

To: Heather Swift[heather_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[Laura_Rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Russell Newell[russell_newell@ios.doi.gov]
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INTERIOR
WASHINGTON
10/24/2017

DAILY COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

TO: White House Cabinet Affairs Communications

FROM: Department of the Interior Communications Team

SUBJECT: Communications Update

Press Inquiries:

- Small inquiries and logistical inquiries.
- ****Multiple Inquires** (NBC-Gabe Gutierrez, NYT- Deborah Acosta, Reuters-Emily Flitter)—REQUEST--** Would someone from Secretary Zinke's office call me to discuss Whitefish Energy. Here are my questions: 1) Did Sec. Zinke play any role in securing the contract for Whitefish Energy to work in Puerto Rico? 2) Does Sec. Zinke know the company's chief executive, Andy Techmanski? 3) The Washington Post reported that one of Sec. Zinke's sons once worked a summer job at one of the company's construction sites. Is that correct? Also, confirming this statement provided to the Post: "The Secretary always politely listens when citizens and the small business community approach him with concerns and ideas. Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company."—**RESPONSE--** On background, Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company. The Zinkes and the Techmanskis know each other because they both live in a small town (population 6,000) where everyone knows everyone and his son joined a friend who worked a summer job at one of their construction sites.
- **CNN: (Rene Marsh)—REQUEST 1--** CNN is looking for information/clarity on Secretary Zinke and his familiarity with Andrew Techmanski, the CEO of Whitefish Energy. Have the two worked together before? In what capacity? How Does the Secretary know Techmanski? Has Techmanski or any of his business partners worked with Zinke on any projects either as Secretary or when Zinke was a member of congress? Did Zinke recommend Whitefish Energy for the contract to help restore Puerto Rico? Did

Zinke have any influence or involvement either directly or indirectly with Whitefish securing the contract in Puerto Rico? Has this company or any of its leadership, including the CEO, had any political connections to Zinke or his wife during their political careers. Donations directly or indirectly? What was/is the Secretary's involvement in the overall recovery process for Puerto Rico?—**RESPONSE 1**-- On background, Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company. The Zinkes and the Techmanskis know each other because they both live in a small town (population 6,000) where everyone knows everyone and his son joined a friend who worked a summer job at one of their construction sites. **REQUEST 2**— Did the Secretary work with or communicate with Techmanskis in the aftermath of the hurricane? Were they in communication after the hurricane discussing any aspect of the recovery effort or anything else?—**RESPONSE 2**-- Background: No. The gentleman sent an email but there was not action taken on it (no reply, forward, discussion, etc). Not for a statement, just for your context - The secretary's phone number and email address have been published multiple times over the years so he gets a lot of emails/cold calls/letters.—**REQUEST 3**-- One additional question beyond the content of the email sent from Techmanski to Zinke. I understand in 2016, then-Congressman Rep. Zinke's office reached out to local officials in Montana about a Whitefish Energy project. Can you the Secretary provide you with insight on why he intervened? What sort of assistance did Zinke's office provide to Whitefish?—**RESPONSE 3**-- On background: That is not accurate. No intervention was taken by Zinke or his office. I'm understand a local field representative in the Congressional office was contacted by an employee of the business, the field rep listened politely took no action and referred him to the Senators' offices.

- **E&E News: (Pamela King)**—**REQUEST**-- I was wondering if Interior has any initial thoughts to share on the HOARD Act introduced today by Rep. Lowenthal: https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/10/24/document_gw_03.pdf. The bill would require annual reports to Congress on APD data.—**RESPONSE**-- The Department has not taken an official position on the bill at this time. FYI - So far this year the BLM has decreased their processing time for APDs by an average of 46 days.

- **E&E News: (Kellie Lunney)**—**REQUEST**-- Politico ran this item today. Is this accurate? Will the secretary be on the Hill today to meet with members of the Natural Resources Cmte? Why the secrecy? **ZINKE'S SUPER SECRET HILL HUDDLE** - Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will meet this afternoon with House Natural Resources Committee members in a room typically reserved for issues involving a high-security clearance. Zinke will meet separately with committee Democrats and Republicans. Copies of invitations obtained by Huddle say he will be "raising a confidential matter" and only members and staff with top-secret level clearance may attend. Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego told Huddle there's "nothing normal" about meeting with Zinke in such secure spot given his department has very little oversight over clandestine issues and said it's likely a way to limit participation since very few staffers on the panel have a security clearance.—**RESPONSE**-- I'm not at liberty to discuss conversations that may or may not be held in a secure location.

Top Stories

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- **Politico:** [Zinke funneled millions to questionable PACs](#)
- **Missoulian:** [Whitefish firm's \\$300 million repair contract in Puerto Rico raises questions](#)
- **Washington Examiner:** [Trump administration plans 'largest oil and gas lease sale in US history'](#)

Top Issues and Accomplishments

- Interior continues to support all Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria, and Hurricane Nate efforts. All bureaus are executing their emergency plans and assisting in Hurricane relief.
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- Today, Secretary Zinke hosted two hour-long meetings with the House Natural Resources Committee Rs and Ds.
- Tonight, Secretary Zinke is joining conservative reporters for an off the record dinner.
- This week, Interior will release the Energy Burdens Report.
- This week, Interior will announce an oil and gas lease sale in Alaska at the National Petroleum Reserve.
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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary
Department of the Interior

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