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## Congressman Ryan Zinke questioned by Senate for Secretary of the Interior Position

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The U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a confirmation hearing for Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary nominee, Representative Ryan Zinke (R-MT) on January 17. The DOI manages more than 500 million acres of federal land and employs over 70,000. Zinke was queried on issues such as public land management practices, climate change, and natural resource development and access.

Rep. Zinke's approach to federal land management includes increasing flexibility in management policies, promoting public trust in the federal government, and ensuring that DOI employees have the resources and equipment they need to manage federal lands. Zinke plans to promote the use of new technologies, such as LiDAR and UAV's, to better utilize federal land resources. When questioned by Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Zinke agreed that human activities influence climate change, and cited ice melt at Montana's Glacier National Park. To fully understand the process of climate change, Zinke highlighted the importance of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in helping the DOI create unbiased scientific information.

Zinke is a proponent of both protecting and continuing to develop public resources. He promised to uphold the National Environmental Policy Act, which mandates reviews of development on public lands, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which uses offshore oil and gas earnings to support natural, cultural, wildlife, and recreational goals. He intends for public lands to continue to belong to the public and is "absolutely against transfer or sale of parks." In addition to conservation, he strongly favors the development of coal, oil, and gas on public lands with renewable energy in an "all of the above" approach. The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources voted to approve Zinke's nomination on January 31.

The Senate voted to confirm Zinke on March 1.

Sources: U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Department of the Interior

*Last updated: 3/6/2017*

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