

**Opening Statement  
Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands  
Oversight Hearing  
The Role of Federal Land in Combating Climate Change  
March 3, 2009**

**The Subcommittee will now come to order.**

**Today our Subcommittee will be conducting an oversight hearing to explore the role of federal lands in combating climate change. This will be the first of a group of hearings our Subcommittee will conduct on climate change. Today's hearing will focus primarily on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and we expect to schedule a future hearing on National Park Service lands and climate change.**

**The impacts of climate change on our federal lands are staggering. Science shows that climate change will cause a spread of invasive species, threaten native species, endanger watersheds, cause habitat loss, and increase the intensity and length of the fire season on our public lands. Today we will be hearing more about these impacts, and suggested policy**

**solutions, by reputable scientists such as Mark Harmon from Oregon State University.**

**Climate change not only threatens the world class resources of our federal lands, but also the millions of Americans who depend on and enjoy our federal lands. Today we will be hearing from witnesses about the role of rural public land communities in combating climate change; and we will receive the perspectives of Indian country, the human-powered recreation community, and the hunter-angler community on this topic.**

**There are two potential climate change solutions that I am particularly interested in exploring today. The first is climate change adaptation. Rick Ridgeway from Freedom to Roam will testify today about connecting habitat in order for wildlife to adapt to the impacts of climate change.**

**A second solution we will explore is whether some of the key laws under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural**

**Resources adequately reflect the reality of climate change. These laws include the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, as well as the various organic acts for the land management agencies. The State of California has moved far beyond the federal government in this area by releasing draft guidance on integrating climate change into the California Environmental Quality Act. Today we will be hearing from Mr. Tony Brunello about California's efforts, and perhaps this can provide good guidance for federal efforts.**

**President Obama has made climate change a top issue on his agenda. Today I am pleased that we are joined by representatives of the Obama Administration to hear what their ongoing work and future plans are for combating climate change on our public lands.**

**Climate change and federal lands will be a key agenda item for our Subcommittee this Congress. I feel strongly that while our public lands are threatened by climate change, they are also critical in finding solutions to combat climate change. As**

**Congress goes about developing climate change legislation, I will work to ensure that there is a role for federal lands.**

**I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today. I would now like to turn to Ranking Member Bishop for any opening statement he may have.**