

A BILL

To abolish the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, repeal the provisions of law establishing the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, 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 “Interior Office of Hearings and Appeals Abolition Act of 2026”.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) The Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior (DOI OHA) adjudicates appeals of Interior Department decisions, including land, mineral, and Indian probate matters.
- (2) The functions of the Office 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.
- (3) By adjudicating property and probate matters, the Office exercises judicial power in tribunals of the executive branch, contrary to Article III, Section 1, which vests “the judicial Power of the United States” in courts whose judges “shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour.”
- (4) By determining property rights in administrative proceedings, the Office violates the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment, which provides that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law”.
- (5) In carrying out its functions, the Office 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.
- (6) The Constitution delegates to the United States no power over land and property within the States. By adjudicating disputes over land, minerals, and estates in administrative tribunals, the Office 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.”

(7) 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 Office perpetuates the centralized administration the Declaration condemned. The Declaration likewise condemned “depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury.”

(8) Abolishing the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior and repealing the provisions of law establishing it 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 OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) In General.—The Office of Hearings and Appeals of 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 Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, ceasing all functions, none of which shall be transferred to any other department or agency of the Federal Government.

(c) Transfer of Assets and Liabilities.—All assets, liabilities, contracts, property, and records of the Office of Hearings and Appeals 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 Office of Hearings and Appeals 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 OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) In General.—The provisions of law establishing the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, and any provision of law vesting functions in the Office of Hearings and Appeals of 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 Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior and to any office, officer, or function established in or vested in the Office of Hearings

and Appeals of the Department of the Interior;

(2) terminating every function of the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, no part of which shall be reassigned to any other department or agency of the Federal Government; and

(3) making such other conforming changes as necessary to reflect the repeal and the permanent abolition of the Office of Hearings and Appeals 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 Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior shall revert to its organizational structure as it existed prior to the establishment of the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior, and no function of the Office of Hearings and Appeals 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 Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior abolished by this Act.

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.