



News from the Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II - Chairman

1324 Longworth House Office Building - Washington DC, 20515 - <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>

The Weekly Preview

April 14 – 18, 2008

This Week's Hearings:

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- On Tuesday, the **Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands** and the **Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources** will hold a joint oversight hearing on "The West-wide Energy Corridor Process: State and Community Impacts." The hearing will examine issues of concern about the current western corridor designation process, including the need to promote "smart corridors" – corridors which are needed to minimize damage to public lands and increase access to new areas of energy potential.

Visit the Committee's Web site to view a [list of witnesses](#) scheduled to testify or to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (*April 15, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 1334 Longworth House Office Building*)

- On Wednesday, the **Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans** will hold an oversight and legislative hearing on the following:
 - The implementation of the 2006 amendments to the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act related to Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing; and
 - [H.R. 5741](#) (Bordallo), To amend the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to improve the conservation of sharks. (*The Shark Conservation Act of 2008*)

The bill includes several measures to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the prohibition on shark finning in U.S. waters that was established in 2000. First, it eliminates an enforcement loophole related to the transport of shark fins by prohibiting vessels from having custody, control, or possession of shark fins without the corresponding carcass.

This is intended to ensure that U.S.-flagged vessels are not traveling to the high seas and purchasing fins from vessels engaged in shark finning in an attempt to skirt the finning prohibition. Second, it strikes the rebuttable presumption regarding the fin to body weight ratio that has caused enforcement problems as well. Finally, it amends current law to allow the Secretary of Commerce to identify and list nations that have not adopted a regulatory program for the conservation of sharks comparable to the United States.

Visit the Committee's Web site to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (*April 16, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building*)

- Also on Wednesday, the **Subcommittee on Water and Power** will hold an oversight hearing to examine the geographical and fiscal scope of Indian Water Rights Settlements in Congress and highlight the current interpretation of the Department of the Interior's Criteria and Procedures used to determine the federal financial obligation of each settlement. The hearing will also consider the certainty brought to water supply through the resolution of these water claims. The Committee will hear from federal and non-federal entities that are currently negotiating to learn more about the settlement process and how it can be improved.

Visit the Committee's Web site to view a [list of witnesses](#) scheduled to testify or to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (*April 16, 2008, at 2:00 p.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building*)

- On Thursday, the **Committee on Natural Resources** will meet in open markup session to consider the following 5 bills:
 - [H.R. 5541](#) (Rahall): To provide a supplemental funding source for catastrophic emergency wildland fire suppression activities on Department of the Interior and National Forest System lands, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a cohesive wildland fire management strategy, and for other purposes. "*Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act or FLAME Act*"
 - [H.R. 3522](#) (T. Udall): To ratify a conveyance of a portion of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation to Rio Arriba County, State of New Mexico, pursuant to the settlement of litigation between the Jicarilla Apache Nation and Rio Arriba County, State of New Mexico, to authorize issuance of a patent for said lands, and to change the exterior boundary of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation accordingly, and for other purposes.
 - [S. 2457](#) (Lieberman): A bill to provide for extensions of leases of certain land by Mashantucket Pequot (Western) Tribe.

- [H.R. 1575](#) (Stupak): To reaffirm and clarify the Federal relationship of the Burt Lake Band as a distinct federally recognized Indian Tribe, and for other purposes. "*Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Reaffirmation Act*"
- [H.R. 3490](#) (Radanovich): To transfer administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal lands from the Bureau of Land Management to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to take such lands into trust for Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians of the Tuolumne Rancheria, and for other purposes. "*Tuolumne Me-Wuk Land Transfer Act of 2007*"

Visit the Committee's Web site to view the [markup report](#) following the markup. (April 17, 2008, at 2:00 p.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building)

In Case You Missed It:

- On April 9, 2008, the **House of Representatives** passed the National Landscape Conservation System Act ([H.R. 2016](#)). Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ), Chairman of the **House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**, introduced the bill, which would codify the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The NLCS was established administratively in 2000 by then-Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to recognize and protect the best of the lands and waters managed by the BLM, but the system has never been officially sanctioned by Congress. The **Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands** held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2016 on June 7, 2007 and the **Committee on Natural Resources** approved the legislation on March 12, 2008. Visit the Committee's Web site to access [witness testimony](#) from the hearing or Rep. Grijalva's Web site to access the [press release](#) with additional information.

Quotable Quotes:

"For the past several years, we have witnessed tragic fire seasons that have put American lives and our treasured public lands in harms way. Fire seasons are getting longer and more intense due to climate change, drought and other factors. As a result, federal fire suppression spending has increased substantially over the past 10 years and projections indicate that this trend will continue into the foreseeable future. The dramatic rise in these costs is eroding other non-fire programs and impacting the core mission of Federal land management agencies. In the case of the Forest Service, fire fighting now accounts for approximately 48 percent of its budget. Our Forest Service is turning into the Fire Service, to the detriment of the rest of its mission."

– Chairman Rahall, during his opening remarks at an April 10, 2008 Full Committee legislative hearing on [H.R. 5541](#) and [H.R. 5648](#).

Calendar:

Click on the text within the calendar to be linked directly to our Web site.

Monday 4/14	Tuesday 4/15	Wednesday 4/16	Thursday 4/17	Friday 4/18
	Joint Subcommittee Oversight Hearing (10:00 AM)	Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Oversight and Legislative Hearing (10:00 AM) Subcommittee on Water and Power Oversight Hearing on "Indian Water Rights Settlements" (2:00 PM)	Full Committee Markup of 5 Bills (10:00 AM)	

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