



Committee: House Natural Resources Committee
Event: [Examining the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior](#)
Date: May 13, 2026

Executive Summary:

On May 13, 2026, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget request for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) featuring testimony from DOI Secretary Doug Burgum.

- Republicans praised the administration's emphasis on expanding domestic oil, gas, coal, geothermal, hydropower, and critical mineral production, while supporting permitting reform efforts intended to accelerate energy, mining, timber, and infrastructure development projects.
- Democrats criticized DOI's handling of wind and solar permitting, arguing the administration has stalled renewable energy development, weakened U.S. competitiveness with China, and undermined offshore wind, battery storage, and electric vehicle supply chains.

Member Toplines:

*Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04)*¹: Westerman praised the administration's focus on expanding domestic oil, gas, coal, and critical mineral production and noted that recent Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lease sales generated over \$355 million. He emphasized the importance of responsible public lands and water systems management, and expressed support for the bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act ([H.R.471](#)).

Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-02): Huffman argued that the Trump Administration is dismantling core public land and clean energy programs while prioritizing fossil fuel expansion and politically connected mining interests. He explained that the administration has undermined U.S. competitiveness with China by weakening support for offshore wind, solar, battery storage, and electric vehicle industries. Huffman also raised ethics and corruption concerns, alleging that DOI policies and federal financing decisions have disproportionately benefited mining companies with political ties, naming Trilogy Metals. He also pointed to reported equity investments and Department of War (DoW) support for mining ventures tied to the President's son, Donald Trump Jr.

Witness Toplines:

Doug Burgum, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior: Burgum defended the Trump Administration's FY27 Interior budget and rejected Ranking Member Huffman's criticism of the administration's equity investments and energy policies. He explained that the budget

¹ Opening statements were not available online at the time of this memo's distribution.

advances the administration’s “American energy dominance” priorities through expanded critical mineral production, deregulation, border security, and more efficient stewardship of federal resources. Burgum highlighted proposed agency restructuring efforts, including the creation of a unified U.S. Wildland Fire Service and a new Marine Minerals Administration intended to streamline permitting and federal resource management.

Major Takeaways:

Renewable Energy Permitting and Offshore Wind:

- Rep. **Susie Lee** (D-NV-03) criticized the DOI’s July 15 memo requiring Secretary-level review for wind and solar permit actions, arguing it created a “permitting mess” in Nevada and stalled 93% of planned new energy capacity in the state. She noted that Governor **Joe Lombardo** raised solar permitting delays with President Trump, who agreed to discuss allowing solar permitting in Nevada with Secretary Burgum, though Lee said no action has followed.
 - Burgum responded that the administration’s “energy dominance” agenda supports energy sources that are “affordable, reliable and secure,” and argued DOI was continuing to process projects consistent with federal law and permitting requirements.
 - Burgum also rejected the court ruling striking down the July 15 memo, explaining that DOI has authority to manage its own internal permitting processes and oversight procedures.
 - Burgum argued that solar energy cannot independently provide reliable baseload electricity and warned that many solar supply chains remain dependent on Chinese manufacturing.
- Rep. **Dave Min** (D-CA-47) stressed that DOI had effectively blocked or slow-walked hundreds of wind and solar energy permits, representing roughly 527 gigawatts of potential generation capacity.
- He criticized Burgum’s past statements regarding renewable energy subsidies and intermittency, arguing that wind, solar, and battery storage continue to scale rapidly and remain in high demand.
- Min criticized the administration’s cancellation of offshore wind leases held by TotalEnergies, arguing the projects could have powered roughly 1.7 million homes. He questioned the administration’s decision to pay the company \$1 billion.
 - Burgum responded that the administration simply refunded money previously paid by TotalEnergies to the federal government and rejected the characterization that DOI had improperly provided the company a payout.
- Rep. **Seth Magaziner** (D-RI-02) accused Burgum of abandoning his previous support for wind energy during his tenure as Governor of North Dakota. He noted that wind and solar accounted for roughly 40 percent of North Dakota’s energy mix before Burgum joined the administration.
- Both Huffman and Magaziner highlighted China’s accelerated renewables deployment, noting that China added more wind generation last year than the rest of the world combined.
- Rep. **Jen Kiggans** (R-VA-02) discussed the importance of balancing domestic energy development with national security priorities in coastal districts where offshore energy

infrastructure and defense operations overlap. She stressed that offshore projects undergoing federal review should receive predictable interagency coordination.

- Kiggans also highlighted the value of public-private-partnerships tied to offshore energy projects, including Dominion Energy's \$500 million investment to support Naval Air Station infrastructure in Virginia. She noted that she and former Governor **Glenn Youngkin** are very supportive of the CVOW Project.
- Burgum responded that DOI's ongoing review of the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) Project was driven by the DoW, which raised concerns that large-scale offshore wind infrastructure could interfere with radar systems, underground sonar operations, and evolving military defense capabilities against low-flying drone attacks.
- Burgum argued that the administration's scrutiny of offshore wind projects is rooted in "physical kinetic security" and grid security, rather than ideological opposition.
- Burgum also defended the proposed consolidation of the Bureau of Ocean Management and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement into a new Marine Minerals Administration. He argued the restructuring would reduce administrative overhead while improving permitting coordination.

Dispatchable Energy:

- Rep. **Harriet Hageman** (R-WY-At Large) argued the administration should expand domestic coal development to strengthen long-term energy security.
- Rep. **Tom Tiffany** (R-WI-07) argued Wisconsin's increased reliance on renewable energy has contributed to rising electricity prices in the state.
- Rep. **Tom McClintock** (R-CA-05) argued California's aggressive renewable energy policies contributed to high electricity and gasoline prices while displacing reliable baseload generation resources.
 - Burgum cited Department of Energy data suggesting states that aggressively expanded renewables while retiring baseload generation experienced significantly higher electricity prices.
- Rep. **Troy Downing** (R-MT-02) emphasized that coal remains essential to powering data centers, manufacturing growth, and meeting electricity demand.
- Rep. **Rob Wittman** (R-VA-01) advocated for an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy and the need for expanded energy generation nationwide. He pointed to Virginia's CVOW Project as an example of additional generation capacity being added to the grid.
 - Burgum agreed that the U.S. has not developed enough electricity generation capacity to meet future demand and highlighted nuclear, geothermal, hydropower, oil, gas, precision drilling, and the shale revolution as critical components of the administration's energy strategy.
 - Burgum noted that the federal government operates approximately 1,100 dams, emphasizing hydropower's role as dispatchable baseload energy.

Minerals and Domestic Supply Chains:

- Rep. **Pete Stauber** (R-MN-08) emphasized the importance of domestic critical mineral production and urged DOI and the U.S. Geological Survey to prioritize advanced geological mapping in Minnesota's Duluth Complex.

- Rep. **Cliff Bentz** (R-OR-02) warned U.S. access to rare earth minerals and mineral processing remain a major national security vulnerability.
- Westerman reiterated his support for the SPEED Act ([H.R.4776](#)) and broader permitting reforms to support the domestic mining industry.
- Westerman questioned whether current lithium-ion battery technology is sufficiently reliable to justify investments in renewable energy.
 - Burgum said no and pointed to permitting reform as essential to advancing domestic mining, timber, and energy development projects.
- Rep. **Addison McDowell** (R-NC-06) emphasized that permitting reform is vital for critical mineral projects tied to defense, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing supply chains.
- Reps. **Mike Kennedy** (R-UT-03) and **Celeste Maloy** (R-UT-02) praised DOI's support for Great Salt Lake restoration and argued the region has been underfunded despite its importance for recreation, water supply, and mineral production.
 - Burgum agreed that Great Salt Lake cleanup and development are vital to the region's economy.

Permitting Reform and Agency Reorganization:

- Reps. **Daniel Webster** (R-FL-11), Westerman, Stauber, and McDowell argued that federal permitting processes have become overly burdensome and delay energy, mining, timber, and infrastructure development.
- Reps. **Emily Randall** (D-WA-06), **Val Hoyle** (D-OR-04), and **Adam Gray** (D-CA-13) raised concerns that staffing cuts across DOI could weaken operational capacity, deferred maintenance efforts, and disaster response readiness.

Water Infrastructure and Hydropower:

- Rep. **Yassamin Ansari** (D-AZ-03) urged greater investment in drought mitigation efforts for the Colorado River.
- Rep. **Paul Gosar** (R-AZ-09) advocated for expanded desalination infrastructure in Arizona to improve long-term water supply reliability.
- Rep. **Jeff Hurd** (R-CO-03) praised DOI's continued engagement on the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project and emphasized its importance for western agriculture and rural communities.
- Gray emphasized the importance of hydropower relicensing and water infrastructure permitting to California's agriculture and economy.

Tribal Consultation and Public Lands:

- Reps. **Melanie Stansbury** (D-NM-01) and **Adelita Grijalva** (D-AZ-07) criticized proposed cuts to tribal education and infrastructure programs.
- Grijalva warned that accelerated environmental review timelines under the administration's energy emergency policies could endanger tribal sacred sites and weaken tribal consultation requirements.
- Kennedy argued that many western communities feel excluded from federal land management decisions and praised DOI's shift towards a "multiple-use" approach.
- Rep. **Nick Begich** (R-AK-At Large) praised DOI's engagement with tribal communities in Alaska.