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March 26, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

During the March 15, 2018 public hearing of the House Committee on Natural Resources on the Interior Department's fiscal year 2019 budget proposal, we discussed a letter that I led with Representative Donald S. Beyer Jr. and 26 other members of Congress requesting information about your taxpayer-funded travel. This letter was sent to you on October 3, 2017. I would like to invite you to clarify your comments regarding a letter you held up, indicating that it was a response to the congressional oversight request for information.

Your letter was not a response to my letter. It was not addressed to me or any of the other signatories, including Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva. Neither the ranking member nor any of the signatories to the letter were in the cc line of your letter. This letter proves only that you sent information in response to a Republican request for information, a request in which Democrats were excluded.

During our exchange you looked directly at your letter at least once, quoted the date on it, and said "I answered the letter." You indicated that it was a reply to my request and that it had been sent to "the ranking member" and Chairman Rob Bishop, saying "I would suggest you ask your Ranking Member to give you a copy of the letter we sent." Coupled with many other instances of your non-responsiveness to Democratic member requests, a misrepresentation of the letter's addressee during a congressional hearing raises considerable questions about transparency and good faith.

Repeatedly claiming that you had responded to me and Democratic members when neither you nor your agency had done so is not an honest statement, which in certain cases can be considered a serious offense. According to 18 USC 1001, "whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of

the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the Government of the United States, knowingly and willfully-falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact; makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation; or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry; shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 5 years.”

Furthermore, a violation of 18 USC 1621 is spelled out in cases like *United States v. Dunnigan*, which said "a witness testifying under oath or affirmation violates this section if she gives false testimony concerning a material matter with the willful intent to provide false testimony, rather than as a result of confusion, mistake, or faulty memory." The law says that the person could be “guilty of perjury and shall, except as otherwise expressly provided by law, be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.”

In order to clear up any confusion, I am requesting that you clarify your statements and please send directly to me, Representative Donald S. Beyer Jr., and Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva all documents detailing your travel. Specifically, my letter requested that you immediately disclose information on all chartered flights, including costs associated with each flight, owners of each plane used, attendance on each flight, and documentation of the approvals for all flights. I appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

CC:

Rep. Rob Bishop, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Donald S. Beyer Jr., Member, House Committee on Natural Resources