

Statement of Doug Burgum
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
Before the
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
On the
President's FY 2027 Budget Request

May 13, 2026

Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of President Trump's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget request for the Department of the Interior and discuss what our team is doing to make America safer, stronger, more beautiful again, and more prosperous.

The Department of the Interior oversees onshore and offshore energy and mineral resources, honors Federal Trust responsibilities with our tribal neighbors, delivers water to the West, and oversees wildlife refuges and national parks. The resources that we sustainably govern directly impact the lives of every American every day.

Interior's 2027 budget totals \$16.1 billion in current authority and \$15.9 billion in net discretionary authority. The budget reflects President Trump's priorities to pursue American Energy Dominance, uphold law and order, and make Federal lands safe and accessible for all Americans.

Interior-managed resources hold a significant position on America's Balance Sheet. The public lands and minerals within the Interior domain include more than 480 million acres of surface land, 750 million acres of subsurface and mineral estate, and more than 3.2 billion acres offshore. Our natural resources are national assets that should be responsibly developed to grow our economy and generate revenue for American taxpayers. Over the past year, the Department has initiated common sense approaches using modern systems to set a foundation for increasing returns for our citizens, strengthen our economy, and create great-paying and meaningful jobs -- all while protecting our beautiful lands, our abundant wildlife, and our clean air and clean water. Under President Trump's leadership, the administration is advancing a new era of abundance focused on economic growth, national security, and fiscal responsibility. The 2027 budget supports this approach by expanding energy development and recreational access on Federal lands and waters, strengthening domestic critical mineral exploration and production, and advancing American Energy Dominance to enhance U.S. economic and national security. Consistent with this strategy and Executive Order (E.O.) 14313 *Establishing the President's Make America Beautiful Again Commission*, the President's Budget prioritizes stewardship and innovation-driven investments while reducing regulatory burdens that constrain development and increase costs. The budget advances core Presidential priorities, including enhanced border security, beautification of public lands and resources, opening and maintaining land for livestock grazing to ensure food security, targeted investments to unlock American energy resources, more efficient and effective wildland fire management, and an optimized workforce structure that

aligns staffing levels with mission requirements, improves operational efficiency, and maximizes the effective use of taxpayer resources.

The 2027 budget features three proposals designed to improve the efficiency with which the Department fulfills its mission. The budget proposes a further strategic unification of the wildland fire programs currently implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) U.S. Forest Service into the Department's new U.S. Wildland Fire Service to create an integrated and operationally more effective organization that streamlines Federal wildfire suppression response, risk mitigation, and coordination with non-Federal partners including States, Tribes, and local communities with whom we fight fire. Also, the budget proposes to transfer the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Office of Protected Resources and associated Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act implementation responsibilities to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which will reduce redundancies and streamline permitting. Finally, the budget proposes to reunite the Department's two offshore minerals management bureaus, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement into a single entity, the Marine Minerals Administration, to streamline governance of offshore energy and mineral resources, deliver greater value to the American public, and ensure the safe, expeditious, and orderly development of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) resources.

In addition to the requested current budget authority, \$2.95 billion authorized for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund is accessible through a budget cap adjustment for wildfire suppression to ensure additional funds are available in the event the regular annual appropriation is inadequate to meet suppression needs. In furtherance of Secretary's Order (S.O.) 3442, the budget also allocates \$681.9 million of mandatory funding for Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund programs, including \$384.2 million for grant programs and \$297.7 million for Federal purposes. Through matching grants to States and communities, the NPS State Assistance Program will continue to support locally led outdoor recreation projects and expand opportunities for all Americans to have meaningful recreational access. On the Federal side, the Department will prioritize funding for conservation easements that increase public access to recreational areas without increasing the Federal footprint. An additional \$153.2 million is estimated to be available for NPS State Assistance grants in 2027 from revenue generated by offshore oil and gas production in the Gulf of America.

The 2027 President's Budget advances key administration priorities, including American Energy Dominance, and making public lands accessible to all Americans for recreation, responsible development, and other authorized uses. Ongoing regulatory reform is enabling the Department to support improvements across a range of industries, including mining, agriculture, ranching, and logging, that will secure financial returns on federally owned land and mineral assets. The Department estimates revenues in 2027 will exceed \$19.8 billion—more than offsetting operational costs. The budget continues to propose reductions for duplicative programs and unnecessary grants and supports localized decision making to best support American communities. The budget includes resources to cover fixed-cost increases, such as facility rent to maintain Interior's core operations carried out by employees living and working in every corner of the country. The 2027 budget includes \$635.0 million for the

Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, ensuring continued support for rural communities with significant Federal land holdings.

In furtherance of the President's Make America Beautiful Again agenda, the 2027 President's Budget includes a new \$10.0 billion mandatory proposal, the Presidential Capital Stewardship Program at the National Park Service, which will allow the Administration to coordinate, plan and execute targeted, priority construction and beautification projects in and around Washington, D.C. to address years of inadequate maintenance. Once complete, these projects will improve safety and accessibility, rehabilitate historic buildings and landscapes, and enhance architectural grandeur so that Americans can once again be proud of their country's capital.

The 2027 Budget also includes \$1.0 billion for a new Great Salt Lake Watershed Recovery Program, a comprehensive Federal program that will work collaboratively with the State of Utah to restore and protect the Great Salt Lake. The Department will work with partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency, to make investments to improve water flows into and within the lake, restore ecosystems, remove invasive species, and address toxins in the lakebed outside of any active environmental remediation sites. Together, these investments will ensure the Great Salt Lake continues to support global aquaculture, serves as a domestic source of critical minerals, and drives economic activity in Utah and beyond.

Advancing Energy Dominance

In the first year of President Trump's second term, the Department has made significant improvements in operations and policies to quickly implement Executive Orders and fulfill the Administration's energy policy goals. The Department has eliminated burdensome regulations that undermined efficient land management and economic development and has restored access to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska to capitalize on the country's vast energy resources. The Department issued a long-term schedule for offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of America and Alaska's Cook Inlet, consistent with the Working Families Tax Cut Act. This sweeping legislation is a critical component of the Trump Administration's Energy Dominance Agenda. By committing to a predictable lease sale schedule, the Department is delivering on President Trump's promise to expand American energy production and strengthen U.S. energy independence. We have advanced exploration and development offshore and held the first two of more than 30 lease sales included in the Working Families Tax Cut Act, generating more than \$300 million in high bids. The Department is developing a new 5-year National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program to replace the last administration's historically restrictive program, while providing critical updates to oil and gas regulations that enable operators to enhance production.

The Working Families Tax Cut Act returned the onshore royalty rate to a minimum 12.5 percent, reversing the 16.67 percent rate established in the Inflation Reduction Act. This royalty rate reduction will help facilitate an estimated 225 additional leases in 2026, and, over the following few years, an average of 160 wells drilled on those additional lease areas. The BLM has resumed quarterly lease sales and improved processing timeframes for Applications for Permits to Drill. Upon approval, a permit to drill will now be valid for a 4-year period rather than a 3-year period,

and the Department is implementing legal definitions for eligible and available lands to reduce leasing disputes.

In March 2026, the Department held a landmark oil and gas lease sale for the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, resulting in 187 leases and generating nearly \$164 million in total receipts. The sale, which was the first for the reserve since 2019 and the first under President Trump's Working Families Tax Cut Act, made history for the leasing program with the most revenue generated ever, the most tracts receiving bids, and the second most acreage sold in a single sale. These lease sales will serve as the backbone of America's energy portfolio for years to come by providing for a predictable stream of new exploration and drilling needed to facilitate future production, ensuring America citizens and industry have access to reliable, affordable energy.

Under E.O. 14241—*Immediate Measures To Increase American Mineral Production*—the Department is also reinvigorating America's beautiful clean coal industry and expanding access to coal reserves by identifying more than 13 million acres with coal leasing potential and making them available to support the country's baseload energy requirements, create new jobs, and restore prosperity across our hardworking coalfield communities. In 2025, the BLM generated more than \$47 million during four sales offering nearly 83 million tons of coal across 15,920 acres at mines in North Dakota and Alabama. Further, Interior is implementing the Working Families Tax Cut Act by reducing royalty rates from 12.5 to 7 percent, which significantly decreases the per-ton cost of producing coal, again fostering new job opportunities in coalfield communities while making energy more affordable.

The Department is prioritizing critical minerals research and production by updating the U.S. Geological Survey list of critical minerals on a more frequent basis and continuing to identify mineral deposits through ongoing geological mapping. The 2027 budget establishes our position as the leading producer and processor of nonfuel minerals, including rare earth minerals, which will create jobs and prosperity at home, strengthen supply chains for the United States and its allies, and reduce the global influence of and reliance on resources from adversarial countries. The BLM advanced five of the Trump administration's first critical mineral production projects and approved 39 projects across the country, covering more than 218,000 Federal acres. The BOEM proposed revisions to regulations governing hard mineral resources on the OCS aiming to advance exploration and development of critical minerals essential to national security, economic competitiveness, and technological progress and is preparing to hold lease sales in the Pacific OCS and offshore Virginia and Alaska. By advancing policies that capitalize on the country's resources, promote innovation, and honor America's heritage, the Department remains committed to serving the interests of the American people and strengthening the country's economic future.

Protecting Our People and Borders

Interior's approximately 2,800 permanent Federal law enforcement officers serve on the front lines of public safety. Interior law enforcement officers patrol remote border regions, protect Bureau of Indian Education schools, and ensure the safety of visitors and residents across national parks, wildlife refuges, and public lands. The mission is broad and demanding, supported by specialized drug enforcement teams operating in Indian Country and on public

lands, urban search-and-rescue units that respond to disasters, and backcountry teams capable of operating for days in rugged wilderness.

The Department's budget supports the continued protection of public lands for the American people, expands access for multiple use, and improves border security. We are driving improvements in efficiency, and this budget proposal focuses resources to maximize beneficial outcomes. For example, the budget includes an increase of \$111.6 million for the United States Park Police, which is actively engaged in addressing the District of Columbia's crime emergency that President Trump declared under E.O. 14333, *Declaring a Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia*, and E.O. 14339, *Additional Measures to Address the Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia*. President Trump's leadership has enabled the USPP to expedite the hiring of more than 300 new officers to keep America's capital and national parks safe and secure. USPP also provides enhanced physical security at iconic national parks, such as the Statue of Liberty, the National Mall, and the numerous monuments and memorials throughout Washington, DC, to guard against intrusions, vulnerabilities, and potential terrorist threats.

In December 2025, Interior announced the transfer of jurisdiction of roughly 760 acres of public land in San Diego and Imperial Counties, California, to the Department of the Navy for a three-year period for the Navy to establish a National Defense Area to support ongoing border security operations. The land, originally reserved in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt for border protection purposes, is one of the highest traffic regions for unlawful crossings along the southern border, creating significant national security challenges and contributing to environmental degradation. Through those actions and others, the Department is implementing the Trump Administration's priorities with fervor, and proposed investments in the USPP and other Interior law enforcement functions in the 2027 budget will advance those efforts.

Upholding America's Trust and Insular Responsibilities

Interior's programs maintain strong and important relationships with Native communities, delivering community services, restoring Tribal homelands, fulfilling commitments related to water and other resource rights, executing fiduciary trust responsibilities, supporting the stewardship of energy and other natural resources, creating economic opportunity, and providing access to education. The budget includes \$2.8 billion for Indian Affairs bureaus across the Department.

Under President Trump's leadership, Interior is upholding its trust responsibilities and supporting Indian Country by allocating funds for energy development, public safety, and infrastructure. The budget will increase efficiency as the Department cuts red tape and speeds up approval processes for projects that improve the health and welfare of Indian Country, including approving Tribal broadband infrastructure projects. A new policy implemented in 2025 establishes a comprehensive framework for the efficient and effective processing of right-of-way applications to build broadband infrastructure throughout Indian Country, with a focus on rural unserved and underserved Tribal communities. Broadband infrastructure is essential to support economic growth, education, healthcare, and overall development of Tribal

communities.

As an essential part of upholding the Federal Government’s trust responsibility, Interior has prioritized addressing the probate backlog across Indian Country and recently announced a new agreement with the State of Alaska. Reflecting a shared commitment to Alaska Native communities, the agreement establishes a framework to expedite probate case resolution, enabling assets to be returned to grieving families more quickly. The budget supports the Department’s commitment to advancing Tribal sovereignty and combating violent crime, illegal drug activity, and the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

Interior proudly upholds the Federal Government’s trust responsibilities to Tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and the Native Hawaiian Community while maintaining vital relationships with U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States. The Office of Insular Affairs helps coordinate Federal policy for American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to support the development of efficient and effective government while also honoring each area’s unique history and culture. In November 2025, the Department awarded \$37.6 million in grant funding to the Insular Areas that supports and strengthens health and education systems, invests in critical infrastructure, and increases access to reliable and affordable energy. The 2027 budget supports continuing efforts to strengthen U.S. territories, support economic development, and counter foreign influence in strategically critical regions.

Expanding Access to Our Land and Water Resources

Millions of Americans visit Interior-managed lands each year, fueling a booming outdoor recreation economy and supporting jobs and small businesses nationwide. According to the latest data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation generated more than \$600 billion in economic activity—2.3 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. Interior’s national parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands—from Alaska to Florida to Maine and beyond—are frequent destinations for those seeking outdoor experiences that exist only here in America and, in 2025, more than 565 million people visited Interior-managed lands. The Trump Administration, in furtherance of E.O. 14313 *Establishing the President’s Make America Beautiful Again Commission* and S.O. 3447 *Expanding Hunting and Fishing Access, Removing Unnecessary Barriers, and Ensuring Consistency Across the Department of the Interior Lands and Waters*, is committed to ensuring those lands remain accessible, welcoming, and responsibly managed.

The 2027 budget request for the array of outdoor recreation programs and a wide range of other uses across the Department will ensure Americans can enrich their lives in a multitude of ways across our vast public lands. The Department has made it a priority to repair, restore, and, when necessary, replace run down facilities to make all of our public lands safe, welcoming, and enjoyable. For example, NPS is reconstructing the entrance to Joshua Tree National Park to better serve visitors, the local community, and maintain employee safety. NPS also completed an initial round of recovery projects to repair the Blue Ridge Parkway following landslides caused by Hurricane Helene, restoring access to popular park locations and adjacent public

lands. Hundreds of projects are underway in parks around the country that will be a focus of celebrating America's upcoming 250th anniversary.

As the country prepares to mark the 250th anniversary, the Department, in coordination with the Freedom 250 organization and the White House, has begun highlighting and restoring historic sites and paying tribute to figures that have defined American greatness and contributed to our national heritage. In the coming years, the Department plans to direct more than \$345 million to preserve and restore America's most historic places.

The Department manages an infrastructure asset portfolio valued at over \$440 billion. Roads, bridges, trails, water systems, visitor centers, and student dorms -- even bathrooms, campgrounds, and drinking fountains -- are all part of this critical, but often unnoticed, framework. After years of increased visitation and use, aging facilities and other vital structures feature a total of more than \$30 billion worth of deferred maintenance. To address deferred maintenance and in furtherance of E.O. 14314 *Making America Beautiful Again by Improving Our National Parks*, the budget proposes reauthorizing President Trump's Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) at \$1.9 billion annually for 5 years. Through the GAOA LRF, the Department invests in assets and infrastructure so visitors, volunteers, and employees can safely enjoy our national parks and public lands for years to come. The GAOA LRF is a generational investment that maintains and restores assets at national parks, public lands, national wildlife refuges, and BIE-funded schools. Reauthorizing the GAOA LRF is critical to maintain the infrastructure that visitors, volunteers, and employees rely on to access and enjoy public lands.

A substantial portion of Interior's infrastructure assets ensure reliable water supplies and hydropower generation to more than 31 million people, providing 1 out of 5 (or, 140,000) Western farmers with irrigation water for 10 million farmland acres that produce 60 percent of the country's vegetables and one quarter of its fresh fruit and nut crops. Many of these assets produce hydroelectric power, generating 40 million megawatt-hours of electricity each year. The budget includes \$1.3 billion for managing water resources to ensure millions of customers have reliable power and water delivery; to provide flood risk reduction; and to support more than 90 million visits annually at recreational areas created by the Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) operation of its reservoirs. The budget for USBR continues to support water delivery projects that serve a significant number of people across regions, including the Central Valley Project in California; the Colorado River Storage Project; and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, which delivers water to eastern-slope project lands and associated communities.

In closing, this budget is about putting America first and doing the best for the American taxpayer. As Interior moves forward under the leadership of President Trump and myself, these initiatives set the foundation for a renewed focus on responsible resource management, economic growth, and cultural preservation. By advancing policies that honor America's heritage while fostering innovation and sustainability, President Trump and the Department remain committed to serving the interests of the American people and strengthening the country's future.

I appreciate that this Committee has strongly supported the Department's mission, and I look forward to working closely with you to advance President Trump's priorities.