



**Conservatives
for
Property Rights**

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Paul Gosar
Chairman
Congressional Western Caucus
2057 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Gosar:

Conservatives for Property Rights, a coalition of conservative and libertarian organizations dedicated to first principles of private property rights, writes in support of the Western Caucus's appropriations initiatives. CPR thanks the Western Caucus for its leadership on reforms to strengthen property rights through the appropriations process. We specifically endorse a number of the caucus's proposed FY 2020 appropriations measures.

CPR emphasizes the central importance of private property in all its forms — physical, personal, and intellectual. The right to private property ranks among the unalienable rights the Founders referenced in the Declaration of Independence. We read this firm property rights foundation as applying to public lands holdings and private use, among others.

Waters of the United States Rule Repeal (Stauber)

CPR urges the inclusion of appropriations language to repeal the Waters of the United States, or WOTUS, rule. This language, contained in FY 2019 appropriations legislation, would codify a revised definition of “navigable waters” to a reasonable, common-sense understanding of this term. Its inclusion would correct an arbitrary and capricious rule that has harmed the property rights of farmers, small businesses, and private land owners by regulatorily taking their property without due process or just compensation.

Land Acquisition Reprogramming (Biggs)

CPR supports reprogramming land acquisition funds to land management. The federal government owns too much land as it is, and it cannot sufficiently manage all the land holdings it already has. Redirecting funding from acquisition to management represents a good first step toward achieving good stewardship of public lands and, ultimately, reducing federal holdings.

Defunding the Social Costs of Carbon Initiative (Gosar)

The Obama-era Social Costs of Carbon boondoggle applies junk science to a utopian political agenda. It runs counter to sound policymaking, reasonable use of our God-given natural resources, and real science. There are responsible ways to mitigate adverse environmental impacts from coal usage, such as carbon capture. Thus, CPR supports appropriations language using the power of the purse to defund this misguided initiative.

Public Lands Access for Sports and Recreational Use (Biggs)

CPR supports preserving citizens' access to federal lands for recreational and sporting purposes. This appropriate measure has been in recent House appropriations bills, and it is consistent with benefitting the American public. Thus, we urge the inclusion of language guaranteeing the public's access to the public's own lands.

Preserving Precious Metal Mining Permitting (Stauber, Emmer, Gosar)

Precious metals are vital to our economic and national security, with many deposits of these extremely valuable resources found on public lands. It is imperative for America's industrial competitiveness that private U.S. companies gain access for the commercial extraction of these natural resources. Thus, CPR opposes any appropriations measures that interfere with or harm the private, commercial acquisition of mineral rights on public lands. We support the Western Caucus's efforts to assure that appropriators not disrupt this critical private property right.

BLM Coal Management Program

CPR supports meeting the President's request funding the Bureau of Land Management's coal management program. This is critical to ensuring private parties' timely mineral rights to coal found on public lands. Such wise use of our natural resources, coupled with property rights, brings market incentives to bear so citizens benefit from what lies beneath our public lands. We all gain from private enterprise yielding abundant, affordable coal as a leading energy source.

EPA Regulatory and Permitting Reforms

The President's budget request seeks funding for crucial regulatory streamlining and permitting procedural reforms at the Environmental Protection Agency. Those proposals would improve the EPA's regulatory processes, reducing red tape, lowering private parties' costs, and increasing certainty for commercial entities planning complex, expensive projects that rely on secure private ownership rights. Thus, CPR urges appropriations language funding these programmatic reforms.

In closing, Conservatives for Property Rights supports the measures discussed above and looks forward to working with the Western Caucus and its members to advance these important initiatives.

Sincerely,

James Edwards
Executive Director
Conservatives for Property Rights

Kevin L. Kearns
President
U.S. Business & Industry Council

Larry Hart
President
Hartco Strategies

Norm Singleton
President
Campaign for Liberty

Seton Motley
President
Less Government

Dick Patten
President
American Business Defense Council