

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva,

At the beginning of this Congress, we were encouraged by the prospect of restoring bipartisanship to the Natural Resources Committee and working on our shared goals for the benefit of the American people. Therefore, we are deeply disappointed and concerned that barely a month into this Congress, Democrats on the committee have abandoned all pretenses of bipartisanship by delaying our organizational meeting and refusing to hold a markup on the committee's \$1.005 billion reconciliation instruction. It is important to note that in 2018, you and 100 of your Democratic colleagues accused Republicans of supporting a "rushed and ill-conceived reconciliation process" that "occurred behind closed doors bypassing full and fair debate in Congress."¹ Ironically, the process that you are now undertaking is significantly more rushed, opaque, and unprecedented than the reconciliation process used by Republicans in 2017.

The global COVID-19 pandemic is a severe, unprecedented crisis that requires bipartisan cooperation to help struggling Americans across the nation. Instead of inviting Republicans to the table and despite commitments from President Biden to work on a bipartisan COVID-19 relief package², we are being completely shut out of this process. Legislation this significant deserves robust hearings and markups to fully understand its ramifications and to ensure we are being good stewards of taxpayer money. Instead of welcoming deliberation and discussion, Democrats are weaponizing the reconciliation process even further by renouncing any semblance of regular order and taking away basic rights of the minority party to offer amendments in committee and, at the very least, submit views. Circumventing this democratic process is the antithesis of bipartisanship, a disservice to our constituents, and will be extremely detrimental to our ability to, in your own words, have a "full and fair debate."³

These wholly unprecedented actions will erode the authority of the Natural Resources Committee by relinquishing our jurisdiction to committees with no subject matter expertise.

¹ Letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, June 15, 2018, "REP. HUFFMAN, 100 MEMBERS TO ZINKE: DON'T SACRIFICE THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO OIL & GAS DRILLING," <https://huffman.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-huffman-100-members-to-zinke-dont-sacrifice-the-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge-to-oil-and-gas-drilling>

² Diamond, Jeremy et al., "Biden still seeking bipartisan Covid-19 relief package despite stalemate," January 28, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/28/politics/biden-bipartisan-covid-19-relief/index.html>

³ Ibid.

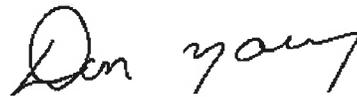
Forgoing a markup gives the Budget and Rules Committees ultimate control over our committee's instruction and would allow them to enact any policy they choose, without having any understanding of its implications. According to the Congressional Research Service, whenever a reconciliation bill became law that directed this committee to report legislation, the committee always fulfilled its duty to hold a markup. Passing any legislation, let alone a bill that will increase the already ballooning deficit by more than \$1 billion, without holding so much as one hearing is irresponsible, negligent, and a complete abdication of our responsibility as lawmakers selected to serve on this important committee.

Republicans on the committee are organized, prepared, and ready to get to work for the American people. Instead of negotiating this package behind closed doors and out of sight from the public, Democrats should welcome an open dialogue and debate by immediately organizing our committee and holding a markup on this time-sensitive legislation. Therefore, we are calling on you to immediately schedule a markup in the Natural Resources Committee for no later than February 16, 2021, to ensure that we bring much-needed transparency and accountability to the reconciliation process.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member



Don Young
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata C. Radewagen
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



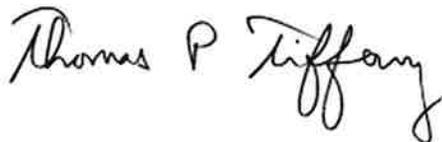
Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



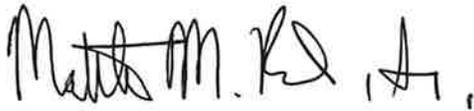
Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



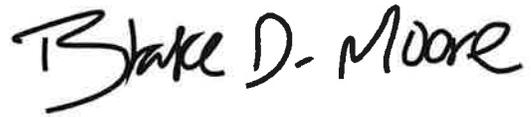
Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress



Jerry L. Carl
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress



Blake Moore
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Democratic Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Republican Leader, U.S. House of Representatives