

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Secretary Burgum,

Thank you for testifying before the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month. It was a pleasure to hear your vision for the Department of the Interior, and I look forward to working together on the important issues facing our federal lands and waters.

As part of my questioning during the hearing, I sought your assistance in addressing an issue faced by my constituents. Virginia's Second Congressional District is home to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, part of the Assateague Island National Seashore. Over 3.2 million people visit the National Seashore each year and enjoy swimming at the public beaches.

Chincoteague typically employs seasonal lifeguards to ensure the safety of park visitors. As I explained at the hearing, the current freeze on hiring federal employees is a significant point of concern for the town and its residents, who worry that they will be unable to hire lifeguards for the season. While several exemptions to the freeze were made for certain public safety employees, unfortunately lifeguards did not make this list.

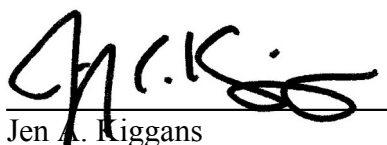
You assured me that seasonal employees would be exempt from the hiring freeze, and that the National Seashore should have no trouble hiring temporary workers. However, that is not the reality on the ground in Chincoteague, and the park remains unable to fill these positions.

I respectfully request a thorough and timely answer to the following questions:

1. What are the details of the current hiring freeze? Who does it apply to, and who is exempt?
2. If temporary seasonal employees are exempt, why is Assateague Island National Seashore having such continued difficulty hiring for these critical public safety positions?
3. When can we expect this situation to be rectified and lifeguards to be hired at the Seashore?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jen A. Kiggans", written over a horizontal line.

Jen A. Kiggans  
Member of Congress