

CONFIRMING DEBRA HAALAND AS SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Passed: 51-40

SUMMARY:

The Senate confirmed Debra Haaland as Secretary of the Interior, making her the first Indigenous woman to become a presidential cabinet secretary. (*March 15, 2021, Roll Call No. 119*)

BACKGROUND:

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is responsible for managing and conserving much of the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. DOI oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and other agencies charged with making important decisions concerning wildlife, water and public lands.

As a member of the House of Representatives, Debra Haaland was a champion for addressing environmental issues. She served as the Chair of National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee in the 116th Congress, where she introduced sweeping conservation measures such as a resolution urging the federal government to establish a national goal of conserving at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 ("30x30"). She also cosponsored several bills to protect wildlife, including one to repeal several regulations that hampered the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act and another to encourage the establishment of wildlife corridors on tribal lands.

An enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna, one of the 19 native pueblos in New Mexico. Haaland's nomination represented a significant shift. Her confirmation made her the first Indigenous woman to head DOI or hold a cabinet-level position with any Administration. .

OUTCOME:

On March 15, 2021, the Senate confirmed Haaland, 51-40. "Yea" was the pro-conservation vote.