



## House Legislative Hearing on Tribal Tourism, Trust Asset Reform, and Land Management



*Chair Wena Supernaw of the Quapaw Nation offers testimony on four tribal bills before the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs in Washington DC. Photo courtesy of the House Committee on Natural Resources.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This week, the Navajo Nation Washington Office attended the House Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs’ legislative hearing on H.R. 4276, H.R. 5515, H.R. 5682, and H.R. 5696. These bills address tourism, land restoration, and the management of tribal trust assets, including amendments to the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act, updates to the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA), a Pechanga Band land-into-trust proposal, and the Strengthening Tribal Real Estate Authority and Modernizing Land for Indigenous Nation Expansion (STREAMLINE) Act.

The NATIVE Act received limited attention, while most of the hearing focused on ITARA and the STREAMLINE Act and the need to uphold the federal trust responsibility while improving slow and inconsistent federal processes. Quapaw Nation Chair Wena Supernaw highlighted resource constraints in eastern Oklahoma and the importance of tribal self-determination for economic development. Pechanga Councilman Marc Luker explained the tribe’s request to take 1,261 acres of Bureau of Land Management land into trust to protect cultural and creation-story sites. Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Director of Forest Management Tim

Vredenburg discussed wildfire threats across a checkerboard of federal, state, private, and tribal lands and noted that ITARA authorities allow faster mobilization and coordination.

Members of Congress raised concerns about appraisal delays that affect housing, agricultural leases, landlocked parcels, and commercial projects. They pointed out that only three ITARA management plans have been approved since 2016 and that the backlog prevents tribes from moving on time-sensitive land and resource decisions. Witnesses stressed that tribes can meet professional appraisal standards, such as the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP), and should not be slowed by federal review bottlenecks. Other questions focused on declining wildfire mitigation in New Mexico and the importance of consolidating culturally significant lands for environmental stewardship and generational education.

For Navajo interests, the hearing underscored the relevance of ITARA reform and the STREAMLINE Act for improving federal timelines and reducing administrative barriers in land-into-trust actions and natural resource management. The Pechanga example reinforced the connection between cultural protection and land consolidation, while the NATIVE Act amendments, though briefly discussed, outlined the continued push for stronger tourism-related grant authority.