

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

**Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Hearing to Consider the Honorable
Debra Haaland for Secretary of the Interior (Continued)**

February 24, 2021

CANTWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I worked as Ranking Member, but Mr. Chairman, actually your question I so appreciated because of the methane rule. And I think people don't realize that a recent study found that life cycle emissions from oil and gas and coal pulled from public lands and waters were equivalent to 20 percent of the total U.S. greenhouse emissions. So that is, you know, put into perspective, it's like the fifth-largest source of emissions in the world, that's more carbon pollution that is emitted than by Japan and Brazil and Germany. So that's what you're going to be the steward over. So I'm appreciative of what the president has done to try to get a handle on that.

And just so, you know, we're clear, I mean we're seeing the impacts obviously with wildfires and disasters and changes in weather and all sorts of things. So again, I think for us, we're billions of dollars—in fact I think NOAA said that climate disasters are \$121 billion per year. So this is—these are big numbers, so I hope we get a good picture on that, and certainly appreciate what the Chairman said about the methane rule, because we don't need to be wasting and we don't need to be emitting that pollution.

And just to be clear on the marijuana issue, this isn't a Seattle issue. Out of 39 counties, 20 to 25 counties in the State of Washington support it, legalizing cannabis. And so I don't blame our legislature or others from getting revenue from that and put it towards public health issues in the State of Washington. This is respecting the wishes of the voters, and then putting it to good use.

But I do want to go back to the questioning of yesterday because I talked about public lands as a great economic engine for us as a nation, and a little frustrated at the end of the last year, first of all, this committee leadership—Chairman Manchin, Senator Daines, Senator Wyden, Senator King, myself and others—led a big effort on the *Great American Outdoors Act* with our colleagues Senator Alexander and Senator Gardner, and we basically want to know that you're going to provide the leadership and investment on the infrastructure upgrade that we're looking for for our national parks. In the Chairman's case, the new River Gorge, I think it's one of, Mr. Chairman, one of—he knows that I like to go to the Dolly Sods so—

MANCHIN: Not that far—

CANTWELL: The new River Gorge is one of the oldest rivers in the United States, so upgrading that protection was critical, and now making investments there. Making investments in Mount Rainier National Park is very important to us, and Olympic National Park. We've got a fifty-year old water treatment system that needs to be upgraded, we have campgrounds and walkways in Mount Rainier that need to be upgraded. So I want to make sure that under your leadership, we're going to make sure that those dollars get spent as we've envisioned them, and that you're going to make this a priority within the agency.

HAALAND: I absolutely will Senator Cantwell, thank you.

CANTWELL: And on the other side of that equation, you know I'm very frustrated by what Secretary Bernhardt did on the way out the door, I mean, talk about thwarting Congress, Congress in a bipartisan fashion said we want permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then he tried to do some damaging things to try to prevent us from that. So I want to make sure that you will be seeking the full \$900 million in mandatory spending for LWCF.

HAALAND: Yes senator. Thank you.

CANTWELL: Thank you. And on the issue of PILT, Payment In Lieu of Taxes, I don't know New Mexico's numbers but I'm assuming you're familiar with that issue, this is critical to many counties in my state. And I think we've been thinking about ways that PILT might be able to be expanded to states that also have national wildlife refuges, that is to say, that the outdoor recreation opportunities that are supported there. So would you be willing to work with us in looking at ways to expand PILT to help compensate states for outdoor recreation opportunities and things that help increase the security of our nation's wildlife refuges?

HAALAND: Payments In Lieu of Taxes is extremely important, I'm committed to making it stronger. And of course I'd be open to ideas on how to improve that.

CANTWELL: Okay. And then on the issue of if we are looking at this plan and we're trying to figure out how to help our public lands, USGS estimated, between 2005 and 2014, federal lands sequestered approximately 15 percent of CO2 emissions that resulted from extraction of fossil fuels on federal land. So is there a way for us to also look at other ways to continually incentivize the sequestration efforts, whether that's through our forests or other ideas, should we be looking at that as well?

HAALAND: Absolutely.

CANTWELL: Thank you. Well we'll look forward to following up about that.

HAALAND: Thank you.

CANTWELL: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Chairman if I just could, I'm sorry, I know I'm out of time I've got twelve seconds—but the Congresswoman shared an important story with me just before the hearing, I don't know if she can recount it, recite it in just a few minutes, but there are people in Indian Country all over the United States that are so proud of her nomination. And they are—I don't even know how we can explain adequately enough how much they are tuning in and looking at this moment. They feel like they have been good stewards of public land for centuries before us, and so, they are so excited about her nomination. Thank you.