

House Committee on Natural Resources

Examining the President's FY2026 Budget Request for the Department of Interior – Full Committee
Oversight Hearing
June 12, 2025

Overview:

This full committee hearing discusses the Department of Interior's (DOI) budget request for FY 2026. DOI Secretary, Doug Burgum testified.

Rep. Bruce Westerman, (Chair, R-AR)

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Rep. Jared Huffman, (Ranking Member, D-CA)

- Raised concerns about the impacts of “BIA firings and funding freezes” to the work that the Department is responsible to do; for example, efforts to prepare and respond to the wildfire season.

Issues related to Tribal food and agriculture:

Trust Responsibilities and Funding Cuts

- Rep. Huffman (D-CA) and Repl. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM) criticized funding freezes and staffing cuts at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which are stalling housing, public safety, and education projects.
- Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NM) described the situation as a “crisis” in Indian Country, citing mass firings, grant freezes, and lack of consultation.

Tribal Sovereignty and Resource Development

- Rep. Jeff Hurd, (R-CO) and Rep. Nick Begich (R-AK) emphasized the importance of Tribal sovereignty in energy development.
- Secretary Burgum praised the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation for their economic transformation through energy sovereignty.

Climate Grants and Tribal Access

- Concerns were raised about climate-related grant requirements and whether Tribes would be excluded if they didn't include climate change language in applications.
- Burgum stated that going forward, climate language would not be a requirement for grant eligibility.

Additional Notable Points

- Rep. Pablo Jose Hernandez (D-PR) discussed the status and rights of U.S. territories and freely associated states, including birthright citizenship and self-governance.
- Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NM) requested a full review of the administration's Tribal policies and a commitment to meaningful consultation.