a 20-year term, within the Rainy River Watershed on the Superior National Forest. 17,000 jobs, \$3 billion for education, \$1.5 billion in annual wages, \$2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore – this is what is at risk if the Obama land grab is not overturned. H.R. 3905 passed the House with strong bipartisan support. Section [449](#) passed the House with unanimous consent. For more information, click [HERE](#), [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

13) Sage Grouse

Position: Retain Section 113 of the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: The Department of Interior under the Obama Administration found in 2015 that a listing of the Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was not warranted. However, the agency unilaterally chose to implement a de facto listing through overly restrictive Resource Management Plan (RMPs) Amendments and Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMPs) Amendments. These RMPs and LRMPs are in many cases more restrictive than a critical habitat designation would be under an ESA listing and sought to prevent responsible mineral production, grazing and other activities across 11 Western states. While Section 113 doesn't solve the Sage Grouse problem, inclusion of this rider is necessary for protection as DOI and other agencies seek to unwind the Obama Administration RMPs and LRMPs. This provision has been included in

omnibus bills since fiscal year 2015. For more information, click [HERE](#).

14) Scott Tipton Water Rights Protection Act

Position: Include this bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Western Caucus Member Scott Tipton's Water Rights Protection Act prevents the federal government from taking privately held water rights without just compensation. This would protect a variety of water users including rural communities, businesses, recreation opportunities, farmers and ranchers as well as other individuals that rely on privately held water rights for their livelihood. It does so by prohibiting federal agencies from extorting water rights through the use of permits, leases, and other land management arrangements, for which it would otherwise have to pay just compensation under the 5th Amendment of the Constitution. This legislation is necessary as the Forest Service and BLM have been aggressively pursuing such takings for several years now. The Water Rights Protection Act passed out of the House of Representatives with bipartisan support in the 113th, 114th and 115th Congresses. For more information, click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

15) Biggs Shooting and Hunting Provision

Position: Retain Section 436 of the House Interior bill in the omnibus.

Summary: This provision ensures hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting remain a priority on public lands. Federal agencies have repeatedly restricted public access to public lands under the guise of safety, resulting in the loss of our sportsmen's recreational activities. Such restrictions have negative effects on our economy, and our constituents' rights to hunt, fish, and shoot on federal lands. Enactment of this provision will be a good step towards protecting these long-standing American traditions. Further, this Section is necessary to protect recreational access in light of misguided actions by the previous Administration that closed public lands to hunters and shooters. For more information, click [HERE](#).

16) Extension of Grazing Permits

Position: Retain Section 423.

Summary: Section 423 extends certain authorities through fiscal year 2018 allowing the Forest Service to renew grazing permits for an additional year. The renewal will follow the same terms as those required in section of Public Law 108–108 (117 Stat. 1307), regarding grazing permits issued by the Forest Service on any lands not subject to administration under section 402 of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1752). Protecting grazing rights is important to Members of the Western Caucus and their constituents. This provision was passed into law previously in the form of H.R. 244, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017.

17) National Oceans Policy

Position: Retain Section 505 in the omnibus.

Summary: This provision seeks to block further implementation of the National Ocean Policy. On July 19th, 2010 President Obama signed [Executive Order 13547](#) and sought to implement a new National Ocean Policy. According to the House Committee on Natural Resources, "In this unilateral action, he established a top-down, Washington, D.C.–based approval process that will

hinder rather than promote ocean and inland activities and cost American jobs...This has the potential to inflict damage across a spectrum of sectors including agriculture, fishing, construction, manufacturing, mining, oil and natural gas, renewable energy, and marine commerce, among others... Over 80 national and local organizations representing agriculture, forestry, energy, fishing, boating, mining, transportation and construction [wrote](#) to [then] Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers requesting a prohibition on funding for the implementation of the President's National Ocean Policy.”

18) **Include Onshore Orders Report Language**

Position: Include report language on BLM Onshore Orders 3, 4 and 5.

Summary: Stakeholders are willing to work with the Administration to ensure proper implementation of BLM Onshore Orders 3, 4 and 5. They would like to see report language included to the effect of, “The Committee directs the Bureau to work expeditiously with interested stakeholders to address technical and implementation issues associated with Onshore Orders 3, 4 and 5.” [Rep. Pearce's](#) Onshore Order 3 Amendment to prevent funds being used to implement the Obama Administration's BLM Onshore Order 3 rule finalized on November 17, 2016, passed the House by a voice vote. [Rep. Westerman's](#) Onshore Order 4 Amendment to prevent funds being to implement the Obama Administration's BLM Onshore Order 4 rule finalized on November 17, 2016, passed the House by a voice vote. Stakeholders are now willing to drop these riders if the agency works with them on implementation. For more information, click [HERE](#), [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

19) [Don Young](#) Amendment to Block Obama's Arctic Drilling Rule

Position: Include this provision.

Summary: The Young provision seeks to prohibit funds from being used for the Obama Administration's Arctic Drilling rule. This amendment passed the House by voice previously. Rep. Young also introduced H.J. Res 70 to block this Obama rule. The SECURE American Energy Act also includes a provision that seeks to prohibit the Department of the Interior from enforcing this rule. On July 15, 2016, the Obama Administration finalized a new Arctic drilling rule. The rule, which governs all future offshore exploration in the Beaufort Sea and Chukchi Sea, has faced significant criticism since its proposal, particularly regarding its overly prescriptive application of restrictions, extreme costs, and failure to consider the substantial innovations in safety technology that are suitable for the low pressure/low temperature environment in the Arctic – as opposed to high pressure/ high temperature needs of the Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Interior cost-benefit analysis has estimated the rule will cost \$2.1 billion in compliance, adding exorbitant costs to the already billions of dollars needed to acquire leases and responsibly develop in the Arctic. A 2011 analysis found that development of those resources would create an annual average of 55,000 jobs over a 50-year period and generate a total of \$193 billion for local, state, and federal treasuries. According to a 2014 poll, 73 percent of Alaskans support Arctic OCS development. The Obama Administration's final Arctic Rule is overly burdensome and costly. Note: text may need updated to reflect that the final rule was issued on 7/16/16. Western Caucus Members would also support updating to state that the rule is repealed or shall have no force or effect. For more information, click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

20) **Vacant Lots for Grazing for those Impacted by Drought or Wildland Fire**

Position: Retain Section 437 in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 437 makes available vacant allotments for permittees impacted by drought or wildland fire. Farmers and ranchers throughout the country are struggling. Many have seen their operations negatively impacted due to fires and drought. Drought conditions have caused growing seasons to lengthen by nearly two weeks since 1950 in the Midwest alone. 2017 was one of the worst wildfire seasons on record. More than 58,000 fires burned more than 9.2 million acres. The Forest Service spent more than \$2.5 billion on suppression costs this fiscal year alone - a new record. Droughts and wildland fires threaten our food supply and the livelihoods of rural economies. Drought alone is estimated to have cost the U.S. economy \$50 billion from 2011 to 2013. Making land available for grazing to replace lands made unusable by drought or wildfire is just commonsense.

21) Wolf-Livestock Loss Demonstration Program

Position: Maintain funding for the Wolf-Livestock Loss Demonstration Program.

Summary: Page 15 of the House Committee Report states, “The Wolf-Livestock Loss Demonstration Program is restored to the fiscal year 2017 enacted level of \$1,000,000 but is transferred to the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.” Members of the Western Caucus support this important program that provides ranchers a small fraction of what they are owed when they can prove their livestock was killed due to a wolf attack. Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates oversight of the Mexican wolf and other wolf recovery programs, the federal government often bears some responsibility for these attacks.

22) IHS Funding

Position: Maintain funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS).

Summary: As stated in the Committee report, “The Indian Health Service (IHS) provides direct health care services in 28 hospitals, 61 health centers, three school health centers, and 34 health stations. Tribes and Tribal groups, through contracts and compacts with the IHS, operate 17 hospitals, 249 health centers, six school health centers, and 70 health stations (including 164 Alaska Native village clinics).” Significant cuts to IHS were proposed by the Administration. The Committee restored funding to the in the House bill. Members of the Western Caucus are supportive of providing IHS funding critical to tribal communities.

23) Tamarisk Report Language

Position: Retain tamarisk report language on page 48.

Summary: The report language states, “Tamarisk Eradication.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture, other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, private entities, and communities to establish a scientifically based and watershed-focused pilot program to eradicate tamarisk in the southwestern United States.” Members of the Western Caucus have consistently pushed for such coordination as invasive tamarisks are soaking up as much as 200 gallons of water per day per plant and many of our communities have significant water shortages.

24) Mexican Gray Wolf and Red Wolf Report Language

Position: Retain Gray wolf and red wolf report language on page 15.

Summary: The report language states, “The service is directed to, within 60 days of enactment of this Act, review and determine whether Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus Baileyi*) is a genetically valid subspecies designation and whether the red wolf (*Canis rufus*) is a genetically valid species designation. The Service shall complete its work and publish a report to Congress not later than one year from the date of enactment of this Act.” The House previously passed an amendment by a recorded vote to allow for the state management of the Mexican gray wolf.

25) Ocean City Protectionist Provision

Position: Numerous Members of the Western Caucus as well as the National Oceans Industries Association (NOIA) **are OPPOSED** to including Section 438 of the House bill in the omnibus.

Summary: Section 438 limits funds for activities related to wind turbines less than 24 nautical miles from the State of Maryland shoreline. Most of our Members support an all-of the-above strategy. NOIA sent a [letter on 8.10.17](#) stating they oppose inclusion of this provision “which would restrict the ability of the Department of the Interior to administer offshore wind leases within 24 miles of the State of Maryland shoreline in fiscal year 2018... We are concerned that the language in Section 438 would violate the lease contract sanctity which is critical to the responsible and timely development of offshore energy resources.”