

## House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands

March 26, 2026

Legislative Hearing on H.R.6778, H.R.7618, H.R.7951, and H.R.7979

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### **Highlight:**

This event was a legislative hearing on four bills, including H.R. 7951, the Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act, sponsored by [Rep. David Valadao](#) (R-CA) and [Rep. Jimmy Panetta](#), (D-CA). The bill would strengthen the Good Neighbor Authority Act by extending agreements from 10 years to 20 years. GNA is already a proven tool that allows USDA's Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to partner with state, Tribal, and local governments.

### **Opening Statements:**

[Rep. Tom Tiffany](#), Chairman (R-WI)

- Historic drought conditions have led to significant wildfires, amounting to 1.4 million acres this year.
- The subcommittee will consider important legislation to improve active forest management across jurisdictional boundaries.
- The Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act (GNA) would strengthen the GNA, which is a highly successful partnership among states, Tribes, and counties.
- Extending agreements up to 20 years is a bipartisan effort that would provide “greater certainty for long term coordination and encouraging the sustained investments needed to increase the pace and scale of forest management.”

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

- The Representative did not make direct references to Tribal nutrition and agriculture, nor the Long-Term GNA (H.R.7951).

### **Witness Statements:**

[Mr. Charles Cuvelier](#), Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, National Park Service

- The Department values its long-standing and productive collaboration with Tribal governments; appreciates that the bill would ensure clear and consistent application of the GNA for Tribes.
- H.R.7951 would clarify eligibility under the GNA for Indian Tribes and set statutory limits on the duration of GNA agreements. The Department welcomes the opportunity to work with the bill sponsors regarding the effective and efficient implementation of the GNA.
- The Department supports the amendments as they are expected to encourage longer term GNA agreements and reduce the administrative burden of short-term agreement renewals.

Ms. Ellen Shultzabarger, Associate Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service

- USDA sees H.R.7951 as having countless benefits, clean drinking water, forest products, and more.
- Keeping these benefits requires forest management in partnership with stakeholders.
- Long-Term GNA provides additional flexibility, enabling GNA agreements that authorize recreation and restoration services for a term of up to 20 years.
- The GNA helps USDA meet strategic goals in active forest management by building capacity through workforce alignment and partnerships. The Department has seen 540 active GNA agreements across 39 states, with growing numbers from Tribal nations.

**Tribal-related issues:**

Rep. Russ Fulcher, (R-ID) asked whether Tribes and counties have engaged in GNA. Ms. Shultzabarger responded that there has been an increase in Tribes and counties participating in the program, citing that the Department has recently signed a Tribe in Oregon (note: Ms. Shultzabarger could not remember the name of the Tribe).

**Other witnesses present:**

Mr. Shawn Thomas, Administrator/State Forester, Forestry and Trust Lands Division, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Mr. Chad Hixon, Executive Director, Trails Preservation Alliance

The Hon. Jeffery C. McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Mr. David Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust