



Committee: House Natural Resources Committee
Event: [Full Committee Markup on H.R. 741; H.R. 3924; H.R. 5694; H.R. 7250; H.R. 7487; H.R. 7831](#)
Date: May 14, 2026

Executive Summary:

On May 14, 2026, the House Natural Resources Committee held a markup of six bills. Debate centered on the Rural Jobs and Hydropower Expansion Act ([H.R. 7487](#)), which passed out of Committee on a vote of 21-14. The remaining five bills passed out of Committee by unanimous consent: the Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025 ([H.R. 741](#)); Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act ([H.R. 3924](#)); ARTIST Act ([H.R. 5694](#)); License to Drill Act ([H.R. 7831](#)); and a bill to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000 ([H.R. 7250](#)).

Member Toplines:¹

Chair Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04): Westerman highlighted Rep. **Lauren Boebert's** (R-CO-04) H.R. 7487, arguing that the bill would streamline the permitting process for new hydropower projects by eliminating duplicative reviews conducted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). He contended that overlapping reviews unnecessarily delay projects and framed regulatory reform as essential to advance U.S. energy dominance, reduce the cost of living, and support rural economic development. He also expressed support for the five remaining bipartisan bills on the agenda, noting they would strengthen tribal health coordination, protect Alaska Native artists, authorize critical water infrastructure in Montana, improve wildfire evaluation, and provide additional resources for oil and gas permit processing.

Ranking Member Jared Huffman (D-CA-02): Huffman expressed broad support for five of the six bills on the agenda, highlighting their practical benefits for tribal health, wildfire planning, clean water funding reauthorization, and federal agency oversight. While he supported expanding hydropower and streamlining the licensing process, he emphasized that it should not come at the expense of core environmental and tribal safeguards. He argued that H.R. 7487, in its current form, could weaken key regulatory standards by shifting authority from FERC to the Department of the Interior (DOI) without transferring the specific statutory protections established under the *Federal Power Act* (FPA).

¹ The opening remarks from Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman were not available online at the time of this memo's composition.

Legislation Considered:

Rural Jobs and Hydropower Expansion Act ([H.R. 7487](#))

I. Member Toplines:

- Boebert argued that her bill would address the slow and overlapping permitting process for non-federal hydropower development at BOR facilities. She maintained that the current jurisdictional split between BOR and FERC creates needless delays and regulatory uncertainty for developers that hinders non-federal hydropower projects and slows rural energy development.
- Westerman argued that substantial untapped hydropower potential already exists at BOR dams and framed the bill as a practical way to accelerate development using existing infrastructure.
- Rep. **Pete Stauber** (R-MN-08) voiced his support for the bill, emphasizing that consolidating regulatory responsibility would improve efficiency while still maintaining existing permitting and environmental review processes through BOR.
- Rep. **Adam Gray** (D-CA-13) emphasized the importance of expanding hydropower to strengthen domestic energy production and water reliability in the West. He argued that the current FERC relicensing process is unnecessarily slow and costly, and highlighted examples of hydropower facilities in his district facing extensive regulatory hurdles despite decades of responsible operation.
- Huffman opposed the amendment, emphasizing that shifting certain hydropower permitting responsibilities from FERC to DOE must preserve established safety regulations. He warned that the bill could weaken or omit these safeguards if oversight jurisdiction is reassigned without also transferring the associated regulatory requirements.

II. Amendments:

- [Boebert 50](#) - Clarifies the bill's definitions.
 - Westerman supported the amendment, noting that it contains technical and clarifying changes identified by BOR.
 - The amendment was agreed to by voice vote.
- [Huffman 1](#) - Requires DOI to include hydropower lease terms that mirror the protections of the *FPA* and carry out FERC's responsibilities as though the project remained under its jurisdiction.
 - Huffman framed his amendment as a targeted effort to preserve existing statutory protections if permitting authority is transferred from FERC to DOI. He also expressed concern that opposition to incorporating the existing safeguards suggested that Boebert's bill may be aimed at bypassing those protections rather than simply reducing excessive regulatory processes.
 - Boebert and Westerman opposed the amendment, arguing that it would undermine the bill's core objective of streamlining project approvals and improving permitting efficiency by adding unnecessary requirements to the BOR permitting review process.
 - The amendment was not agreed to by a [14-21 vote](#).

- III. Final Vote on H.R. 7487: **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 21-14.**
- **Yeas:** Westerman; Wittman; Gosar; Webster; Fulcher; Stauber; Tiffany; Boebert; Bentz; Kiggans; Hunt; Collins; Ezell; Maloy; McDowell; Crank; Begich; Hurd; Kennedy; Downing; Gray
 - **Nays:** Huffman; Stansbury; Magaziner; Min; Dexter; Hernández; Randall; Elfreth; Rivas; Grivalja; Dingell; Soto; Brownley; Lee
 - **No Vote:** Amodei; Hageman; McClintock; Radewagen; Walberg; Ansari; Golden; Hoyle; Leger Fernández; Neguse

Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025 ([H.R. 741](#))

- I. Amendments:
- [Huffman 072](#) - Makes technical clarifications to the bill's language.
 - The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.
- II. Final Vote on H.R. 741: **Passed out of Committee by Unanimous Consent.**

Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act ([H.R. 3924](#))

- I. Amendments:
- [Neguse 01](#) - Specifies the quadrennial review process and clarifies the bill's definitions.
 - The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.
- II. Final Vote on H.R. 3924: **Passed out of Committee by Unanimous Consent.**

ARTIST Act ([H.R. 5694](#))

- I. Amendments:
- [Begich 118](#) - Defines the parameters and limitations of the materials, activities, and goods under the amendment's provisions, and outlines the rules governing the interstate commerce of those goods.
 - The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.
- II. Final Vote on H.R. 5694: **Passed out of Committee by Unanimous Consent.**

To reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000 ([H.R. 7250](#))

- I. Member Toplines:
- Rep. **Troy Downing** (R-MT-02) emphasized the importance of reliable water systems for supporting rural communities, agriculture, and tribal populations across eastern Montana. He explained that the bill would extend the authorization of the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act by two years, which he stated is necessary to complete the final two phases of a critical water pipeline project for Montana's tribal and rural communities.
- II. Final Vote on H.R. 7250: **Passed out of Committee by Unanimous Consent.**

License to Drill Act ([H.R. 7831](#))

- I. Member Toplines:
- Rep. **Mike Kennedy** (R-UT-03) argued that the bill would improve efficiency and accountability in the federal permitting process by ensuring agencies have staffing and resources to process permit applications more effectively. He framed permitting delays and regulatory uncertainty as barriers to domestic

energy production, affordability, and job security. He emphasized that permitting reform can reduce bureaucratic obstacles while preserving public accountability and environmental review standards.

II. Final Vote on H.R. 7831: **Passed out of Committee by Unanimous Consent.**