

A BILL

To abolish the Department of the Interior, repeal section 1451 of title 43, United States Code, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Department of the Interior Abolition Act of 2026”.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages federal lands, national parks, wildlife refuges, water projects, mineral and energy resources, and Indian affairs.
- (2) By retaining and managing vast lands and resources within the States, the Department exercises authority beyond Article I, Section 8, Clause 17, which limits exclusive federal legislation to the seat of Government and to places purchased “by the Consent of the Legislature of the State” for “Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings,” and beyond the power of Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 to make needful rules respecting the property of the United States, which the Founders did not understand to authorize the permanent federal retention and management of vast lands within the States.
- (3) The functions of the Department are not “necessary and proper for carrying into Execution” any power vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States and therefore find no support in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which Madison in Federalist No. 44 described as a means of executing powers already granted rather than a source of new ones, as the Anti-Federalist writer Brutus warned in his first essay of 1787 it would otherwise become.
- (4) The Department exercises lawmaking power by issuing rules and standards that carry the force of law, contrary to Article I, Section 1, which vests “All legislative Powers herein granted” in the Congress alone, which may not transfer them to officers unaccountable to the people at the ballot box.
- (5) By restricting the use of private land and water rights, the Department violates the Due Process Clause and Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment, which provide that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” and that private property shall not “be taken for public use, without just compensation”.
- (6) By imposing penalties through administrative hearings, the Department denies Americans the Seventh Amendment’s guarantee that “In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved.”

(7) In carrying out its functions, the Department disregards the Ninth Amendment, which provides that “The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people,” including the right of the people to order their own lives, property, and affairs free of federal direction in matters the Constitution does not commit to the Federal Government.

(8) The Constitution delegates to the United States no power over lands, waters, and wildlife within the States. By retaining and managing vast lands and resources within the States, the Department exercises powers that the Tenth Amendment reserves “to the States respectively, or to the people,” contrary to Federalist No. 45, in which Madison described the powers delegated to the Federal Government as “few and defined” and those remaining in the States as “numerous and indefinite.”

(9) The Declaration of Independence affirms that governments are instituted to secure the unalienable rights of the people and derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed,” and it charged the Crown with having “erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.” The Department perpetuates the centralized administration the Declaration condemned. The security of property, which the Founders regarded as inseparable from liberty, may not be left to the discretion of federal officers.

(10) Abolishing the Department of the Interior and repealing section 1451 of title 43, United States Code, will reduce the size and cost of the Federal Government, return to the States and to the people the powers the Constitution reserves to them, and restore the constitutional principles of limited government and enumerated powers.

SECTION 3. ABOLITION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) In General.—The Department of the Interior is hereby abolished effective immediately following the enactment of this Act.

(b) Wind-Down Operations.—Immediately following the enactment of this Act, the President shall designate an appropriate official to expeditiously wind down the operations of the Department of the Interior, ceasing all functions, except that the performance of treaty obligations of the United States to Indian tribes, as authorized by Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, Article II, Section 2, and Article VI of the Constitution, shall be transferred to such other department or officer of the United States as determined by such official.

(c) Transfer of Assets and Liabilities.—All assets, liabilities, contracts, property, and records of the Department of the Interior shall be transferred to the designated official under subsection (b) for appropriate disposition.

(d) Employee Transition.—Employees of the Department of the Interior shall be offered opportunities for reassignment within the federal government or provided with severance and retraining assistance as prescribed by existing federal law.

SECTION 4. REPEAL OF PROVISIONS OF LAW ESTABLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) In General.—Section 1451 of title 43, United States Code, and any other provision of law establishing the Department of the Interior or vesting functions in the Department of the Interior, are hereby repealed.

(b) Conforming Amendments.—The United States Code and all other relevant Federal laws are amended by—

(1) striking all references to the Department of the Interior and to any office, officer, or function established in or vested in the Department of the Interior;

(2) reassigning only the performance of treaty obligations of the United States to Indian tribes, as authorized by Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, Article II, Section 2, and Article VI of the Constitution, in accordance with section 3(b), and terminating every other function of the Department of the Interior; and

(3) making such other conforming changes as necessary to reflect the repeal and the permanent abolition of the Department of the Interior.

(c) Effective Date.—The repeal under this section shall take effect immediately following the enactment of this Act.

SECTION 5. TRANSITION PROVISIONS.

(a) No Restoration of Prior Structures.—No element of the Department of the Interior shall revert to its organizational structure as it existed prior to the establishment of the Department of the Interior, and no function of the Department of the Interior shall be restored to any predecessor department, agency, or office.

(b) Permanent Abolition.—No department, agency, office, or other entity shall be established to carry out the functions of the Department of the Interior abolished by this Act, other than the enumerated functions transferred under section 3(b).

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of the Act and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.