

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

OVERSIGHT PLAN

112TH CONGRESS



Chairman Doc Hastings

*****PROPOSED – PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL *****

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Introduction

Under clause 2 of Rule X of the House of Representatives, each standing committee of the House has general oversight responsibilities to determine whether laws and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction are being implemented in accordance with the intent of Congress and to determine whether they should be continued, reformed, curtailed, or eliminated.

In past Congresses, the Committee on Natural Resources has been lax in performing a core Constitutional duty of the Legislative Branch to examine and question the Executive Branch's implementation and administration of laws written by the Congress. This lack of fundamental oversight by the Committee occurred under both Democrat and Republican Majorities, and when examining both Democrat and Republican Presidential Administrations.

In the 112th Congress, the Committee on Natural Resources, and its five Subcommittees, will be fully committed to fulfilling their oversight responsibilities. In prioritizing the oversight work of the Committee and Subcommittees, the emphasis will be placed first and foremost on 1) job creation and economic growth, and 2) reducing spending and eliminating unnecessary, duplicative and unaffordable government programs.

This oversight plan outlines the initial, primary focuses of the Committee and Subcommittees, though additional oversight activities are expected to be generated throughout the first and second sessions of the Congress. As the Committee and Subcommittees review the budgets, spending and merit of programs and agencies under their jurisdiction, it is expected that these additional oversight topics will be brought to light and addressed in an open, transparent manner. And as the Committee shines a spotlight on the regulations and policies unilaterally imposed or proposed by the Interior Department and other agencies, further oversight needs will assuredly be identified.

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Creating Jobs and Increasing Energy Independence Through Safe and Responsible All-of-the-Above Energy and Mineral Production – The Subcommittee and full Committee will examine the nation’s energy and mineral policies, how they affect the nation’s economy and job creation, how they affect the viability of domestic energy (including renewable and alternative sources) and domestic manufacturing (both industrial and high-tech), and how the Administration’s actions are affecting gasoline prices, energy costs, and revenues for federal and state treasuries. A prime focus will be upon the importance of and need for an all-of-the above approach to increase domestic energy production and strengthen our mineral security to create high-paying family wage jobs, increase our economic competitiveness and strengthen our national security.

Budget and Spending Review – The Subcommittee’s jurisdiction covers five Interior Department agencies, and programs within two others: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety, Environment and Enforcement (BSEE), Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), Office of Surface Mining (OSM) and the energy and minerals programs of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The Subcommittee will examine each of these agencies for opportunities to streamline, reduce costs, and either close or consolidate outdated programs.

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Natural Gas – Ensuring the safety and viability of American offshore oil and natural gas production will be a prime focus of the full Committee and Subcommittee. Oversight activities will be broad and inclusive of the many timely issues relating to the OCS. These include: the April 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill, as well as its causes and the response by both the federal government and responsible parties; the impact on and ongoing needs of Gulf Coast communities; the structure of federal regulatory agencies and Interior Department’s reorganization of the Minerals Management Service into three new divisions (BOEM, BSEE, ONRR); reforms to existing laws governing offshore activities and the oil spill response; the Administration’s de facto moratorium in the Gulf and its impact on jobs and domestic supply; the official moratoriums imposed by President Obama on multiple areas of the OCS, as well as the ability to proceed with activities in areas of Alaska; and the importance of domestic production to job creation and America’s economic and national security.

Onshore Oil and Natural Gas Programs – The Subcommittee will hold hearings on the state of oil and gas leasing on federal onshore lands in the western United States. Hearings will focus on leasing delays and declines in production from federal lands. The Subcommittee will focus on specific controversies associated with leasing in Utah, Montana and Wyoming, as well as the newly proposed policy related to use of hydraulic fracturing on federal lands.

Gasoline Prices – The Subcommittee will conduct hearings on the price of gasoline and oil and its impact on family budgets, small businesses, and job creation and economic activity generally. This examination of gas and oil prices will include review of America’s dependence on foreign oil and natural gas, and the ability to reduce our dependence through specific domestic production activities.

Royalties and Revenues – In 2008, the federal government raised more than \$23 billion in revenue from bonus bids, rents and royalties related to oil and gas activities on federal lands. Today, with oil prices at or near the same level, the revenue estimates for fiscal year 2011 could be as low as \$7.5 billion, a decline of more than 60%. At a time of record national debt and federal budget deficits, as well as high unemployment, it is important for the Subcommittee to examine the causes of this decline and opportunities for creating jobs and generating additional revenue for the federal and state governments through new activity. There will also be an examination of the current royalty collection system, including technology advancements that could reduce costs and improve accuracy of collection.

Renewable and Alternative Energy – The Subcommittee will conduct oversight over current solar, geothermal and wind programs operated by BLM and USFS, and examine what steps may be necessary to advance and speed the deployment of these technologies on federal lands. The Subcommittee will also explore the advancements in OCS wind leasing, including what steps, if any, are needed to help streamline the leasing and permitting of new wind facilities on the OCS to ensure that those interested in promoting OCS wind resources can create jobs and are not delayed by federal bureaucratic red tape.

National Minerals Security Strategy – The Subcommittee will be conducting a multifaceted oversight strategy related to the development of a National Minerals Security Strategy. In the last year, there were significant concerns raised about the ability to obtain strategic minerals by business, industry and government sources. This is a serious national economic and security dilemma. It also greatly impacts related jobs throughout the country. The Subcommittee intends to conduct oversight on a broad range of strategic minerals, including, but not limited to, rare earth elements, uranium, and copper. This will include a review of domestic resources, current and planned production, and possible future production opportunities. The Subcommittee will also review, and possibly consider legislation to improve, abandoned mine clean-up.

Coal Mining Regulations and Leasing – The Department of the Interior is actively participating in the Obama Administration’s war on coal, which is causing real economic hardship for coal miners, their families and coal communities in the United States. The policies of this Administration could well cause future unemployment of all coal miners to the detriment of our national security, economic well-being and energy affordability. Oversight focuses will include regulatory changes to: the classification and use of coal ash, the stream buffer zone rule, new standards for “conductivity,” and impacts of the roadless rule regulations on mining operations. In addition to budgetary oversight of the Office of Surfacing Mining, the Subcommittee will focus on the current effectiveness of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) and problems associated with permit approvals. “Clean coal” will also be a focus.

Federal Mapping Programs – The federal government spends billions each year on new geospatial data – spending which is frequently duplicative and uncoordinated. During hearings last year, witnesses made clear that multiple Administrations have exerted little control, central oversight or effective management. The Subcommittee intends to examine this issue and may consider legislation to consolidate and streamline the geospatial programs to reduce waste and duplication. In addition, the Subcommittee intends to conduct oversight of federal agencies and how they track and monitor their land management responsibilities and purposes.

Oil Shale Research, Demonstration and Development Leasing – The oil shale lands managed by BLM are the largest known concentration of oil shale in the world – what the U.S. Geological Survey estimates to be the equivalent of 800 billion barrels of recoverable oil. This estimate means this resource would be enough to meet U.S. demand for oil at current usage levels for 110 years. The bipartisan Energy Policy Act of 2005 included direction for BLM to establish commercial and research, demonstration and development (RD&D) leasing programs for oil shale resources. This program reached a high point with the completion of long-developed commercial oil shale rules and a successful RD&D leasing process. Since then the Administration has injected uncertainty into the commercial shale rules and changed the terms of the RD&D leases under a second lease offering. These steps have resulted in a significant decline in private sector investment and research on oil shale. By stalling action, new job creation is stymied. The Subcommittee plans to examine the impacts of this uncertainty, the status of oil shale research leases and programs, and consider legislation to set the oil shale program back on the path toward success.

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs

Budget and Spending Review – The Subcommittee will examine the President’s Fiscal Year 2012 budget recommendations, as well as existing spending levels, for the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Insular Affairs, within the Department of the Interior, and the National Marine Fisheries Service and certain “wet” programs of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) within the Department of Commerce. Stimulus spending under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will also be examined, with an emphasis on examining how the \$4 billion provided to these agencies was spent, how many permanent, part-time or temporary jobs were created and how the operations and maintenance backlog of these agencies has been affected.

Disabled Sportsmen’s Access Act of 1998 – More than a decade ago, the Congress amended the Sikes Act of 1960 to encourage the Department of Defense to provide recreational opportunities for disabled individuals. A recent survey has indicated that only 25 of the 400 military installations throughout the country have made any attempt to provide facilities for disabled persons to hunt or fish.

Invasive Species – There are now thousands of acres of land in the United States that are overrun by invasive species, including Asian carp, feral pigs, Giant Salvinia, and zebra mussels. These foreign invaders are destroying valuable infrastructure and are costing taxpayers millions of lost dollars.

Lacey Act Listing of Constrictor Snakes – The Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a proposed rule adding nine nonnative constrictor snakes species to the Lacey Act, which prohibits import as well as interstate commerce in listed species. Oversight is needed to assess this proposal and the impact of this listing on hundreds of thousands of pet-owners, thousands of pet stores, and economic activity that measures in the millions of dollars annually.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – This Foundation was legislatively created to assist the Fish and Wildlife Service in the conservation of its wildlife resources. The authorization of taxpayer funds expired on September 30, 2010. As a new authorization is considered, the Subcommittee will hear from the Foundation and interested and impacted parties.

National Wildlife Refuge System Operations and Maintenance Backlog – According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the backlog exceeds \$3.4 billion, and there are a total of 12,795 deferred projects. Of this total, 3,472 projects were considered “mission critical” to the refuge system.

Refuge Revenue Sharing – In 1935, Congress enacted the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act. The purpose of this law was to compensate local communities for the loss of tax revenues when private land is incorporated within the National Wildlife Refuge System. For the past 15 years, the amount of money paid to the counties has decreased from 77 percent to a mere 36 percent of payments.

White-Nose Syndrome – First documented in February 2006 outside of Albany, New York, the White-Nose syndrome (WNS) has spread rapidly across the Eastern United States killing more

than 1 million bats that hibernate in caves and mines. The Subcommittee will obtain the most current information on the impact of WNS on bat species, how federal, state and local officials are responding to its spread, what has been the economic impact of closing hundreds of caves, and what has been learned from federal funds spent seeking an explanation of WNS.

Wildlife Management within the National Wildlife Refuge System – During the past two years, there has been a tremendous increase in the federal acquisition of private land for inclusion within the refuge system. This has occurred as the operations and maintenance backlog continues to skyrocket. The Subcommittee will examine how this dramatic shift in funding is affecting wildlife management, what adverse effects it has caused on fish and wildlife populations, and whether unnecessary access restrictions have been placed on anglers, hunters and recreationists.

Insular Areas General Oversight – The Subcommittee expects to review the fundamental issues facing each of the territories and freely associated states: support and development of self-government and self-determination; job creation, economic development and self-sufficiency through the private sector; accountability of federal funds; enforcement of federal laws; implementation and funding for the Compacts of Free Association; and management of limited land and water resources.

International Fisheries Agreements and International Compliance – In addition to numerous international fisheries treaties already in existence, a number of new international treaties and agreements are being negotiated to ensure compliance of vessels fishing on the high seas. In addition, the U.S. has taken aggressive action to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing practices. The Subcommittee will examine the need for such treaties and how the IUU fishing practices harm the U.S. fishing industry.

Ocean Governance/National Ocean Council and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning – Through an Executive Order, the White House created a new National Ocean Council (NOC) and a structure for a new Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning initiative. The Committee and Subcommittee will examine the authority used to create this entity and initiative, what sources of funding will be used, what authorities this new entity will have, what effect any new policy initiatives from the NOC will have on other departments and agencies, and how this administrative action may impact jobs and economic activity, including energy production, recreational and commercial fishing, coastal ports and industries, and up-stream activities including farming and agricultural production.

NOAA's Education Programs – NOAA currently has more than a dozen education programs, most of which were created either through earmarks or through broad authority in the America COMPETES Act. The Subcommittee will examine the authority, funding, necessity for, partner organizations, and possible overlap of programs.

Mapping and Charting Program – Hydrographic and geodetic surveys are critical components for safe transportation, including within Arctic regions. The Committee will continue its oversight authority with regard to mapping and charting activities within NOAA and the coordination of these activities across federal agencies to reduce duplication.

Marine Protected Areas, National Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Monuments – The National Marine Sanctuaries Program includes 14 sanctuaries and one national marine monument. In recent years, a number of sanctuaries have revised their designation documents and in some cases, have restricted the ability of various user groups to access sanctuary resources or waters. In addition, other authorities have been used by federal agencies to designate marine protected areas. These authorities often overlap. Oversight topics will include: the sanctuary program budget; the existing sanctuary vessel fleet; expansions of missions and/or restrictions on specific activities through changes in designation documents; expansions of individual sanctuaries; the designation of marine monuments and other marine protected areas; and expansion of the program in general.

Fishery Restrictions Resulting From Protected Resources Designations – There are a number of fisheries that currently are or will be restricted due to interactions or perceived interactions with protected animals. In many cases, the scientific information being used to implement the restrictions is either incomplete or outdated. Because NOAA has diverted funding from gathering the information necessary to adequately manage the natural resources under their jurisdiction, the agency is causing job losses and economic hardships for coastal and fishery-dependent communities. The Subcommittee will examine a number of specific examples illustrating these concerns.

Fisheries Strategic Research Plan – In recent years, NOAA has proposed the creation of a number of new line offices or initiatives, including the creation of a NOAA Climate Service and implementation of a national catch share program. At the same time, funding for basic fisheries and marine mammal surveys necessary to support management of the nation's fishery resources have remained inadequate. As surveys are postponed or cut, the confidence in the stock assessments decline, causing harvest levels to be cut resulting in job losses and economic stress on fishery-dependent communities. The Subcommittee will examine the NOAA's long-term commitment to the harvest of fishery resources and the research necessary to ensure the sustainability of those resources and those who depend on those resources.

Marine Mammal Protection Act – The law prohibits, with few exceptions, the harm or harassment of marine mammals without a permit. The authorization of appropriations for the Act expired in 1999. The Committee will continue its oversight authorities with regard to the implementation and enforcement of the Act.

Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs

Budget and Spending Review – The Committee will review the budget, spending, and staffing levels for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, and other Departments, offices and functions relating to Indian and Alaska Native affairs. Stimulus spending will also be examined.

Federal Barriers to Economic and Energy Development on Indian Lands – Certain federal laws and policies governing the management of federal lands and other public resources are applied to the management of lands and resources owned by, or held in restricted status for, tribes and individual Indians. The Subcommittee will review whether it is appropriate to treat lands belonging to Indians as though they are public lands.

Cobell v. Salazar Settlement Implementation – The proposed settlement of the long-running Cobell v. Salazar lawsuit was authorized pursuant to the Claims Resolution Act (Public Law 111-291). This Act was passed by Congress under procedures that precluded amendments to correct several flaws identified by respected tribes, tribal organizations, and noted experts. The implementation of this settlement will be examined.

Trust Reform – Without nominating a Special Trustee for American Indians or submitting to the Committee on Natural Resources a plan for improving management of individual Indian and tribal trust resources, the Obama Administration has displayed little or no progress in assisting tribes in their goal of self-determination. The Subcommittee will examine these issues in greater detail through oversight hearings.

Fee-to-Trust Issues, including Carcieri v. Salazar – The 2009 Supreme Court decision in Carcieri v. Salazar was one of the most significant judicial actions concerning Indian lands since 1934. In the 112th Congress, fee-to-trust issues will be considered, including the impact of Carcieri, in a thoughtful, transparent, open process.

Alaska Natives – The Committee will review the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and amendments made to the Act in recent years, including to correct technical problems.

Natural Resources Management on Indian Reservations – The Department of the Interior holds approximately 56 million acres of land in trust or restricted status for tribes and individual Indians. The Committee will review the current law and Departmental policies and actions concerning these resources in furtherance of the goal of increasing tribal self-governance, as well as job creation, and economic development opportunities for the benefit of Native Americans.

Tribal Law and Order Act Implementation – In the 111th Congress, the House Democrat Leadership bypassed regular order and passed a major overhaul of laws relating to crime and law enforcement in Indian Country. In the 112th Congress, the Subcommittee will review the implementation and impact of this Act through a transparent, open process that allows an opportunity for broad participation.

Indian Health Care Improvement Act Implementation/Indian Health Service – In the 110th and 111th Congresses, the House Democrat Leadership refused to consider a bipartisan Indian Health Care Improvement Act. Instead, in the last Congress, Democrat Leaders took the risky move of adding it to the Obamacare federal government takeover of health care legislation. This course of action injected Indian health care reauthorization into a heated political debate. Indian health care is due special treatment because of Congress's authority over Indian affairs under the Constitution. In the 112th Congress the Subcommittee will review implementation of Indian health care through regular order on a bipartisan basis.

Gaming – In 2009, a total of \$26.5 billion in gambling revenues (amounts wagered less prizes paid) were generated by 233 tribes operating 419 casinos regulated under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (source: National Indian Gaming Commission). This sum is nearly triple the \$9.8 billion in revenues generated just ten years ago in 1999, and an estimated one-quarter of all gambling revenues generated nationwide in all types of lawful gambling operations. Over the last four years, the Committee has conducted very little oversight of this major industry. In the 112th Congress, it would be responsible to ensure that appropriate enforcement and oversight by the National Indian Gaming Commission, Department of the Interior, and Department of Justice are being conducted.

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

Budget and Spending Review – The Subcommittee will review the Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for programs under its jurisdiction, as well as current spending levels for all agencies and programs. Agency heads of the National Park Service, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and public witnesses will be invited to testify at a hearing or hearings. Stimulus spending will also be examined.

Border Security – The Subcommittee will conduct oversight on how implementation of environmental laws on federal lands affects border security.

Strengthening Core National Park Functions of Stewardship, Visitor Experience and Maintenance of National Park Facilities – The Subcommittee will seek ways to ensure that the National Park Service’s basic mission and resources are protected and that park budget constraints, if they occur, affect only nontraditional park activities.

New National Park Units – Proposals for additional parks and park expansions will be examined with due regard for the merits of the proposal, spending constraints, the need for access to vital resources, and protection of property rights.

National Park Management – The Subcommittee will conduct oversight on ways to lessen the operations and maintenance backlog and foster and expand wholesome, family enjoyment of the parks.

National Forests/Wilderness Designations and Releases – Hearings will be held on proposals to designate wilderness areas and to release areas not suited for designation.

Forest Health and Wildfires – The Subcommittee will hold oversight hearings on forest health, wildfire prevention and suppression, and implementation of the various Forest Service authorities.

National Forest County Payments and School Funding – An examination of the impacts of this program on local communities and governments will be undertaken in anticipation of its pending expiration and need for Congressional action.

Resources on Forest Service Lands – Hearings will be held on ways to ensure that appropriate environmental standards are incorporated in the management of Forest Service lands consistent with the need for jobs in resource dependent communities, growth of our country’s economy and diverse recreational activities.

Cabin Fees – Action will be taken to seek a revenue neutral means to keep affordable the fees charged to owners of private cabins on Forest Service Lands.

National Forest System Recreation – Oversight will be conducted on ideas for maintaining open public recreational access without onerous fees.

Forest Service Budget – Oversight will be conducted on how best to strengthen the Forest Service’s basic mission and lessen the diversion of budget and personnel resources into less productive activities. Also, oversight will be conducted on the Forest Service’s proposed Planning Rule.

Bureau of Land Management “Wild Lands” Proposal – Oversight will be conducted on the use of peremptory administrative actions that create de facto wilderness areas without Congressional action or local input. The impact on recreation and job creation will be a focus.

Bureau of Land Management Land Exchanges – The Subcommittee will seek opportunities to implement mutually advantageous and otherwise beneficial land exchanges – especially those that consolidate land for protection and for economic activity that can create jobs for Americans.

Jobs and Bureau of Land Management’s Contribution to Economic Growth and Security – Oversight will be conducted on ways to ensure that appropriate environmental standards are incorporated in the management of BLM lands that provide secure, domestic sources of energy, food, minerals, jobs and recreation.

National Landscape Conservation System – Oversight will be conducted on the use of peremptory administrative actions that create de facto wilderness areas without Congressional action or local input.

Wild Horses and Burros – Oversight will be conducted on BLM’s management of wild horses and burros.

Bureau of Land Management Budget – Oversight will be conducted on how best to strengthen the Bureau of Land Management’s basic mission and lessen the diversion of budget and personnel resources into less productive activities.

Subcommittee on Water and Power

Budget and Spending Review – At a time of growing water supply needs, water-use conflicts, curtailment of water deliveries due to federal regulation and a \$14 trillion national debt, the Subcommittee intends to examine the Bureau of Reclamation’s and the U.S. Geological Survey’s annual budget requests, spending and stimulus spending. The goal of such oversight is to determine whether the agencies are accountable to the American taxpayers, ratepayers and other beneficiaries and to ascertain whether they are fulfilling their core missions.

Oversight of the Power Marketing Administration Budgets – The four Power Marketing Administrations – the Bonneville Power Administration, the Western Area Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration and the Southeastern Power Administration – sell hydropower generated at federal dams and reservoirs to wholesale customers that serve millions of retail electricity consumers. In many cases, these energy prices have increased or the supply has significantly decreased due to a number of factors. The Subcommittee intends to examine the reasons for the price increases, whether these agencies are reducing internal costs to mitigate for such increases and if they are fulfilling their historical missions.

Increasing Traditional Water Supplies – Visionary leaders developed much of the western water supply infrastructure that urban and rural communities have depended upon for generations. These existing water storage and delivery projects continue to serve millions today, but their operations are being curtailed by endless litigation and agencies bent upon rationing water supplies. The Subcommittee intends to focus on the need to not only protect existing water storage/conveyance facilities but to examine and overcome regulatory, financial and other barriers to building new ones as a way of returning to a policy of abundance.

Water Project Financing – The Subcommittee intends to analyze different types of water projects to determine the most cost-effective approach to providing new water supplies and other benefits. This examination will include but not be limited to a determination of project’s purposes, cost per acre foot, water and non-water benefits and the current process used to determinate cost/benefit ratios.

California Water Supplies at a Crossroads – Although the Subcommittee will focus on the entire western water supply situation, there will be hearings on ways to deliver more water to California communities in need. Many of these communities have experienced high unemployment due to recent man-made water shortages in California. Yet even in current times of high precipitation, millions of acre feet are not captured due to regulation and lack of adequate storage. The Subcommittee intends to focus on bringing abundant water and power supplies back to California and other western states so that communities have access to reliable and cost effective water and power supplies.

Returning to the “Beneficiaries Pay” Principle – Recent efforts to integrate wind and solar resources into the electricity grid can have impacts on existing water and power users who do not benefit from such integration. The Subcommittee intends to examine the impacts of integration schemes, including those by the Western Area Power Administration.

Maintaining Electricity Transmission/Distribution Service on Federal Lands – Energy rights of way on federal lands have a direct impact on electricity transmission and distribution systems. Vegetative management on these rights-of-way is an issue in some areas of the western United States. The Subcommittee intends to examine these matters.

Protecting and Promoting Hydropower as a Clean, Renewable Energy Source – Efforts are underway to undermine existing hydropower resources. The Subcommittee intends to examine these efforts and ways to promote large-scale and small-scale hydropower generation.

Empowering Local Communities – The Subcommittee intends to focus on ways to empower local communities through improving the Bureau of Reclamation’s title transfer process and allowing some water users to pre-pay their capital repayment contracts to the federal government.

Full Committee

The full Committee will conduct oversight on a variety of topics in coordination with the Subcommittees, as well as on specific jurisdictional items that reside at the full Committee level. These full Committee jurisdictional matters include:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – Recent court rulings and administrative regulations relating to NEPA will be reviewed and examined, especially as it relates to job creation and economic activity.

Endangered Species Act – For nearly 20 years, the authorization of appropriations for this Act has been expired and lapsed. This is not responsible to the taxpayers or the species that are threatened and endangered under the Act. It also disregards the many communities whose economic livelihoods are so directly impacted by this law. During this almost two-decade period, the number of listed species has grown to over 2,600, while the number of recovered species has been a mere 20. By any objective standard, a fundamental goal of this law, which is to recover and remove the need for species protection under the Act, has not been achieved as all Americans would hope. The Act and the species it is intended to protect deserve an open, transparent discussion of the future and how Congress will proceed.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Reauthorization – The Magnuson-Stevens Act is the primary statute regulating commercial and recreational fishing in Federal waters. The Act was reauthorized in the 109th Congress through 2013. A number of provisions from that reauthorization will be examined, and a look ahead to the next reauthorization will begin.