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Description of document: Department of the Interior (DOI) Correspondence with the Congressional Offices that played a role in the January 6, 2021 Insurrection 2021-2023

Requested date: 16-November-2021

Release date: 30-August-2024

Posted date: 09-September-2024

Source of document: FOIA Request  
Department of the Interior  
FOIA Officer  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-7328, MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Email: [osfoia@ios.doi.gov](mailto:osfoia@ios.doi.gov)

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United States Department of the Interior  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

August 30, 2024

Via Electronic Mail

RE: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. DOI-OS-2022-000723

The Office of the Secretary (OS) FOIA Office received your FOIA request, dated November 16, 2021, on November 17, 2021 and assigned it control number DOI-OS-2022-000723. Please cite this number in any future communications with our office regarding your request.

**Description of the Requested Records**

You requested:

“A copy of all letters and emails between the Department of Interior primary office that handles congressional correspondence and each/any of the following Congressional Representatives: Rep. Marjorie Greene, Rep. Paul Gosar, Rep. Lauren Boebert, Rep. Mo Brooks, Rep. Andy Biggs, Rep. Madison Cawthorn, and Rep. Louie Gohmert. Please limit this to records between January 1, 2017 and the present. Please limit this request to the Department office that manages congressional inquiries. Please include both letters and emails FROM those offices and also letters and emails TO those offices. This request is to learn more about interactions between the agency and the Congressional Offices that played a role in the January 6, 2021 Insurrection, according to numerous news reports including this article:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/exclusive-jan-6-organizers-met-congress-white-house-1245289/>”

**Partial Release**

We are writing to respond to your request.

We have enclosed one file consisting of 242 pages, which is being released to you in part. Portions of these materials are being withheld under the following FOIA Exemption:

## **Exemption 6**

Exemption 6 allows an agency to withhold “personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” [5 U.S.C. § 552\(b\)\(6\)](#). We are withholding approximately 2 pages in part under Exemption 6.

The phrase “similar files” covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information.

Under the FOIA, the only relevant public interest to consider under the exemption is the extent to which the information sought would shed light on an agency’s performance of its statutory duties or otherwise let citizens know what their government is up to. The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which is the greater result of disclosure: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal information, including personal phone numbers, and we have determined that the individuals to whom this information pertains have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, you have not provided information that explains a relevant public interest under the FOIA in the disclosure of this personal information and we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency’s statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals and we are withholding it under Exemption 6.

Leah Fairman, FOIA Officer, is responsible for this denial.

Jeffrey Scott, Attorney-Advisor, Office of the Solicitor, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. was consulted.

## **Fees—No Charge**

We do not bill requesters for FOIA processing fees when their fees are less than \$50.00, because the cost of collection would be greater than the fee collected. *See* [43 C.F.R. § 2.37\(g\)](#). Therefore, there is no billable fee for the processing of this request.

## **Appeal Rights**

You may appeal this response to the Department’s FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you

choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal **no later than 90 workdays** from the date of this final response. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

**Your appeal must be made in writing.** You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe this response is in error. You must also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and the Office of the Secretary concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and this response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and the Office of the Secretary will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

#### *DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information*

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
MS-6556 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

Attn: FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office

Telephone: (202) 208-5339  
Fax: (202) 208-6677  
Email: FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov

#### **Mediation Services**

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)

Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>  
Telephone: (202) 741-5770  
Fax: (202) 741-5769  
Toll-free: (877) 684-6448

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer.

Contact information for the Department's FOIA Public Liaison, who you may also seek dispute resolution services from, is available at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/foiacenters>.

### **Conclusion**

This concludes our response to your request.

If you have any questions about this letter, you may contact me by email at [os\\_foia@ios.doi.gov](mailto:os_foia@ios.doi.gov), or by mail at U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, MS-7328, Washington, D.C. 20240. Additionally, contact information for the Department's FOIA Requester Centers and FOIA Public Liaison is available at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/foiacenters>.

Sincerely,  
**LEAH  
FAIRMAN**  
Digitally signed  
by LEAH  
FAIRMAN  
Date: 2024.08.30  
09:46:52 -04'00'  
Leah Fairman  
FOIA Officer  
Office of the Secretary  
FOIA Office

Electronic Enclosure

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 10, 2021

Mr. Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary de la Vega,

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has failed to provide the information requested in letters related to Secretarial Order 3395<sup>1</sup> sent on February 4, 2021 and February 19, 2021. In good faith to build a positive working relationship, we requested the establishment of a rolling production schedule by February 26, 2021 to satisfy 24 outstanding inquiries. While DOI transmitted a response letter 15 days after the deadline, the Department failed to provide substantive answers or establish a timeline for producing unanswered document requests.<sup>2</sup> DOI's early and repeated refusal to satisfy congressional oversight requests reflects poorly on President Biden's commitment to transparency in government.

Secretarial Order 3395 expires in 11 days, yet details surrounding its implementation, execution, and post-expiration impact remain unknown. The adverse effects on American workers, states, and industry, however, is becoming clearer. Multiple state officials have requested waivers from federal drilling restrictions.<sup>3</sup> For example, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon wrote to you about his concerns of "add[ed] layers of bureaucratic red tape" and "a backlog of actions tied to existing operations under valid leases" due to Secretarial Order 3395.<sup>4</sup>

Secretarial Order 3395's deleterious consequences continue to grow beyond its initial scope against energy development and other forms of multiple use, and now threatens funding for children's education, community infrastructure, and public services. Drawing criticism from the public education community, top educators wrote to President Biden opposing Secretarial

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Natural Resources, et al., to Scott de la Vega, Acting U.S. Sec'y of the Interior (Feb. 4, 2021) (on file with Comm.); Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Natural Resources, & Rep. Paul A. Gosar, Ranking Member, Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations on the H. Comm. on Natural Resources, to Scott de la Vega, Acting U.S. Sec'y of the Interior (Feb. 19, 2021) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Scott de la Vega, Acting U.S. Sec'y of the Interior to Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Natural Resources (Mar. 5, 2021) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>3</sup> See Letter from The Hon. Mark Gordon, Governor of Wyo., to Scott de la Vega, Acting U.S. Sec'y, Dep't of the Interior (Feb. 17, 2021) (on file with author), *available at* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KfUH5L-Zz6PhcSy9PtfDzjZefL3dXxhS/view>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

Order 3395 classifying the decision to halt oil and gas production as “arbitrary and inequitable.”<sup>5</sup> In their letter, public school superintendents for the states of Wyoming, North Dakota, Montana, Alaska, and Utah expressed the importance of the mining, gas, and oil industries’ revenue generation and job creation in their states.<sup>6</sup>

Executive Order 14008 augments and extends the concerns surrounding Secretarial Order 3395. Bipartisan requests to rescind Secretarial Order 3395 and Executive Order 14008 readily recognize their devastating economic consequences.<sup>7</sup> Republicans and Democrats alike understand these orders’ far-reaching damage to their constituencies with an emphasis on the resulting loss of jobs, support for state and local public programs, and funding for conservation.<sup>8</sup>

We remain very concerned about the long-term, harmful consequences of Secretarial Order 3395 and President Biden’s executive orders thwarting U.S. energy development.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, to assist us with our oversight activities, please produce the following, in addition to the outstanding requests from our February 4, 2021 and February 19, 2021 letters, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m., March 24, 2021:

1. All communications referring to or relating to a backlog of Applications for Permit to Drill, and other authorization and approval requests after the implementation of Secretarial Order 3395.
2. A document sufficient to show all energy and mineral development projects delayed or put on hold as a result of Secretarial Order 3395.
3. All documents and communications with any organizations external to DOI referring or relating to DOI’s plans regarding delegation of authority to Department bureaus after the expiration of Secretarial Order 3395.
4. All documents and communications referring to or relating to the length of the moratorium placed on the implementation of the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Executive Order 13990.
5. A document sufficient to show the timeline for conducting a review of the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Jillian Balow, Wyo. State Superintendent of Public education, et al., to The Hon. Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States, (Feb. 17, 2021) (on file with author), *available at* <https://edu.wyoming.gov/blog/2021/02/18/statement-to-president-biden-penned-by-five-state-superintendents-and-commissioners-of-education/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Rep. Vincente Gonzalez, Rep. Henry Cuellar, Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, & Rep. Marc Veasey to President Joseph Biden (Jan. 27, 2021) (on file with author); Letter from Rep. Kevin McCarthy, et al, to President Joseph Biden (February 9, 2021) (on file with author).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Exec. Order No. 13990, 86 Fed. Reg. 14, 7037 (Jan. 20, 2021); Exec. Order No. 14008, 86 Fed. Reg. 19, 7619 (Jan. 27, 2021).

6. A document sufficient to show a cost-benefit analysis conducted prior to Executive Order 13990's revocation of the Keystone XL Pipeline permit.
7. All documents and communications referring or relating to restoring monument boundaries per Section 3 of Executive Order 13990.
8. A document sufficient to show a cost-benefit analysis conducted prior to issuing Executive Order 14008's moratorium on oil and gas leases on public lands and waters.
9. All documents and communications with any organizations external to DOI referring to or relating to the drafting or issuing of Section 208 of Executive Order 14008.
10. A document sufficient to show an analysis of any increase in dependency on foreign sources for oil and natural gas as a result of Section 208 of Executive Order 14008 and Secretarial Order 3395.
11. A document describing an analysis of the increased lifecycle global greenhouse gas emissions due to corresponding increases in U.S. dependency on foreign sources for oil and natural gas as a result of Section 208 of Executive Order 14008 and Secretarial Order 3395.
12. A document sufficient to describe the timeline for conducting the review of federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices per Section 208 of Executive Order 14008.
13. A document sufficient to describe any anticipated adjustment of royalty rates associated with coal, oil, and gas development due to Section of 208 of Executive Order 14008.
14. A document sufficient to describe the calculation of climate costs detailed in Section 208 of Executive Order 14008.
15. A document sufficient to show how economic impact and energy and mineral development will be considered in the report required under Section 216 of Executive Order 14008.
16. A document sufficient to show the legal standards used to justify ignoring statutory requirements to hold oil and gas lease sales.
17. All documents and communications with any organizations external to DOI referring or relating to Section 216 of Executive Order 14008 to conserve 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030.



18. A document listing the stakeholders from whom DOI solicited input to “achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030” per Section 216 of Executive Order 14008.
19. A document listing and describing legislation the Biden Administration or DOI are supporting based on their ability to advance “the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030” per Section 216 of Executive Order 14008.
20. A document sufficient to describe analysis and plans to plug leaks in oil and gas wells, reclaim abandoned mine lands, and the projected number of new jobs associated with such plans due to Section 217 of Executive Order 14008.
21. All documents and communications referring or relating to any and all plans related to Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act and Mineral Leasing Act disbursements.
22. A document sufficient to show the number of permits necessary to conduct operations on the Outer Continental Shelf as required by executed lease terms that have not been issued by the Department.
23. A document sufficient to show the agenda of the March 25, 2021 Fossil Fuels Program Review forum.
24. All documents and communications referring or relating to the process of assembling panels for the March 25, 2021 Fossil Fuels Program Review forum, including but not limited to, themes chosen for the panel discussion and selection of panel participants.
25. A document listing all individuals and organizations invited to speak at or attend the March 25, 2021 Fossil Fuels Program Review forum.

Please deliver your response to room 1329 of the Longworth House Office Building. An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request.

Please contact the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Minority staff at (202) 225-2761 with any questions about this request.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Oversight and Investigations  
Subcommittee

Mr. Scott de la Vega

March 10, 2021

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cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write to you today in response to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) recent announcement to initiate a review of land management plans for the greater sage-grouse. While we believe this comprehensive review is premature, it is our expectation that you collaborate, coordinate, and listen to all state and local stakeholders as you proceed. We urge the Administration to recognize the important, successful state and locally-led sage-grouse conservation efforts and to resist activist pressure to thwart progress with unilateral decisions that will harm western communities and their work on behalf of the species. Similarly, we are greatly dismayed to see your budget did not support long-standing bipartisan efforts surrounding state and local management of the greater sage-grouse.

For years, state and local governments, non-profit conservation organizations, and local communities have consistently proven themselves as the best stewards of their unique landscapes and have implemented successful sage-grouse management and conservation plans to avoid potential adverse impacts on multiple uses on public lands, including energy and mineral development, grazing, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. As you know, these sectors are critical to rural communities and economies.

Based on the best scientific data available, it will take many years to see the positive, incremental results of these collaborative conservation efforts for the greater sage-grouse. It is critical that agencies and partners rely on the best science, developed through data collection, lek counts, and assessing effectiveness of these plans and best practices. Using more robust, longitudinal data to assess effectiveness of plan implementation, coupled with state and private efforts, will better inform the Department. We urge the Department of Interior and associated partners to promote voluntary conservation efforts which have been highly successful and have cost millions of dollars in private and public capital investment to implement. States, including California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Oregon, and Wyoming have implemented conservation plans that establish responsible management constraints, limit hunting, control non-native predators, reduce invasive juniper trees, and implement habitat restoration after energy development. Additionally, millions of federal taxpayers' dollars have been spent on sage-grouse conservation. In fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture alone has appropriated over \$200 million. These efforts must be taken into account before any major decisions are made in regard to greater sage-grouse recovery.

Equally important to allowing state strategies to succeed is the recognition that wildfires are the biggest threat to greater sage-grouse populations. Better federal land management, including efforts to expedite the removal of cheatgrass – which is one of largest contributors to wildfire escalation – should be acknowledged during the review process. In fact, between 2000 and 2018, more than 15 million acres of

sagebrush steppe were burned by wildfire. Proactively addressing and treating for the overall health of public lands – as it relates to wildfire potential – will do far more for species protection and habitat restoration than spending millions on plan reviews and imposing further federal restrictions on conservation partners. The Administration must recognize the role wildfires play in greater sage-grouse management, and we request that any efforts to restrict active land management and other wildfire prevention practices be denied.

Furthermore, drought continues to play a role in sage-grouse recovery. We cannot penalize western land users for a natural endemic that results in the loss of greater sage-grouse habitat. We must find commonsense solutions to the realities of catastrophic drought that plague much of the West. To ensure sage-grouse habitat is maintained, drought mitigation must be a part of the broader discussion of species recovery. Water storage, wildfire prevention, water user flexibility, and increased coordination at all government levels are imperative.

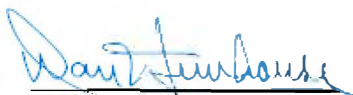
Additionally, as the administration has indicated mineral withdrawals could accompany sage-grouse designations, the Department's collaborative efforts must include states, developers, and other interested parties regarding the prospect of hard-rock mineral development in and around the affected areas. Domestic critical minerals are a public good that must be considered during this process, especially in light of E.O. 14017 on securing America's supply chains and the rising demand for renewable technologies and battery storage.

The greater sage-grouse land management plans targeted specific actions to reduce threats to the greater sage-grouse. This enabled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conclude that an Endangered Species Act listing for the greater sage-grouse was not warranted due to the cumulative, coordinated conservation efforts of federal, state, and private landowners, as well as the millions of acres of private, voluntary conservation efforts.

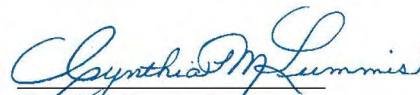
As you determine the scope of your review, we ask that the 2019 sage-grouse amendments that specifically sought to enhance cooperation and coordination – particularly to align with state plans and management strategies and improved adaptive management – be included. BLM must continue to collaborate and coordinate with state and local governments, tribes, and impacted communities to ensure use of the best available science and preserve flexible, aligned plans that accommodate local situations. In addition, as the West faces another fire season, we also compel the Department, working through the BLM and U.S. Forest Service, to proactively address fire threat in sagebrush steppe ecosystems. Singularly, proactive fuels treatment and fire response in habitat may be the largest contribution the Department can make to greater sage-grouse habitat and species conservation.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue for the West.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



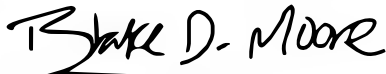
Cynthia Lummis  
United States Senator



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



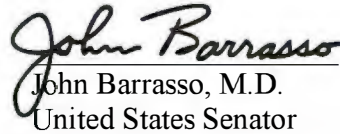
Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



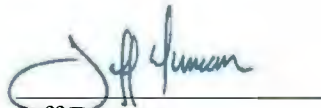
Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator



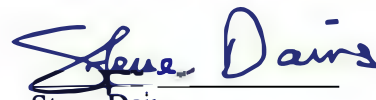
Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



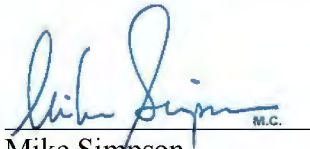
Ben Sasse  
United States Senator



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



James E. Risch  
United States Senator



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



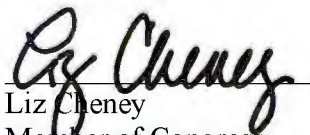
Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



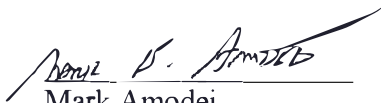
James R. Baird  
Member of Congress



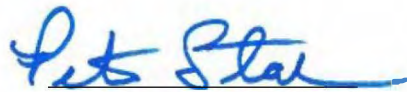
Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



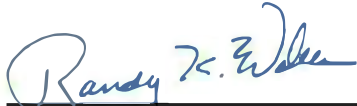
Kelley Armstrong  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D. S.  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



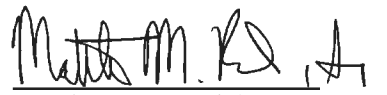
Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris-Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens  
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

Cc: Acting Director Nada Culver, Acting Director Martha Williams

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 28, 2021

The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau  
Deputy Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Ms. Heather Gottry  
Director and Designated Agency Ethics Official, Departmental Ethics Office  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Deputy Secretary Beaudreau and Ms. Gottry,

On his first day in office, President Biden signed an Executive Order (E.O.) implementing additional ethics commitments for appointees.<sup>1</sup> The E.O. included a two year prohibition on participating in particular matters with former employers or clients.<sup>2</sup> The E.O.'s requirements buttressed the existing ethical standards which require federal employees to act impartially<sup>3</sup> and to avoid even the appearance of acting otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Ethics guidance advises employees that they should not act on a matter if a reasonable person, with knowledge of the circumstances, could legitimately question the employee's impartiality.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to his Senate confirmation, Deputy Secretary Beaudreau signed an ethics agreement,<sup>6</sup> and worked with career ethics staff at the Department of the Interior (DOI) to create procedures to ensure his compliance with ethical obligations.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Deputy Secretary Beaudreau stated he would "be mindful at all times about complying with ethical obligations."<sup>8</sup> As Deputy Secretary, Mr. Beaudreau joins Secretary Debra Haaland as the primary individuals responsible for overseeing the entirety of DOI.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exec. Order 13989, 86 Fed. Reg. 14, 7029 (Jan. 20, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> 5 CFR § 2635.101(b)(8).

<sup>4</sup> 5 CFR § 2635.101(b)(14).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. OFF. OF GOV'T ETHICS, STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT: SUMMARY FOR EXEC. BRANCH EMPLOYEES at 12, available at [https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/0/7E9C8E62D239E7C0852585B6005A180E/\\$FILE/Intro%20to%20Standards.pdf](https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/0/7E9C8E62D239E7C0852585B6005A180E/$FILE/Intro%20to%20Standards.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau to Ms. Heather Gottry, Designated Agency Ethics Official and Director, Departmental Ethics Office, U.S. Dep't of the Interior (Apr. 16, 2021), available at [https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/4D599B55F3DB7D62852586BF002EBBBD/\\$FILE/Beaudreau,%20Tommy%20%20finalEA.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/4D599B55F3DB7D62852586BF002EBBBD/$FILE/Beaudreau,%20Tommy%20%20finalEA.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau to be Deputy Sec'y of the Interior: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources*, 117th Cong. (2021) (Statement of The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Partlow & Juliet Eilperin, *This Biden Pick has Worked for Top Offshore Wind Firms. Now He's Poised to Help Oversee the Industry*, WASHINGTON POST (May 18, 2021),

That responsibility provides Deputy Secretary Beaudreau the opportunity to participate in a wide array of policy discussions and decision-making processes.

Concerns surrounding Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's potential conflicts of interest arose during his Senate confirmation process. Specifically, Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's prior representation of companies in the wind energy industry raises potential for conflicts of interest. The Biden Administration set a goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030.<sup>10</sup> DOI plays a key role in this initiative through the development of renewable energy in federal waters.<sup>11</sup> To meet President Biden's goal, DOI is reviewing 14 applications for permits to build offshore wind turbines, 10 of which are being sought by Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's former clients.<sup>12</sup> According to a chief attorney with a government ethics group, "if there are pending applications, he'll need to stay out of it"<sup>13</sup> to protect the integrity of the decision-making process for the wind farm proposals. It goes without saying, Deputy Secretary Beaudreau should recuse himself from issues benefiting his former clients.

Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's Public Financial Disclosure Report reveals 35 clients, which contributed to his nearly \$2.4 million income within a 14-month period.<sup>14</sup> In comparison, while severely criticized for the number of his potential conflicts of interest, then-Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt under the Trump Administration disclosed 17 clients to contribute to his approximately \$1.1 million income in his initial Public Financial Disclosure Report.<sup>15</sup> Given Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's extensive list of clients, Scott Amey, General Counsel for the Project on Government Oversight, suggested, "full transparency here would be copies of his calendars and meetings that he's having to show his former clients aren't receiving an unfair advantage that isn't available to other competitors in the industry."<sup>16</sup> To avoid the appearance of impropriety, Deputy Secretary Beaudreau should disclose additional details about his participation in policy discussions and decisions to the public.

To maintain the public's trust, compliance with ethical standards is paramount. Given Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's high potential to encounter conflicts of interest, DOI should also share the procedures in place to ensure impartiality in the agency's decision-making process. Therefore, in order to assist with our oversight activities, please provide the following as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 12, 2021:

1. A copy of Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's List of Recusals and Quick Reference Chart.
2. All documents referring or relating to the procedures developed by the Departmental Ethics Office or Deputy Secretary Beaudreau, including but not limited to, Deputy Secretary

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/05/18/this-biden-pick-has-worked-top-offshore-wind-firms-now-hes-poised-help-oversee-industry/>.

<sup>10</sup> Press Release, Dep't of the Interior, Interior Joins Government-Wide Effort to Advance Offshore Wind (Mar. 29, 2021), <https://www.doi.gov/news/interior-joins-government-wide-effort-advance-offshore-wind>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Supra* note 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Sam Skolnik, *Biden's Deputy Interior Pick Earned \$2.4 Million at Latham*, Bloomberg Law (Apr. 22, 2021), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/bidens-deputy-interior-pick-earned-2-4-million-at-latham>.

<sup>15</sup> EXECUTIVE BRANCH PERSONNEL PUBLIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORT (OGE FORM 278E) FOR DAVID LONGLY BERNHARDT (2017).

<sup>16</sup> *Supra* note 9.



The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau and  
Ms. Heather Gottry  
June 28, 2021  
Page 3

Beaudreau's Ethics Recusal and Screening Arrangement, to ensure Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's compliance with his ethical obligations.

3. All documents and communications, including but not limited to emails, referring or relating to Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's involvement or potential involvement in the Biden Administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030.
4. A document sufficient to describe DOI's plan to make copies of Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's calendar and meetings available to the public.
5. A document sufficient to describe Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's intentions to file a request for any ethics waivers and Deputy Secretary Beaudreau's intentions to seek or the government's intentions to issue him any impartiality determinations per 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

Please contact the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Minority staff at (202) 225-2761 with any questions about this request, and to coordinate the delivery of your response to room 1329 of the Longworth House Office Building.

An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Katie Porter, Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Enclosure

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 16, 2021

Secretary Deb Haaland  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) develops revised land management plans for the greater sage-grouse and resumes its evaluation of the proposed mineral withdrawal of public lands in sagebrush focal areas from mineral location and entry, we ask that the agency use the best available science to implement rangewide measures that reduce risks to sage-grouse populations while effectively implementing and maintaining Interior's core mission of multiple-use.

Under the guise of a potential Endangered Species Act listing, BLM is seeking a mineral withdrawal on 10 million acres of federal lands in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming. This proposed action not only ignores Interior's mission but disregards the states, local governments, and stakeholders who have consistently proven themselves as the best stewards of their unique landscapes and have implemented successful sage-grouse management and conservation plans to avoid potential adverse impacts.

We maintain that an Endangered Species Act listing is not the most effective way to protect and restore the greater sage-grouse species. In your scientific review of current land management plans and environmental impacts, you will find that any decline in sage-grouse populations can largely be attributed to four main reasons: invasive grasses (i.e., cheatgrass), drought, predation, and insufficient management of wild horses and burros.

Active management of federal lands and removal of cheatgrass, one of the largest contributors to wildfire escalation, should be a top priority and plays a key role in sage-grouse recovery. Earlier this year, researchers found that the removal of invasive vegetation allowed for a 12% faster population growth than in areas without such treatment.<sup>1</sup> As you know, catastrophic wildfires throughout the West have threatened our public lands, waters, and air quality. Increases in burned areas, resulting from more frequent wildfires and invasive grass cycles, has led to elevated nest predation from ravens – which account for a majority of sage-grouse nest failures – and a decline of available nesting areas. Due to the large amounts of sagebrush steppe burned, ravens have exploited the lack of canopy cover typically used to conceal nesting areas.

Further, drought continues to impact greater sage-grouse recovery. We do not believe that it would be fair to penalize western land users for a natural endemic that results in the loss of greater sage-grouse habitat. We must find commonsense solutions to the realities of catastrophic drought that

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew C. Olsen et al, *Reversing tree expansion in sagebrush steppe yields population-level benefit for imperiled grouse*, Ecosphere, June 9, 2021, <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.3551>.

continues to plague much of the West. To ensure sage-grouse habitat is maintained, drought mitigation must be a part of the broader discussion of species recovery. Water storage, wildfire prevention, water user flexibility, and increased coordination at all government levels are imperative.

Additionally, we urge the Department to prioritize actively managing and reducing wild horse and burro populations, as sage-grouse populations would see a significant rebound.<sup>2</sup> Wild horse and burro populations on BLM lands are three times the appropriate management levels, and these levels have become unsustainable and extremely destructive to western rangelands. Overgrazing has left the land barren, disrupting the ecological balance and posing a threat to several species, including the greater sage-grouse. Should current wild horse and burro population levels continue to grow at current rates, projections indicate sage-grouse populations will be reduced by 70%.

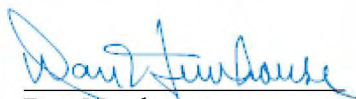
By issuing the intent to amend land management plans for greater sage-grouse, while simultaneously resuming the evaluation of a proposed mineral withdrawal of public lands in sagebrush focal areas, it is clear BLM aims to use a potential Endangered Species Act listing as an excuse to ban the responsible development of domestic minerals and energy resources on public lands.

Unilaterally locking up 10 million acres ignores the scientific community, and it fails to empower local management efforts that ensure multiple-use is afforded to rural communities. Domestic minerals are a public good, and restricting mineral development conflicts with the goals of the Administration to increase renewable energy sources into our nation's energy portfolio. Additionally, our rural communities rely on the jobs, products, and revenues that mineral production on public lands provides.

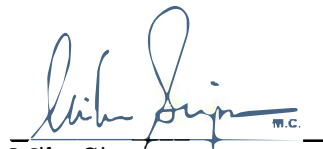
We are concerned that these actions by the Administration will further exacerbate our current energy shortages and supply chain issues – while doing little to nothing to protect and restore greater sage-grouse populations. Instead of a top-down approach, we urge you to empower states, local governments, and private conservation partners who have implemented conservation plans that establish responsible management constraints and limits on hunting, control non-native predators, reduce invasive juniper trees and grasses, and implement habitat restoration after energy development, all of which provide co-benefits for wildlife mitigation. To ensure the Department's actions are informed by the valuable local knowledge possessed by these stakeholders, the Department must meet directly with impacted state and local governments, as well as the private conservation partners who have made significant investments in sage grouse recovery, and host public meetings in all of the impacted states as part of its review.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you on this important issue for the West.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> Coates, Peter, *Sage Grouse Population Dynamics are Adversely Affected by Overabundant Feral Horses*, The Journal of Wildlife Management.



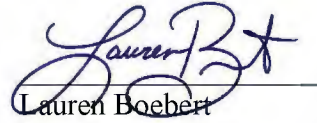
Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress



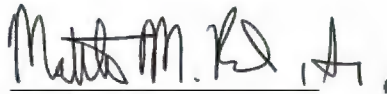
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress




Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S  
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress



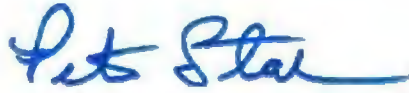
Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



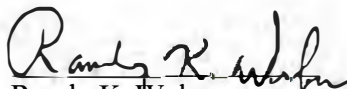
Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



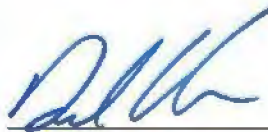
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

Last month, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 100,441 people attempting entry through the Southwest border, reflecting a 28 percent increase in illegal crossings since January 2021.<sup>1</sup> The surge of illegal border crossings continues, with CBP reporting just a few days ago that “agents apprehended 134 illegal aliens” near Lomas, Texas, and then hours later, another “113 illegal aliens comprised of families and unaccompanied alien children (UAC)” near La Grulla, Texas.<sup>2</sup> On his first day in office, President Biden took administrative action to reverse many of President Trump’s immigration policies, including halting construction of the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.<sup>3</sup> These decisions have opened the United States’ Southern border to human traffickers and drug cartels.<sup>4</sup> In addition to health and safety concerns, illegal immigration has a severe impact on the environment.

The environmental consequences of illegal immigration are well documented. Both of us have personally witnessed scattered trash and damage to our lands during official tours of the Southern border. Deserts are used as dumping sites<sup>5</sup> and vegetation is destroyed.<sup>6</sup> For example, between 2007 and 2018, 460,000 pounds of trash discarded by illegal migrants were collected along the 370 miles of the Arizona-Mexico border.<sup>7</sup> Based on past cleanups, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality estimates that each border crosser leaves “approximately six to eight pounds of trash in the desert during their journey.”<sup>8</sup> The trash left behind by illegal

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, CPB Announces February 2021 Operation Update (Mar. 10, 2021), *available at* <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-announces-february-2021-operational-update>.

<sup>2</sup> Press Release: Large Groups Continue to Flow Into the RGV (Mar. 15, 2021), *available at* <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/local-media-release/large-groups-continue-flow-rgv>.

<sup>3</sup> Proclamation No. 10142, 86 Fed. Reg. 7225.

<sup>4</sup> Steven Groves, *Have a Care for U.S. Sovereignty*, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION (Feb. 12, 2021), <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/have-care-us-sovereignty>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Birmingham, *NAT Investigators: Border Trash*, News4 Tucson (May 13, 2019), <https://kvoa.com/news/2019/05/13/n4t-investigators-border-trash/>.

<sup>6</sup> ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, Arizona Border Trash, <https://www.azbordertrash.gov/about.html>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

migrants includes human waste, backpacks, medical products, plastic, vehicles, and clothing, all of which pose risks to wildlife.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to jeopardizing the safety of wildlife, their habitats are decimated as well. Six hundred ninety-three miles of the Southern border is federal or Indian-owned land,<sup>10</sup> some of which the United States has designated as protected areas. Illegal migrants do not respect these protections. For example, delicate sites such as the Sonoran Desert National Monument and Ironwood Forest National Monument required habitat restoration and mitigation after being used as major illegal smuggling corridors.<sup>11</sup> The Natural Resources Committee also heard testimony in previous hearings of various examples of illegal migrant destruction of federal land, including:

- significant destruction of Organ Pipe National Monument and the creation of illegal trails throughout Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge;<sup>12</sup>
- campfires causing more than 370 acres of the Cleveland National Forest to burn in 2005;<sup>13</sup> and
- adverse impact to approximately 203 threatened, endangered, or sensitive species in the Coronado National Forest.<sup>14</sup>

Not only are they destroying wildlife habitats, illegal migrants are also vandalizing American citizens' properties.<sup>15</sup> As the number of illegal migrants crossing the border increases, greater damages to federal lands are anticipated.

Decreasing illegal crossings protects our border environment, and while a border wall serves as an effective deterrent,<sup>16</sup> the expansion is no longer under construction. We cannot ignore the environmental impact of illegal migrants when devising immigration enforcement policy. Therefore, to assist us with our oversight activities, please produce the following, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m., April 1, 2021:

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<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum from Carol Hardy Vincent, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy, Congressional Research Service, to Staff, Oversight and Investigations Subcomm., H. Comm. on Nat. Res. (Nov. 9, 2017) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>11</sup> *Southern Arizona Project, 2016 Border Report*, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, U.S. DEP'T OF THE INTERIOR, available at <https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/documents/files/SAP%202016%20%28508%20Final%29.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> *Enhancing DHS' Efforts to Disrupt Alien Smuggling Across Our Border: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism of the H. Comm. on Homeland Security*, 111th Cong. (2010) (statement of Janice L. Kephart, Director of National Security Policy, Center for Immigration Studies).

<sup>13</sup> *The Costs of Denying Border Patrol Access: Our Environment and Security: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations of the H. Comm. on Nat. Res.*, 115th Cong. (2018) (statement of Hon. Andrew R. Arthur, Resident Fellow in Law and Policy, Center for Immigration Studies).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Texas Rancher Says Illegal Immigrants Are Repeatedly Causing Property Damage and Trashing His Land*, THE DAILY CALLER (Mar. 12, 2021), [https://www.ntd.com/texas-rancher-says-illegal-immigrants-are-repeatedly-causing-property-damage-and-trashing-his-land\\_579995.html](https://www.ntd.com/texas-rancher-says-illegal-immigrants-are-repeatedly-causing-property-damage-and-trashing-his-land_579995.html).

<sup>16</sup> Press Release, Department of Homeland Security, The Border Wall System is Deployed, Effective and Disrupting Criminals and Smugglers (Oct. 29, 2020), available at <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/10/29/border-wall-system-deployed-effective-and-disrupting-criminals-and-smugglers>.

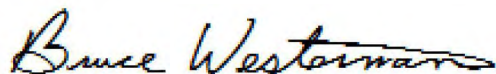
1. All documents referring or related to the environmental analyses conducted for the El Paso, Rio Grande Valley, and Laredo border sectors for FY17 through FY19.
2. A document describing anticipated environmental damage due to the February 2021 surge of illegal border crossings on the Southern border.

Please also provide a briefing, as soon as possible, but no later than March 25, 2021, from the CBP Wall Team for Republican Committee staff on the environmental impacts of halting construction of the border wall.

Please deliver your response to room 1329 of the Longworth House Office Building. An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request.

Please contact the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Minority staff at (202) 225-2761 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Oversight and Investigations  
Subcommittee

cc: The Honorable Debra Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, Natural Resources Committee

Enclosure



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0603

March 29, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Deputy Director  
The Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President Biden, Deputy Director Young and Secretary Haaland:

As your administration prepares to release its first budget, I urge you to include full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program for fiscal year 2022.

All twenty-nine counties that make up Colorado's Third Congressional District benefit from the PILT program, which provides necessary funding to offset the loss of tax revenue local governments would otherwise receive, but do not because of the large presence of federal lands within their boundaries. The county governments of the Third District are currently waiting for confirmation that these funds will reach them while trying to plan their budgets. It is imperative that your administration uphold the federal government's long-standing commitment to counties with significant federal lands within their border.

Colorado experienced devastating consequences from wildfires last year with the three largest fires in state history occurring, including the Pine Gulch fire in my district that occurred mostly on Bureau of Land Management land. PILT funding is a front-line resource that allows for fire protection districts and our communities to help fight fires on federal land. PILT funding is also a pillar for construction of new schools, road maintenance, police protection, and life-saving search and rescue missions.

Withholding PILT funds would be detrimental to rural communities like the ones I represent and 49 different states. These counties are already deprived of crucial revenues simply because they are home to federal public lands. Again, I urge you to fully fund the PILT program in your fiscal year 2022 budget. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



March 16, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

More than 100 years ago, the National Park Service was founded as a program to protect 35 established national monuments including the very first national park. In the years to follow, America continued to build upon this conservation legacy—enacting laws on a bipartisan basis to ensure conservation and stewardship principles were the foundation of public land management. However, over the last two decades, litigation, preservationist ideology, bureaucratic processes, and executive actions have undermined multiple-use and sustained yield statutory mandates—particularly in the West. It is for this reason that we write to express our concern regarding the lack of information and ambiguous goals for the Biden Administration's Executive Order establishing a directive to protect at least 30% of our lands and waters by 2030 (30 by 30).

The lack of detail accompanying this goal, the inability of your nominee for Secretary of the Interior – author of the mirroring legislation – to answer questions about this initiative, and the fact that this effort is spear-headed by an unconfirmed appointee housed in the National Climate Task Force has resulted in numerous concerns raised by those who live, work, and recreate on and near public lands. The federal government manages 640 million acres of land, over 90% of which is west of the Mississippi. Given our wide-open spaces, large-scale landscapes, and significant federal ownership, Western states will be disproportionately impacted by policies set in place to achieve the 30 by 30 goal, which we fear will impact revenues-derived and jobs that depend upon multiple-use public lands.

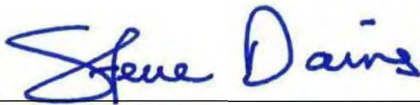
We urge you to remember that land management agencies are bound by a statutory-based multiple-use mandate. Our lands and our waters must remain open to activities that support our rural economies and help us to achieve our agriculture, timber, recreation, energy, and mineral needs. These multiple-uses are not only compatible with conservation ambitions, but they are an effective means to achieve these goals. Healthy lands and sustainable wildlife are inherent to our hunting, recreation, and sportsmen opportunities. Activities such as grazing and timber harvest are oftentimes the most effective tool to restore and sustain landscapes. Bonding requirements, reclamation standards, and mitigation directives ensure that extractive industries leave the land better than they found it—in addition, these activities fund several conservation programs. Each use goes through extensive environmental review and public comment.

The West is already paving the way on conservation. Stewardship of our lands is embedded in our Western values. Sustainable, healthy land is the lifeblood of our rural communities and our outdoor heritage and rural economies thrive when our lands are properly managed. While the

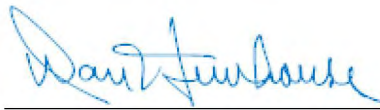
Administration has implied that multiple-use is not contrary to conservation, recent activities that attack key industries suggests otherwise. Multiple-use is compatible with conservation, and the United States Geological Survey has already illustrated 30% of our lands are in some degree of conservation status. Recently, the Administration has clarified that private lands are included in this initiative, setting the stage for potential egregious federal overreach. While these lands contribute to overall conservation, subjecting private landowners to this nebulous federal program is an extreme breach of private property rights. More clarity is desperately needed.

Therefore, we remain concerned that the 30 by 30 initiative will be used as a method to undermine private property rights, circumvent the multiple-use mandate, and lock up more land. Conservation remains a top priority for Western congressional members, and our constituents' lives and livelihoods rely upon a healthy, actively-managed landscape. However, the 30 by 30 initiative displays a dangerous thoughtlessness and far too many of our questions have been left unanswered. It is also our understanding that key constituencies have yet to be engaged on this initiative. As such, we respectfully urge you to provide state and local governments, the energy, minerals, and agriculture sectors, tribes, sportsmen, and recreationists an equitable and meaningful voice in the process. We also request a detailed briefing with the signers of this letter within 60 days of the Executive Order being signed.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



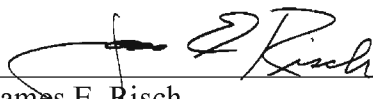
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



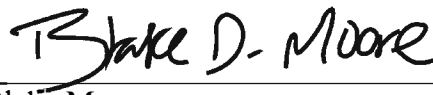
James E. Risch  
United States Senator



Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress



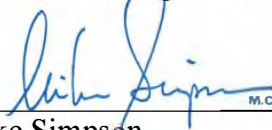
Michael S. Lee  
United States Senator



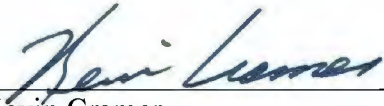
Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



Ben Sasse  
United States Senator



Mitt Romney  
United States Senator



Cynthia Lummis  
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator



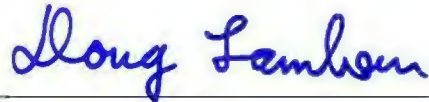
John Hoeven  
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



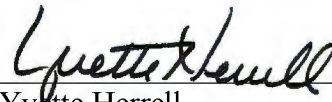
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale Sr.  
Member of Congress



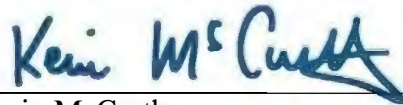
Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress




Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Jason Smith  
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



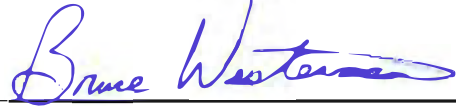
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress



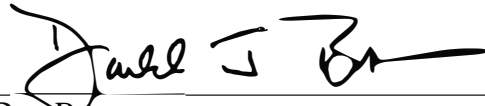
Liz Cheney  
House Conference Chair



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



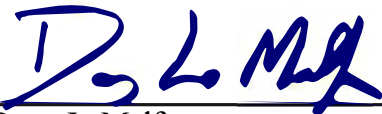
Don Bacon  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



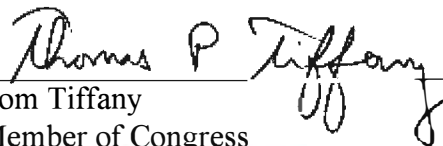
Jim Baird  
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress



Thomas P Tiffany  
Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



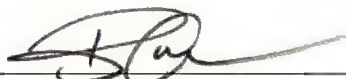
Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress



James Comer  
Member of Congress



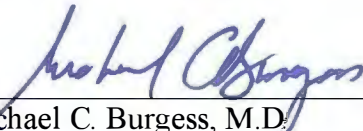
John Curtis  
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens  
Member of Congress



Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Jodey C. Arrington  
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



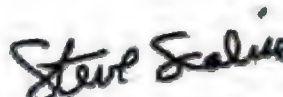
Ron Estes  
Member of Congress



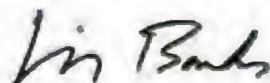
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



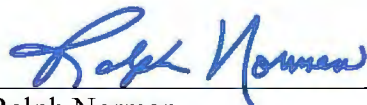
Steve Scalise  
House Republican Whip



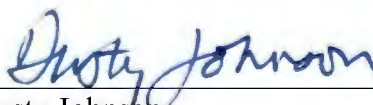
Jim Banks  
Member of Congress



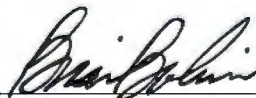
Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



Brian Babin  
Member of Congress



Mike Bost  
Member of Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 18, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue  
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
Secretary  
Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Vilsack, Secretary Raimondo, and Secretary Haaland:

As you know, wildfires in the US and around the world are increasing in frequency and veracity leading to more devastating health, safety, property, and ecological impacts. Each year the government allocates billions of taxpayer dollars to combat wildfires. One of the most important firefighting tools are aerial fire-retardants which can dramatically slow the flame front, enabling our firefighters to better control the fires and do so more safely.

We understand that the USDA Forest Service has been trying for several years to broaden the options of qualified fire-retardant suppliers and to end the complete dependency on a single source supplier, and we applaud this effort. An equally important goal has been to improve the properties of retardants to lessen damage to the environment and water supplies. Approval of additional products would allow for the use of innovative retardant formulas that have shown to be more effective and lower the carbon footprint.

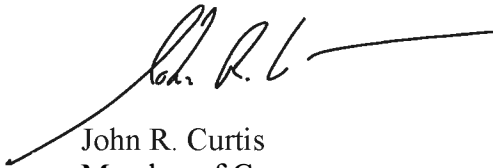
We understand that the agency is now working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to obtain operational field approvals of new retardants through an updated National Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) expected to be completed by September 2021 (85 FR 51403). However, in recent years, August and September

have been two of the most devastating fire months and it is critical that wildland firefighters have the best resources available to them during that time. To that end, we urge you to prioritize work to complete of the SEIS by early August, so they are approved for field use later that month.

We are pleased to see the progress made and wish to work closely to ensure that the needed work on the biological assessments is completed ahead of schedule. To that end, we would like to understand your milestones for completing this work and respectfully ask for weekly progress reports to our staff about your progress to complete this important work.

Thank you for your service and consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to improve federal wildfire response. For clarifying questions, please have a member of your staff contact Rebekah Rodriguez with Congressman Curtis at [Rebekah.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rebekah.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



John R. Curtis  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



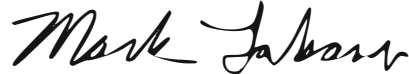
Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President  
United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you know, the United States needs resilient, diverse, and secure mineral supply chains to ensure our economic prosperity and national security. This issue is something on which we can find bipartisan agreement and should be able to work together to promote for the benefit of our nation and our own domestic mineral security.

Yet, as leaders in American Natural Resource policy, we were deeply disappointed when your Executive Order on “America’s Supply Chains” failed to include any reference to the Department of the Interior (DOI) or the important role of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in securing domestic mineral supplies. As the nation’s largest land manager, DOI is best positioned to leverage our vast federal lands to produce more of the minerals we need as a nation for our security and for a more electrified future. In addition, the USGS knows where many of our minerals are and where in the production stage we need assistance to get the minerals produced. This failure means the effort created by the Executive Order will clearly be incomplete.

In fact, DOI and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have already moved our nation backward in ongoing efforts to produce more minerals in the United States. One of the first actions by USDA was to withdraw a critical environmental review for a copper mine which could supply America with 25% of our future copper needs for generations. In addition, the United States Forest Service is considering withdrawing leases for copper-nickel projects in Minnesota that could supply important cobalt and other minerals for which we are completely foreign dependent.

Overly broad Secretarial Orders from the Department stopping oil and gas were applied to minerals exploration which resulted in unnecessary costs and delays to miners working to produce rare earth minerals. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is working to undo a permitted lithium mine in Nevada which was approved under the last Administration. In Alaska, the BLM has withdrawn more than ten million acres of land from mineral exploration, cutting off our ability to explore for the minerals we need as a nation. Taken together, these efforts are hurting our national security and clearly

disregard the priority of securing domestic supply chains which was shown in your Executive Order.

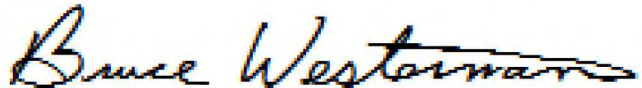
Finally, it has become clear that that you are preparing to sacrifice American mining jobs to Canada to make up for the damage caused by your deeply misguided Keystone Pipeline decision. News reports from the March 18<sup>th</sup> closed door secret meetings held by the Department of Commerce imply that you are preparing to provide Canadian mining companies with incentives to open and operate more mines to supply America with minerals.

That this Administration, through the Department of Commerce, is working to trade the jobs of American miners, steelworkers, and laborers to Canada to make up for a decision you made that killed thousands of American pipefitting and welding jobs and tens of thousands of Canadian oil and gas jobs is unacceptable. American miners and American mineral security should not be used as tools to be traded away to make up for your disastrous foreign policy decisions. American mining and smelting jobs are some of the highest paying jobs in our nation and your Administration should be fighting to create more of these jobs domestically, not using taxpayer resources to encourage Canada to steal our jobs and the opportunity they present to America. It makes no sense to actively kill mining jobs in Minnesota, Arizona, and Alaska while turning to Canada and asking them to open mines to fill the gaps.

Your Executive Order recognized how important mineral security is to our nation, and we call on you now to have confidence in the American worker and the American environmental ethic to promote mining in America and direct your agencies to focus on making mining happen. Our environmental laws, mining regulations, and workers are the best in the world. Your Administration should recognize this and work to promote American mining and American miners. We stand ready to work with you to accomplish this goal in the years to come, but you must stop the ongoing efforts to short circuit this opportunity and trade our jobs away.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Gosar" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul A Gosar, D.D.S  
Member of Congress

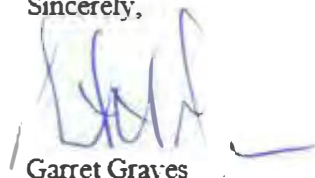
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Westerman" with a long, sweeping underline.

Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 23, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

Members of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Oversight and Reform are deeply concerned about various reports of torture, sexual assault, and extrajudicial killings committed by eco-guard forces abroad funded in part by U.S. government-issued grants. On September 17, 2019, in response to a bipartisan congressional investigation, the Department of the Interior expressed concerns about “the adequacy of the controls in place to effectively and transparently monitor the use of U.S. taxpayer resources that support [grants to satisfy] conservation and trafficking goals . . . .”<sup>1</sup> We applaud the Department’s responsiveness and sound judgment to withhold awarding \$12.3 million in Fiscal Year 2018 funds for certain international conservation grants until proper oversight mechanisms are in place.<sup>2</sup>

We urge you to continue your heightened review of grants, particularly those that involve law enforcement activities or support regions with documented human rights abuses. It is imperative that the Department take additional steps to ensure that taxpayer dollars do not support partner organizations that are affiliated with human rights abusers.

The Committee on Natural Resources initiated its bipartisan investigation into whether federal funding had inadvertently supported human rights violations after reports surfaced that the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) funded rangers who tortured, raped, and murdered indigenous and local people abroad.<sup>3</sup> As you are aware, WWF receives approximately \$21 million in taxpayer-funded grants annually through the Department and other U.S. government agencies.<sup>4</sup> WWF is only one of several similar organizations that receive such grant funding from the U.S. government.

Given the gravity of the concerns, the Committee on Natural Resources submitted a bipartisan request to the Government Accountability Office to examine, among other things, the protections, guidelines, or controls in place to prevent U.S. partner organizations from engaging

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hon. Susan Combs, Assistant Sec’y Pol’y, Mgmt., & Budget, U.S. Dep’t of the Interior to Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. (Sept. 17, 2019) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>2</sup> E-mail from Office of Congressional Affairs, U.S. Dep’t of the Interior, to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Staff (Sept. 30, 2019, 11:05 EST) (on file with author).

<sup>3</sup> Katie J.M. Baker and Tom Warren, *WWF Funds Guards Who Have Tortured and Killed People*, BUZZFEED (Mar. 4, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death>.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Ginette Hemley, Sr. Vice President, Wildlife Conservation, WWF to Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. and Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Republican, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. (July 23, 2019) (on file with author) (Chart of Grants of Sub-Grants to the WWF Network from US Agencies between 2004 and 2019). WWF reported receipt of \$333,270,095 in government grants for from Jan. 1, 2004 to July 23, 2019.

in or supporting efforts involving human rights abuses.<sup>5</sup> The Committee on Natural Resources also requested<sup>6</sup> and received a bipartisan briefing from the Department on the issue,<sup>7</sup> and subsequently requested documents and information.<sup>8</sup>

Concerns surrounding the allegations of human rights violations were clearly echoed by WWF's representatives and the Department in multiple bipartisan briefings to the Committee on Natural Resources. In the first bipartisan briefing with WWF on April 9, 2019, the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs for WWF stated that "most of these issues go back many years" and that "we don't know [the full extent of the problem] given the corruption in some of these places."<sup>9</sup> When pressed for further information about the allegations, WWF's Senior Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs added that "a lot of people are leaking."<sup>10</sup> The information provided in the briefing partially led to a bipartisan request on July 1, 2019, for a series of documents from WWF.<sup>11</sup> WWF's Senior Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs and the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs never again formally communicated with the Committee on Natural Resources minority.

Instead, outside lobbyists retained by WWF on July 9, 2019<sup>12</sup> contacted the Committee on Natural Resources majority<sup>13</sup> and scheduled a bipartisan meeting the very next day. During the meeting, one of the lobbyists also admitted the condition of the circumstances and stated, "It's bad. I mean, it's bad."<sup>14</sup> Five days later, WWF, WWF's lobbyists, and WWF's outside law firm again met with Committee on Natural Resources staff. During the July 15, 2019, briefing, a top WWF official stated, "It was never our intention to hide anything from anybody. Maybe we got involved with the wrong people in the wrong way."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. and Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Republican, H. Comm. on Nat. Res., to Hon. Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General, U.S. Gov't Accountability Office (May 6, 2019) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. and Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Republican, H. Comm. on Nat. Res., to Hon. David Bernhardt, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of the Interior (June 6, 2019) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>7</sup> *Briefing from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv., U.S. Dep't of the Interior*, to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Staff (July 12, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. and Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Republican, H. Comm. on Nat. Res., to Hon. David Bernhardt, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of the Interior, (July 23, 2019) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>9</sup> *Briefing from WWF*, to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Staff (Apr. 9, 2019) (Statement of Will Gartshore, Deputy Dir. of Legis. Affairs, WWF).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* (statement of James Mazarella, Sr. Vice President for Policy & Gov't Affairs, WWF).

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. and Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Republican, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. to Carter Roberts, President and CEO, World Wildlife Fund (July 1, 2019) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>12</sup> Lobbying Registration, Cassidy & Associates, Inc. (July 10, 2019), <http://disclosures.house.gov/ld/ldxmlrelease/2019/RR/301044025.xml>.

<sup>13</sup> Email from Amelia Jenkins, Executive Vice President, Cassidy & Associates to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Majority Staff (July 9, 2019, 10:44 EST) (on file with author).

<sup>14</sup> Meeting with H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Staff (July 10, 2019) (statement of Amelia Jenkins, Executive Vice President, Cassidy & Associates).

<sup>15</sup> Meeting with H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Staff (July 15, 2019) (statement of Martha Piper, Chief Operating Officer, WWF).

Documents produced by WWF to the Committee on Natural Resources confirm WWF's representatives' statements about the breadth and severity of human rights violations and disclose disturbing recollections of abuses committed by recipients of WWF funding. Importantly, responsive information reveals that WWF possessed documented knowledge of the atrocities, which ranged from recent events to events dating back nearly two decades.<sup>16</sup> For example in 2012, a farmer and his father were jailed, his wife raped, and his family tortured by law enforcement based on a false accusation of poaching.<sup>17</sup> In another instance in 2013, three men were beaten and had their genitalia tied together with fishing wire as eco-guards interrogated them about where they had been fishing.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, in 2002, a woman was raped by eco-guards and her husband was threatened with death and fined for fishing in a park.<sup>19</sup>

It appears, however, that while the U.S. government has directly awarded approximately \$9.9 million in taxpayer dollars to WWF specifically to support eco-guards,<sup>20</sup> WWF rarely, if at all, ever notified the Department of the existence of its internal investigations documenting human rights violations. The failure of partner organizations to formally notify the U.S. government of such concerns and problems is indicative of weak oversight and accountability mechanisms necessary for a grant program's integrity. Although WWF may have failed to alert the Department of these serious issues, the Department's processes inadequately rely on auditors paid by WWF to determine whether grant funds have been used to support human rights abuses.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the Department likely faces greater oversight and accountability obstacles based on WWF's extensive use of sub-grantees. This issue touches on the longstanding challenges to monitor sub-grantee behavior. Based on responsive documents, U.S. government grants awarded to WWF are almost always sub-granted, and primarily to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF International).<sup>22</sup> Notably, WWF International is a foreign entity registered in Switzerland and a distinct legal entity from WWF in the United States.

Potential oversight gaps are further concerning given the fungible nature of these funds. For example, while WWF explicitly receives U.S. government grants to pay the salaries and bonuses of eco-guards,<sup>23</sup> WWF and its non-profit partners appear to endeavor to also arm eco-

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<sup>16</sup> Memorandum from Dominic O'Neill, COO, WWF Int'l, to Whom it may concern (Salonga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo) (July 31, 2019) (on file with author).

<sup>17</sup> Baker *supra* note 3.

<sup>18</sup> INVESTIGATION REPORT ON THE SALONGA NATIONAL PARK (Draft Report, March 2019) at WWF-HRNCOM-00000255.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at WWF-HRNCOM-00000252.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Ginette Hemley, *supra* note 4 (Chart of Grants of Sub-Grants to the WWF Network from US Agencies between 2004 and 2019), *see generally* WWF-HRNCOM-00000222 – WWF-HRNCOM-00000231. The U.S. Dep't of the Interior contributed approximately \$3.3 million for these activities to WWF in the same time period.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Hon. Susan Combs, *supra* note 1.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Ginette Hemley *supra* note 4.

<sup>23</sup> *See* Budget Justification, WWF-US, (Sub-grant to African Parks Network – Odzala-Kokoua National Park: "EcoGuards (110) 32% of \$321.75/each per month support by USFWS") at DOI\_00013304\_000000143; Budget Justification, WWF-US, (Sub-grant to WWF-Gabon – Souanke Panhandle Forestry Concessions: "The following

guards. In its application for funding, WWF noted that previous Department funds had led to improvements in law enforcement effectiveness, but highlighted the need for firearms and ammunition.<sup>24</sup> The Department's Notice of Funding Opportunities prohibits the purchase of firearms or ammunition.<sup>25</sup> In a prior report, however, the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) International Affairs (IA) grant management specialists repeatedly failed to properly evaluate whether grant recipients' financial management systems complied with federal laws and regulations.<sup>26</sup> The OIG noted that if a partner organization's financial system does not comply with federal requirements, there is "no assurance that Federal awards are being managed properly."<sup>27</sup> The demonstrated accountability weaknesses associated with these grants raise concerns that taxpayer dollars are increasing opportunities for partner organizations to obtain weapons for eco-guards and further risks to human rights.

While we are encouraged by the Department's recent in-depth evaluation of grants prior to their award, further scrutiny is warranted. The Department must take additional steps to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not supporting human rights abuses. We recommend that the Department create a list of high-risk areas and reassess its ability to oversee funds going to these areas. Until the Department has appropriate accountability mechanisms in place, a moratorium on funds being distributed to high-risk areas, especially for law enforcement related activities, will help minimize the risk for U.S. taxpayer-funded human rights abuses. Additionally, the Department's improved ability to monitor sub-grantees is imperative for the successful execution of international conservation grants.

On October 10, 2019, Chairman Grijalva sent you a letter stating that "concern for human rights issues does not mandate stopping funding for international conservation grants in Africa."<sup>28</sup> In contrast to Chairman Grijalva's view, FWS IA Acting Assistant Director Eric Alvarez stated expressly, "we don't tolerate international human rights [abuses]."<sup>29</sup> We agree. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you continue to withhold specifically identified high risk grant funds until the Department can ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being used to support human rights abuses. Failure to ensure accountability harms the integrity of our nation's international conservation efforts. We appreciate your shared concern and willingness to work with us to address these issues.

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field running costs will be funded 21% by USFWS and 79% WWF. All of this funding is transferred to Ouesso bank and managed in the field by WWF & MEF and administered by WWF. Ecoguard salaries . . . Ecoguard performance bonus") at DOI\_00013304\_000000151).

<sup>24</sup> CONNECTING CONSERVATION: WILDLIFE CORRIDORS & CORE AREAS IN THE SANGHA TRI-NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND NORTHERN CONGO, *African Parks Network, Wildlife Conservation Society, & WWF Application for Funding* (May 2018) at DOI\_00013304\_000000366.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Hon. Susan Combs, *supra* note 1.

<sup>26</sup> OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, U.S. DEP'T OF THE INTERIOR, 2018-FIN-007, ISSUES FOUND WITH THE AWARD AND MONITORING OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS MADE BY THE FWS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM (2018) at 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Chair, H. Comm. on Nat. Res. to Hon. David Bernhardt, Sec'y, Dep't of the Interior (Oct. 3, 2019 [erroneously dated]) (on file with Comm.).

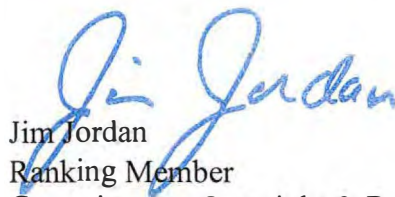
<sup>29</sup> *Briefing from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv., Dep't of the Interior, supra* note 7 (statement by Eric Alvarez, Assistant Dir. International Affairs at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services).

Hon. David Bernhardt  
October 23, 2019  
Page 5

Sincerely,



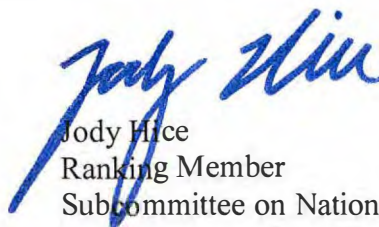
Rob Bishop  
Ranking Republican  
Committee on Natural Resources



Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight & Reform



Louie Gohmert  
Ranking Republican  
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources



Jody Hice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security  
Committee on Oversight & Reform



Tom McClintock  
Ranking Republican  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, & Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources



James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment  
Committee on Oversight & Reform



Hon. David Bernhardt  
October 23, 2019  
Page 6

cc: The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable TJ Cox  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Jaren Huffman  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, & Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney  
Acting Chairwomen  
Committee on Oversight & Reform

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security  
Committee on Oversight & Reform

The Honorable Harley Rouda  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment  
Committee on Oversight & Reform

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

On June 15, 2021, the United States District Court Western District of Louisiana, Lake Charles Division, issued a nationwide preliminary injunction<sup>1</sup> against President Biden's Executive Order 14008, Section 208 (EO), that mandated a "pause" on new oil and gas leasing on both federal offshore and onshore lands. Through the preliminary injunction, the Court acknowledged the injury caused by the "pause," noting millions of dollars at stake.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the Court's decision indicates the strong likelihood the states will succeed in their challenge against the Biden Administration.<sup>3</sup> We look forward to the Department of the Interior's (the Department) resumption of lease sales, in compliance with the Court's order.

We remain concerned, however, about the harms already caused by the mandated "pause." For example, immediate impacts of the EO's "pause" included cancellation of Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale 257, Planned Lease Sales 259 and 261<sup>4</sup> and BLM lease sales scheduled for March 9, 2021<sup>5</sup> in Nevada and March 23, 2021 in Montana.<sup>6</sup> In addition to resuming lease sales, the Department should provide remedies for the cancellation of leases that occurred this year.

Additionally, the Department is expected to release its review of the onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs in the coming weeks. Despite requesting additional information from the public related to the March 25, 2021 forum on the review of the leasing programs,<sup>7</sup> it is unclear what information was received and how it was incorporated in the Department's interim

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/LouisianaetalvBidenetalDocketNo221cv00778WDLaMar242021CourtDocket/6?1623794815>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-judge-blocks-biden-pausing-oil-gas-lease-auctions-2021-06-15/>

<sup>4</sup> 2017-2022 Lease Sale Schedule. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. <https://www.boem.gov/2017-2022-lease-sale-schedule>

<sup>5</sup> Nevada Oil and Gas Lease Sales. Oil and Gas. Bureau of Land Management.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales/nevada>

<sup>6</sup> Montana\_Dakotas Oil and Gas Lease Sales. Oil and Gas. Bureau of Land Management.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales/montana-dakotas>

<sup>7</sup> Interior Department Announces Details for the Public Forum on Federal Oil and Gas Program. Department of the Interior. March 18, 2021. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-details-public-forum-federal-oil-and-gas-program>

report.<sup>8</sup> Without access to this information, Congress and the public cannot fully evaluate whether the Department thoughtfully considered the input of interested stakeholders in reviewing the programs. The Department's lack of transparency increases our concerns surrounding how the review was conducted.

Congress made the requirement of regular lease sales clear through statutes, including the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the Mineral Leasing Act. To understand the Department's plans to comply with the Court's order and its statutory obligations, we request you provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 1, 2021:

1. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to resume regular lease sales.
2. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to hold additional lease sales to remedy the cancellation of sales between January 27, 2021 and June 15, 2021.
3. A document sufficient to describe the Department's legal analysis to support its decision to pause oil and gas leasing.
4. A document sufficient to show the impact of lease cancellations on Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act funding resulting from lost bonus bids, royalties and rents and the Department's proposed remedy for the related revenue loss.
5. A document sufficient to show the impact of lease cancellations on federal energy revenues made available to states under the Mineral Leasing Act resulting from lost bonus bids, royalties and rent, and the Department's proposed remedy for the related revenue loss.
6. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to make the comments and additional information submitted for the March 25, 2021 forum available to the public.
7. A document listing all members of the Paris Climate Agreement that have banned oil and gas development.
8. A document sufficient to describe the Department's analysis on how U.S. energy independence would be impacted prior to executing the decision to pause new oil and gas leasing on both federal offshore and onshore lands.

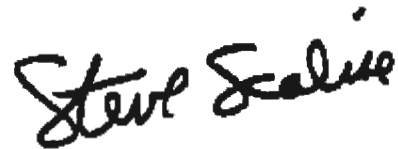
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<sup>8</sup> Interior Department Announces Details for the Public Forum on Federal Oil and gas Program. Department of the Interior. March 18, 2021. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-details-public-forum-federal-oil-and-gas-program>

Sincerely,



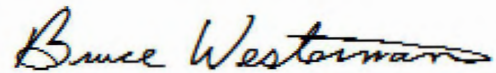
Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader



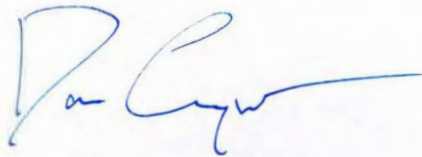
Steve Scalise  
Republican Whip



Tom Emmer  
Chair  
National Republican Congressional Committee



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress



Don Young  
Member of Congress



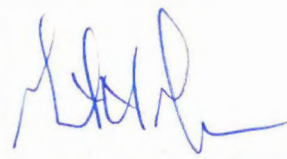
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



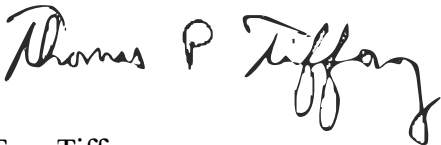
Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



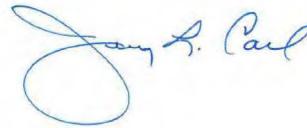
Jody B. Hice  
Member of Congress



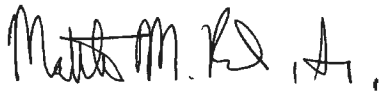
Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



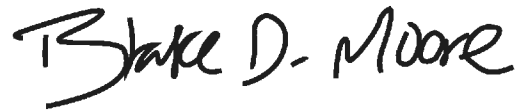
Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Jerry L. Carl  
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress



Blake D. Moore  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress



Tom Cole  
Member of Congress



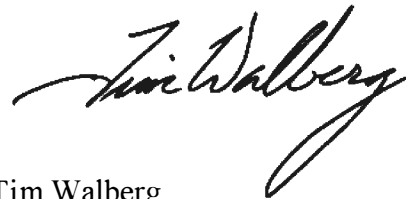
Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress



Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie  
Member of Congress



Carol Miller  
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



French Hill  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Madison Cawthorn  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

Enclosure

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 23, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack:

A catastrophic drought is severely impacting much of the western United States. In fact, as of July 6, 2021, over 93% of the region is classified under “severe drought” or worse according to the U.S. Drought Monitor map.<sup>1</sup> This historic drought has profoundly impacted water supplies in numerous western watersheds and exacerbates catastrophic wildfire risk nationwide. This is a dire situation for many of our constituents, threatening communities, economies, the environment, and our way of life. It is also impacting the availability of food for the region, the rest of the nation, and the world.

In light of inaction by the House Democrat Majority, Republicans held a forum on drought on May 19, 2021, where House Members and local witnesses proposed comprehensive solutions to combat the current drought and to better prepare for future droughts. Some of these solutions included short-term actions, such as emergency funding, increased flexibility for water transfers that are currently limited due to the Endangered Species Act, and federal and state disaster declarations; and long-term solutions, including rehabilitation of current water storage projects and development of new projects, improved forest management to prevent wildfires, and the reduction of regulatory burdens. Subsequent to the Republican drought forum, House Natural Resources Democrats held an oversight hearing on drought, but they have failed to advance any meaningful, multi-layered legislative solutions to address the western drought crisis.

We remain committed to working across the aisle with the Biden Administration to mitigate this and future droughts. However, we are concerned that the Biden Administration lacks a comprehensive plan. This is especially troubling when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, an agency within the Department of the Interior, is charged with delivering water in 17 western states to more than 31 million people. The agency’s projects also provide water to one out of five Western farmers to irrigate 10 million acres of farmland that produce 60% of the nation's vegetables and 25% of its fruits and nuts.<sup>2</sup>

For example, on April 21, 2021, the Biden Administration announced the formation of an “Interagency Working Group” to address the worsening drought conditions in the West. Chaired by both of you, the Interagency Working Group was tasked “to help coordinate across the federal

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<sup>1</sup> <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.usbr.gov/main/about/>




government, working in partnership with state, local, and Tribal governments to address the needs of communities suffering from drought-related impacts.”<sup>3</sup>

Since then, House Republicans have questioned Interior Department officials time and again in hearings to receive answers on what proposals or solutions the Biden Administration and its Interagency Working Group are developing and how we can work together to combat the western drought crisis. Instead, we have not received concrete answers or responses that were promised to our questions in writing.<sup>4</sup> As a result, we and many of our constituents are left with the perception that this Administration has no comprehensive drought plan and that the Interagency Working Group announcement was nothing more than a window-dressing exercise for the press.

We hope that it is not the case.

As such, we request a briefing no later than July 28, 2021, that will provide us detailed insights into the Administration’s plan to address the drought crisis and what the Interagency Working Group has done and plans to do to provide relief during this time of need for so many. The Americans we all represent deserve nothing less than common sense solutions and expect the executive and legislative branches to work together expeditiously to find these solutions.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader

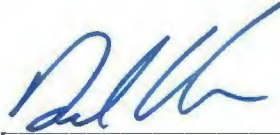


Mike Garcia  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/white-house-launches-drought-relief-working-group-address-urgency-western-water-crisis>

<sup>4</sup> Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife hearing on “The Status of Drought Conditions Throughout the Western United States” on May 25, 2021 and legislative hearing on June 29, 2021.



David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



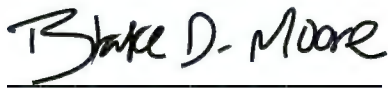
Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress




Don Young  
Member of Congress



Ken Buck  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Michelle Steel  
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



Young Kim  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



Amata Coleman Radewagon  
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress



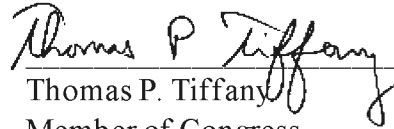
Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens  
Member of Congress



Thomas P. Tiffany  
Member of Congress



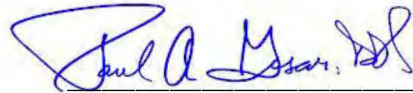
Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



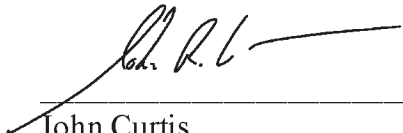
Jodey C. Arrington  
Member of Congress



Matthew Rosendale Sr.  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress



John Curtis  
Member of Congress



August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach  
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

As of October 15, 2021, almost 6.5 million acres in the United States burned from more than 47,000 wildfires since the beginning of the year.<sup>1</sup> The Forest Service (FS) is responsible for wildfire management and response for 193 million acres of the National Forest System (NFS) while the Department of the Interior (DOI) manages response for more than 400 million acres of public land.<sup>2</sup> These 593 million federal acres have 14,500 Department of Agriculture (USDA) and 5,000 DOI wildland firefighters<sup>3</sup> dedicated to protecting our federal lands.

In their roles, these federal wildland firefighters also coordinate emergency responses with state, local, and tribal partners, and are the tip of the spear to combat ongoing wildfire threats. As President Joe Biden stated earlier this year, “we’ve got to be prepared and have every resource available to make sure we’re there for the American people.”<sup>4</sup> The full availability of these federal firefighters is imperative to the health and safety of our federal lands and the communities near those lands. Therefore, we seek to assess the consequences of President Biden’s recent vaccination mandates on the staffing of USDA and DOI wildland firefighters.

Due in large part to decades of inadequate forest management, wildfire seasons now last year-round and put increasingly significant strains on our federal wildland firefighters and firefighting resources. This year, the United States spent more consecutive days at the highest wildfire preparedness level, Preparedness Level 5,<sup>5</sup> than in any other year.<sup>6</sup> According to FS Chief Randy Moore, firefighting resources are already stretched to the limit and the agency continually struggles to recruit and retain new firefighters.<sup>7</sup> The Biden Administration’s policies

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<sup>1</sup> Daily Statistics, NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER, <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/nfn> (last visited Oct. 15, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Katie Hoover & Laura A. Hanson, *Wildfire Statistics*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (Oct. 4, 2021), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/1F10244>.

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, U.S. DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR, *Secretaries Haaland and Vilsack Announce Implementation of New Pay Initiatives for Wildland Firefighters* (Aug. 17, 2021) <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretaries-haaland-and-vilsack-announce-implementation-new-pay-initiatives-wildland>.

<sup>4</sup> Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Biden Promises to End “Ridiculously Low Salary” for Federal Firefighters* NBC NEWS (June 23, 2021), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-promises-end-ridiculously-low-salary-federal-firefighters-n1272204>.

<sup>5</sup> National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels, NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER, [https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/National\\_Preparedness\\_Levels.pdf](https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/National_Preparedness_Levels.pdf) (last visited Oct. 15, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> *Full Committee Hearing on The 2021 Wildland Fire Year: Responding to and Mitigating Threats to Communities: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Conservation and Forestry of the H. Comm. on Agriculture*, 117th Cong. (2021) (Written Testimony of Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

forcing our wildland firefighters, who professionally risk their lives, to choose between their livelihood and their own personal health decision is therefore counterintuitive to ensuring necessary recruitment and retention.

Rather than allowing federal employees to consult with their doctor to determine appropriate medical actions, President Biden mandated that federal employees<sup>8</sup> and contractors receive COVID-19 vaccinations.<sup>9</sup> Federal employees must be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021,<sup>10</sup> and federal contractors must be fully vaccinated by December 8, 2021.<sup>11</sup> Employees not in compliance with this requirement will face consequences, including termination of employment.<sup>12</sup>

Several federal employee advocacy groups criticized President Biden's vaccine mandate as misguided and an inappropriate overreach.<sup>13</sup> For example, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association opposed the mandate and encouraged its members to seek individual medical advice about vaccinations.<sup>14</sup> Numerous Members of Congress also urged President Biden to reconsider the mandate.<sup>15</sup> Similar vaccination mandates at state and local levels received negative reactions, particularly from firefighters.<sup>16</sup> Across the country, essential employees left the workforce because of COVID-19 vaccination mandates.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Exec. Order No. 14043 86 Fed. Reg. 175, 50989 (Sept. 9, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Exec. Order No. 14042 86 Fed. Reg. 175, 50985 (Sept. 9, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> SAFER FED. WORKFORCE TASK FORCE, *COVID-19 Workplace Safety: Agency Model Safety Principles* (Sept. 13, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> SAFER FED. WORKFORCE TASK FORCE, *COVID-19 Workplace Safety: Guidance for Federal Contractors and Subcontractors* (Sept. 24, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Zeke Miller, *Sweeping New Vaccine Mandates for 100 Million Americans*, AP NEWS (Sept. 9, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-executive-branch-18fb12993f05be13bf760946a6fb89be>.

<sup>13</sup> Nicole Ogrysko, *Biden Will Now Require Vaccines For All Federal Employees Via New Executive Order*, FED. NEWS NETWORK (Sept. 9, 2021), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2021/09/biden-will-now-require-vaccines-for-all-federal-employees-via-new-executive-order/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *E.g.*, Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Nat. Resources, to Hon. Joseph R. Biden, President of the U.S. (Oct. 12, 2021) (on file with author); Letter from Rep. Jeff Duncan et. al, to Hon. Joseph R. Biden, President of the U.S. (Sept. 30, 2021) (on file with author).

<sup>16</sup> See Delia Goncalves, *DC Firefighters Push Back Against Mayor's Vaccine Mandate*, WUSA9 (Sept. 7, 2021), <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/dc-firefighters-push-back-against-mayors-vaccine-mandate-and-ask-for-compromise/65-cb03cef1-d3e4-4414-aaf4-b0848c656bb3>; Molly Duerig, *More Than 2 Dozen Orange County Firefighters Come Out Against COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate*, BAY NEWS 9 (Aug. 31, 2021), <https://www.baynews9.com/fl/tampa/news/2021/08/31/orange-county-firefighters-oppose-vaccine-mandate>.

<sup>17</sup> See, *e.g.*, Jonathan Franklin, *Dozens of Massachusetts State Police Have Resigned Over A Vaccine Mandate, Union Says*, NPR (Sept. 27, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/09/27/1040961594/massachusetts-state-police-resign-covid-vaccine>; Joe Fisher & Kasey Cunningham, *Dozens of UNC Health Workers Quit Over Vaccine Mandate*, WRAL (Sept. 21, 2021), <https://www.wral.com/coronavirus/dozens-of-unc-health-workers-quit-over-vaccine-mandate/19886823/>; Rachel Treisman, *New York May Use The National Guard to Replace Unvaccinated Health Care Workers*, NPR (Sept. 26, 2021) <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/26/1040780961/new-york-health-care-worker-vaccine-mandate-staffing-shortages-national-guard>.

Due to these trends, we are concerned the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal employees may adversely affect the number of wildland firefighters serving at USDA and DOI. Coupled with other factors contributing to the depletion of federal firefighter ranks<sup>18</sup> and the lack of management fueling longer, more severe wildfire seasons, President Biden's actions may exacerbate challenges in the ongoing effort to combat wildfires.

Additionally, many stakeholders are concerned about the vaccination mandate's harmful impact to federal contractors, specifically those completing critical forest management projects that are essential to reducing the risk and severity of catastrophic wildfires and improving forest health. We echo their concerns that the mandate is likely to disrupt work in rural America, ultimately jeopardizing wildfire prevention efforts and potentially endangering hundreds of communities at risk of destruction due to catastrophic wildfire.<sup>19</sup>

These trends also raise doubts about USDA's and DOI's ability to maintain the appropriate level of preparedness necessary to effectively respond to wildfire threats. President Biden's actions, however, ignore the reality of the unique environments in which wildland firefighters must work, and the efficacy of COVID-19 precautions. In Chief Moore's recent congressional testimony, he confirmed that "the Forest Service and our interagency partners have seen success with our COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures."<sup>20</sup> Two weeks ago, the Mine Safety and Health Administration determined that the strength of existing mine worker protections are sufficient to not require COVID-19 vaccinations.<sup>21</sup> USDA and DOI should similarly examine the existing protections for federal wildland firefighters and contractors to determine if an exemption from the vaccination mandates is appropriate. At a minimum, the agencies must evaluate reasonable accommodations and alternatives to vaccinations, such as routine testing.

Understanding the adverse impact of President Biden's mandate on USDA's and DOI's federal wildland firefighter force is critical to assessing the federal government's ability to effectively manage and respond to wildfires. Therefore, to assist with our oversight activities, please produce the following, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m., November 3, 2021:

1. A document sufficient to describe the estimated number of fully vaccinated federal wildland firefighters at your Department as of October 27, 2021.
2. A document sufficient to describe your Department's plan for employees and contractors who do not comply with President Biden's vaccination mandates.

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<sup>18</sup> Ximena Bustillo, *'They Get Really Jaded': Worker Defections Strain Feds' Wildfire Crews*, POLITICO (July 28, 2021), <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/28/they-get-really-jaded-worker-defections-strain-feds-wildfire-crews-501258>.

<sup>19</sup> Bill Gabbert, *Hundreds of small communities face a greater risk from wildfire than Paradise, California*, WILDFIRE TODAY (July 25, 2019), <https://wildfiretoday.com/2019/07/25/hundreds-of-small-communities-face-a-greater-risk-from-wildfire-than-paradise-california/>.

<sup>20</sup> *Supra* note 5.


<sup>21</sup> James Marshall, *Mining Agency Opts Out of Vaccine Mandate for Miners*, E&E NEWS (Sept. 30, 2020), <https://www.eenews.net/articles/mining-agency-opts-out-of-vaccine-mandate-for-miners/>.

3. All documents and communications, including, but not limited to, internal memoranda and e-mails, referring or relating to attrition concerns at your Department because of President Biden's vaccination mandates for federal employees and contractors.
4. All documents and communications referring or relating to the decision to implement vaccination mandates between January 20, 2021 and October 27, 2021.
5. A document sufficient to describe your Department's contingency plan to address the attrition of federal wildland firefighters and relevant contractors because of President Biden's vaccination mandates for federal employees and contractors.
6. A document sufficient to describe your Department's analysis of working conditions for both federal wildland firefighters and relevant contractors to assess the appropriateness of an exemption from President Biden's COVID-19 vaccination mandates.
7. All documents and communications referring or relating to the National Interagency Coordination Center's unfulfilled dispatching or mobilization requests of wildland firefighter crews, staff to assist wildland firefighters, and resources needed to combat wildfires between January 20, 2021 and October 27, 2021.

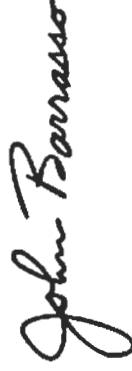
Please contact the House Natural Resources Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Minority staff at (202) 225-7107 and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Minority staff at (202) 224-7875 with any questions about this request and to coordinate the delivery of your response to room 1329 of the Longworth House Office Building and room 310 of the Dirksen Senate Building.

An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources



John Barrasso, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources





Dan Newhouse  
Chairman  
Congressional Western Caucus



Steve Daines  
Chairman  
Senate Western Caucus



Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



Cynthia M. Lummis  
United States Senator



Louie Gohmert  
Vice Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Paul. A Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations  
House Committee on Natural Resources




Russ Fulcher  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,  
and Public Lands  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Pete Stauber  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral  
Resources  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Cliff Bentz  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and  
Wildlife  
House Committee on Natural Resources



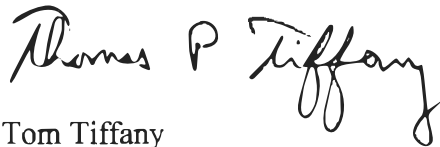
Doug Lamborn  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Readiness  
House Armed Services Committee



Tom McClintock  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Immigration and  
Citizenship  
House Judiciary Committee



Doug LaMalfa  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
House Committee on Agriculture



Tom Tiffany  
Vice Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,  
and Public Lands  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Technology  
Modernization  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Blake Moore  
Vice Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Jay Obernolte  
Vice Ranking Member  
Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the  
United States  
House Committee on Natural Resources

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Joseph Manchin III, Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources

Enclosure

## Responding to Committee Document Requests

### A. Definitions

1. The term “document” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, recorded notes, letters, notices, confirmations, receipts, checks, envelopes, presentations, pamphlets, brochures, interoffice and intra office communications, electronic mails (e-mails), notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, voice mail, phone mail, meeting or other communication, diaries, analyses, summaries, messages, correspondence, circulars, opinions, work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind, and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape, or otherwise.
2. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether face-to-face, in a meeting, by telephone, mail, e-mail, discussions, releases, personal delivery, or otherwise.
3. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this document request. The singular includes the plural. The masculine includes the feminine.
4. As used herein, “referring” or “relating” means and includes “constituting,” “pertaining,” “evidencing,” “reflecting,” “describing,” or “having anything to do with,” and in each instance, directly or indirectly. These terms mean, without limitation, any reference or relationship which either (a) provides information with respect to the subject of the inquiry, or (b) might lead to individuals who, or documents which, might possess or contain information with respect to the subject of the inquiry.

### B. Instructions

1. In complying with this document request, you are required to produce all responsive documents, materials, or items that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employers, employees, representatives, subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, partnerships, and departments acting on your behalf. You are also required to produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy or to which you have access, as well as documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party. No records, documents, data or information called for by this request shall be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.

2. In the event that any entity, organization, or individual denoted in this document request has been, or is also known by any other name than that herein denoted, the document request shall be read also to include them under that alternative identification.
3. Each document produced shall be produced in a form that renders that document capable of being printed or copied.
4. Documents produced in response to this document request shall be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers, envelopes, or identifying markers with which they were associated when this document request was served. Documents produced to this document request shall also identify to which paragraph from the document request such documents are responsive. Moreover, please include with your response, an index identifying each record and label (preferably by bates stamping) the documents. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.
5. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity also possesses documents that are non-identical or identical copies of the same document.
6. If any of the requested information is available in machine-readable or electronic form (such as on a computer server, hard drive, CD, DVD, memory stick, or computer back-up tape), state the form in which it is available and provide sufficient detail to allow the information to be copied to a readable format. If the information requested is stored in a computer, indicate whether you have an existing program that will print the records in a readable form.
7. If compliance with the document request cannot be made in full, compliance shall be made to the extent possible and shall include a written explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
8. In the event that a document is withheld, in whole or in part, based on a claim of privilege, provide the following information concerning any such document: (a) the privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter of the document; (d) the date, author, and any recipients; and (e) the relationship of the author and recipients to each other. Claims of privileges are considered under Committee on Natural Resources Rule 4(h) and, similar to all common-law privileges, are recognized only at the discretion of the Committee.
9. If any document responsive to this document request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, identify the document (stating its date, author, subject and recipients) and explain the circumstances by which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control.
10. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this document request referring to a document is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you should produce all documents which would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.

11. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data or information, not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date, shall be produced immediately upon location or discovery subsequent thereto.

12. Production materials should be delivered to:

Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 29, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Granholm and Secretary Haaland:

As you know, Executive Order (EO) 14042, “Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors” and the Biden Administration’s “Safer Federal Workforce Task Force” directed<sup>1</sup> and provided guidance<sup>2</sup> to federal executive agencies on workplace safety protocols related to COVID vaccination requirements for the duration of contracts or amendments to contracts entered into on or after October 25, 2021.

We have serious concerns that the EO’s potentially broad, infeasible and untimely impact will not only increase critical worker shortages in rural America but could also have devastating impacts on food supply chains and electricity reliability.

Since the guidance broadly defines a “covered contractor employee”, there are numerous questions from electric and water utilities, state agencies, irrigation districts and others who have entered into supply, operation and maintenance, construction and other contracts with some of your Department’s federal agencies which generate and transmit wholesale electricity and deliver water from federal water projects.<sup>3</sup>

Many of these entities have specific concerns not only about the necessity of the vaccine mandates and timing of the potential vaccine requirements but also how far-reaching these mandates could be to the eventual farmworker and electrical line worker. At a time when our country is experiencing supply chain issues, the last thing we need is to create another reason for essential worker supply shortages that can have serious detrimental impacts on food supplies and electricity reliability. Not only are your own water and electricity-related employees affected by EO 14042, but there are legitimate questions on whether those with federal water and power supply and other contracts would be covered by the mandates.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), for example, provides wholesale water, through contract, to hundreds of entities throughout the western United States. Those entities (water contractors), in turn, provide water to 140,000 farming and ranching operations who employ millions of workers that assist in growing, producing and harvesting food for all of America and much of the world. In fact, 60%

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/09/09/executive-order-on-ensuring-adequate-covid-safety-protocols-for-federal-contractors/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/contractors/>

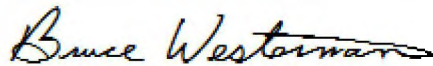
<sup>3</sup> [https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/downloads/Draft%20contractor%20guidance%20doc\\_20210922.pdf](https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/downloads/Draft%20contractor%20guidance%20doc_20210922.pdf)

of the Nation's vegetables are grown using water from Reclamation's projects.<sup>4</sup> Reclamation also provides water to hundreds of municipalities, who in turn provide water to 31 million retail consumers.<sup>5</sup> Many of Reclamation's water contractors also have operation and maintenance contracts to pay for and provide services necessary to safeguard water supply and delivery infrastructure.

In addition, Reclamation is the second largest producer of hydropower in the United States, accounting for 15% of domestic hydropower production.<sup>6</sup> All four of the Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs) – the Western Area Power Administration, the Bonneville Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration and the Southeastern Power Administration – sell hydroelectricity generated at Reclamation and/or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dams to hundreds of wholesale power customers, most of which are non-profit and tribal utilities, in 34 states.<sup>7</sup> Many of these utilities also have power supply, operation and maintenance and other contracts necessary to repay the federal investment in generation and bulk transmission system. In addition, some of the PMAs have “black start” power contracts with entities for grid reliability purposes.

We are aware that your Departments are assessing what existing and future contracts are potentially impacted by EO 14042. As you know, the Task Force imposed a December 8, 2021 deadline for covered contractor employees to be vaccinated, so these assessments must be done in a timely matter and the results must be communicated clearly to those who are or are not impacted by the EO. In the event that your assessments conclude EO 14042 is applicable to the water and power contracts described above, we request that exceptions be provided thereto, without the contractors having to make specific requests.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Cliff Bentz  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



Pete Stauber  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

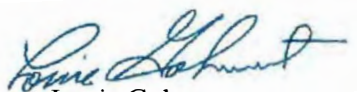
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<sup>4</sup><https://www.usbr.gov/main/about/fact.html#:~:text=Delivers%2010%20trillion%20gallons%20of,have%2090%20million%20visits%20annually.>

<sup>5</sup> Id

<sup>6</sup> Id

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/oe/mission/power-marketing-administrations>



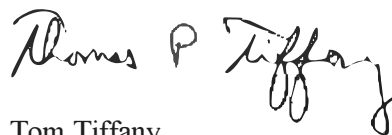
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



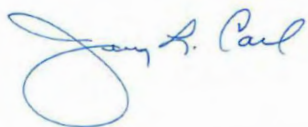
Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



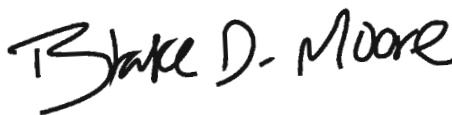
Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Jerry L. Carl  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2308

005026  
September 6, 2022

RECEIVED  
2022 SEP 12 AM 11:10  
OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write to encourage the Department of Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to expeditiously facilitate negotiations between the Colorado River Basin States following the agency's June 2022 announcement that the basin states must reduce their Colorado River water use by an additional 2 to 4 million acre-feet in order to preserve the system.

We also call on the Department of Interior to clearly delineate the authority they believe they possess if the states cannot reach an agreement on their own and to update us on negotiations on water use with Mexico.

Arizona has already gone above and beyond to help solve the water shortage problem by leaving over 800,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead this year alone. Since 2014, Arizona has left over 2.5 million acre-feet, which has increased the elevation of Lake Mead by nearly 37 feet. Without Arizona's water conservation efforts, California would have been required to cut their water use for the very first time under the agreement made in the 2019 Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan.

It is now time for California and some of the other basin states to step up to the plate. Arizona cannot continue to shoulder the brunt of water reductions. We call on the Department of Interior to make these negotiations a priority. We also call on the Department of Interior to urge California to take water cuts that are in line with their water usage.

We look forward to seeing the negotiations proceed and look forward to a response letter from your department that addresses our concerns.

Sincerely,



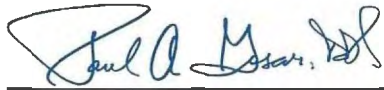
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Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



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Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



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Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

RECEIVED

03066  
September 30, 2019

2019 OCT -6 10 41 AM '19

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Public Comments Processing  
Attn: FWS-HQ-NWRS-2019-0040  
Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS, BPHC  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

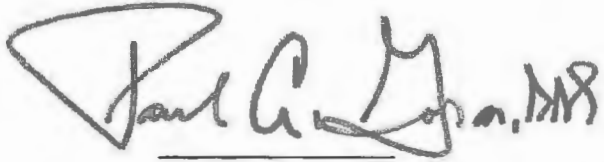
The undersigned members are writing in support of the 2019-2020 Station-Specific Hunting and Fishing Regulations for National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries. Opening 7 National Wildlife Refuges and 15 National Fish Hatcheries to sport fishing and hunting while expanding sport fishing and hunting on 67 additional National Wildlife Refuges will benefit our shared goal with this Administration to increase public participation in recreational opportunities such as recreational fishing. Public lands, including those managed by the Department of the Interior, are a significant provider of recreational fishing opportunities throughout the country. These proposed regulations and the resultant access to 1,415,131 acres of public lands will allow more Americans to fish and hunt while lowering barriers to entry and simplifying regulatory language.

Between 2011 and 2016 there was a 16% increase in the total number of people 16 years and older participating in wildlife-related recreation activities in the United States and it is our hope that new opportunities on refuges throughout America will further increase participation. America's 49 million recreational fishermen annually contribute \$125 billion to the economy and support 800,000 jobs. These pastimes aren't just important for the recreational economy, but revenues from the sale of licenses and the excise taxes paid by angler and hunters contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation projects in every state.

New and expanded hunting and fishing opportunities will help the Service achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program: FY 2016-2020. Goal 5, *Enhance Recreational Fishing and Other Public Uses of Aquatic Resources* is specifically focused on maintaining and improving habitat and fisheries while increasing angler participating and improving access. Furthermore, fishing opportunities on the hatcheries will help to achieve Objective 3 of that goal, *Increase recreational fishing and other public uses and enjoyment of aquatic resources* as members of the public will be encouraged to fish and explore on National Fish Hatchery land.

The undersigned members would again like to thank the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Secretary Bernhardt for being champions of outdoor recreation and furthering opportunities for fishing and hunting on Federal Lands. These proposed regulatory changes will increase access and opportunities allowing for more people to enjoy the American outdoors.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



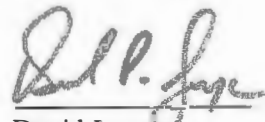
Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



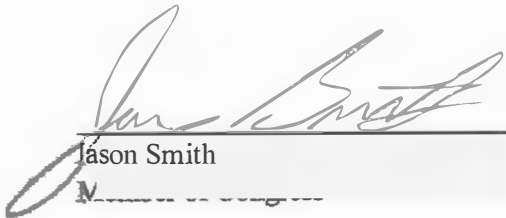
Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



David Joyce  
Member of Congress



Jason Smith

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time. As we all consider efforts to maintain the economic drivers of our economy, we ask your support in providing relief within your existing authority, to essential industries impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, until our nation's economy gets back on track.

There are widespread efforts to ensure our economy continues to function amidst this crisis through industry appropriate financial resources and regulatory pathways. We hope the Department of the Interior will strongly consider similar efforts to ensure industries that operate within the federal estate have the appropriate resources and certainty needed to survive the pandemic and continue to provide the American people with the resources they utilize in their daily lives. With this in mind, we encourage you to suspend, defer, or reduce, the federal royalty payments for oil, gas, coal, soda ash, and other minerals to the U.S. Treasury during these uncertain economic times, caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Ideally, any reduction would allow producers working on the federal estate to forgo the federal portion of required royalty payments while preserving the portion that is returned to the states so as not to negatively impact state revenues.

As Secretary, notwithstanding section 102(a)(9) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701(a)(9)), section 39 of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 209) specifically allows you to "waive, suspend or reduce" royalty payments. While economic conditions will improve over time, providing this necessary action now will ensure America continues its international energy dominance. Additionally, this could help save essential industry jobs, many of which are located in heavily impacted rural communities.

These essential industries are seeking to continue production rather than a bailout and should be given due recognition as such. There is no playbook for the situation we find ourselves in and we must utilize every existing authority to enable them to withstand the economic impacts of this pandemic, which is no fault of their own.

Given these considerations, we urge you to provide necessary relief during this national emergency in the form of a suspension, or reduction, in federal royalties paid to the U.S. Treasury. Such action will allow a stronger fossil fuel industry to emerge, maintaining America's energy dominance and national security.

Sincerely,




John Curtis  
Member of Congress




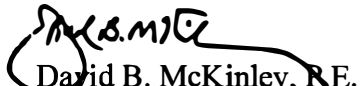
Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader

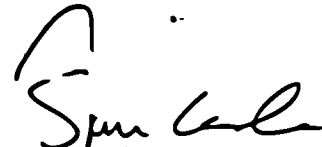



Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress


  
Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress


  
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

  
David B. McKinley, R.E.  
Member of Congress

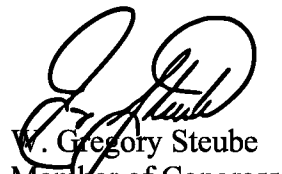
  
Tom Cole  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Conaway  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress

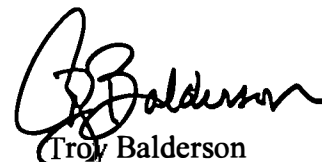
  
Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress

  
Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress

  
W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress

  
Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

  
Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

  
Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress



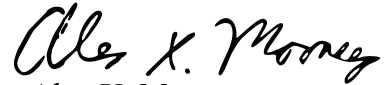
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney  
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress



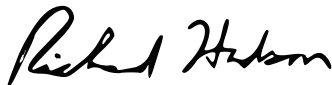
Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



Pete Olson  
Member of Congress



Fred Keller  
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



Greg Pence  
Member of Congress



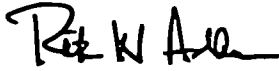
Paul Cook  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Jodey C. Arrington  
Member of Congress



Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

Thank you for your leadership during this time of great uncertainty. As this national health emergency unfolds, we ask that you continue to prioritize America's oil and natural gas producers and workforce. As you know, oil prices plunged to an 18-year low last week and have dropped by more than half this year alone. With oil trading well below \$50 per barrel, many producers are operating at a loss.

Oil and gas producers, and the jobs they support, face unique threats that extend beyond the global pandemic. Prior to the decline in demand due to the spread of the virus, Russia and Saudi Arabia began simultaneously flooding the market with cheap oil, forcing American oil and gas companies to shrink production and slash spending just to stay afloat. If this market does not stabilize soon, we risk rolling back the success of the U.S. energy industry over the past decade, which will have a disastrous effect on America's economy and jeopardize our energy security. With that in mind, please consider the following policy strategies that would provide America's energy producers and workers with much-needed relief.

**1. Provide Relief to Producers**

Many producers, both onshore and offshore, are considering suspension of drilling programs. Suspensions will not only harm those individuals who work directly for the companies, but also the oilfield services workers who depend on energy exploration and production activities.

**Recommendation:** The Secretary of the Interior has existing authority to provide royalty relief to producers, and we urge you to support the Secretary's use of this authority as soon as possible. We also recommend extension of primary terms of offshore oil and gas leases to give producers more flexibility during this downturn.

**2. Address Russia and Saudi Arabia's Unfair Practices**

Russia's rejection of OPEC supply cuts combined with Saudi Arabia dumping cheap crude on the market remains a serious threat to the U.S. oil and gas industry.

**Recommendation:** The recent news of a special energy envoy to Saudi Arabia is a great first step in addressing this issue. However, these two countries must be quickly brought to the negotiating table to resolve this crisis and address their hostile actions.

**3. Continue Utilizing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR)**

We commend you and Secretary Brouillette for utilizing the SPR to relieve market price pressures and provide cashflow to producers.

**Recommendation:** In addition to requesting additional funding from Congress to fill the SPR, we encourage the Department of Energy (DOE) to use the legal authorities at its disposal to work with oil and gas producers — particularly small and midsized operators — to ensure those in most dire need of assistance benefit from DOE's utilization of the SPR.

4. **Maintain Liquidity and Ensure Access to Capital**

We are pleased that the energy industry will benefit from the tax and loan relief provisions included in the CARES Act.

**Recommendation:** Federal agencies must expedite and implement new guidelines in a way that does not delay or prevent access for energy companies. We also urge the Administration to take necessary steps to assure that the 2016 Office of the Comptroller of the Currency Energy Lending Guidelines do not in any way hinder or prohibit producers from obtaining loans.

5. **Identify and Expedite Regulatory Relief Efforts**

Your Administration has made the United States a world leader in energy development and environmental protection all while growing the economy.

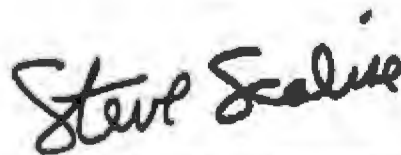
**Recommendation:** We encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to complete its work on replacing the Obama-era methane regulations with cost-effective guidelines that provide clarity and fairness for low production wells under Subpart OOOO (Quad-O). As EPA works to finalize these rules, we also encourage you and Administrator Wheeler to explore additional regulatory relief efforts.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure the safety of Americans and the viability of our economy during this challenging time. America's oil and gas producers, and the workers who depend on them, need you to consider all possible options to weather this storm and maintain America's leadership in energy production and to protect our nation's energy security for the long term. We stand ready to assist in these requests however possible.

Sincerely,



Jodey C. Arrington  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



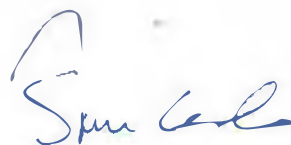
Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



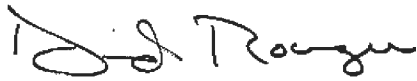
Tom Cole  
Member of Congress



Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



French Hill  
Member of Congress



David Rouzer  
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
Member of Congress



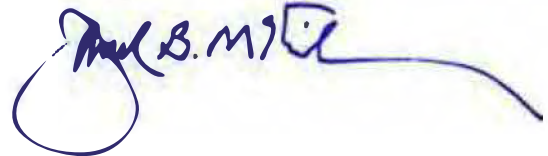
Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress



Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress



Ron Wright  
Member of Congress



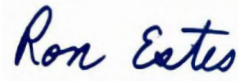
Don Young  
Member of Congress



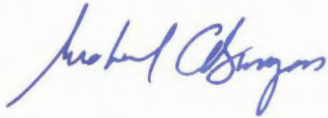
Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney  
Member of Congress



Ron Estes  
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress



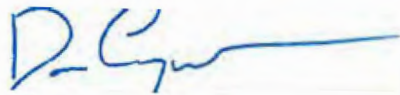
Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress

  
M.C.

Will Hurd  
Member of Congress



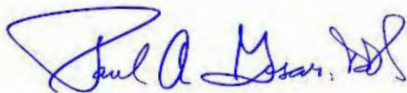
Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress



Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress



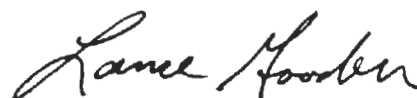
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Phil Roe, M.D.  
Member of Congress




Chip Roy  
Member of Congress




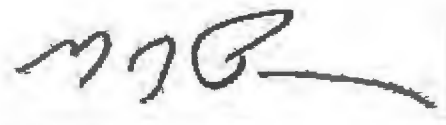
Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress


  
Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Flores  
Member of Congress

  
Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

  
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

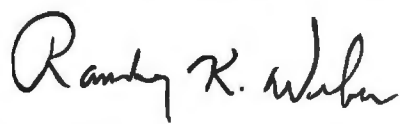
  
Greg Pence  
Member of Congress


  
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress


  
Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress

  
Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress

  
Randy Weber  
Member of Congress

  
Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

  
Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

**PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S.**  
FOURTH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

2057 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2315

122 N. CORTEZ STREET, SUITE #104  
PRESCOTT, AZ 86301  
(928) 445-1683

6499 SOUTH KINGS RANCH ROAD, SUITE #4  
GOLD CANYON, AZ 85118  
(480) 882-2697

220 N. 4TH STREET  
KINGMAN, AZ 86401  
(928) 445-1683

[WWW.GOSAR.HOUSE.GOV](http://WWW.GOSAR.HOUSE.GOV)



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0301**

**COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES**  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
CHAIRMAN, ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
WATER, POWER AND OCEANS  
**COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIRMAN, INTERIOR  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
**CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS**  
CHAIRMAN

June 3, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Bernhardt and Secretary Perdue:

As members of the Congressional Western Caucus, we write to express concern about the threat of a significant 2020 fire season on western states as they simultaneously address the COVID-19 pandemic and its unique threats to our communities. We urge you to finalize and proactively implement an aggressive initial wildfire attack strategy to address the 2020 fire season and particular attention to the increased costs to operators.

**Aggressive Initial Attack**

Protecting our communities, firefighters, and critical infrastructure is paramount as we address the “perfect storm” of a pandemic and a fire season that coincides with unprecedented drought conditions. We must protect residents who suffer from lung and heart conditions at increased risk of adverse health effects due to COVID-19 and wildfire smoke exposure. We must avoid threatening social distancing practices due to preventable community evacuations and sheltering residents and firefighters who are deployed in the field. The bottom line is that the federal government must help states put fires out quickly and aggressively. Never before has it been more important to proactively plan wildfire suppression strategies and ensure we have the firefighting assets available and in place to succeed.

Aerial firefighting is a critically important part of a swift initial attack strategy. Recent studies conducted at George Mason University show that on average, a fire stands a higher probability of being contained within 24 hours if air tankers are deployed on that fire within the first few hours. Fires that do not receive air tankers for a period of 13 hours or more are likely to take days or

weeks to achieve containment. We urge you to proactively plan to utilize all air tanker assets available and approved for use by the U.S. Forest Service and to add additional air tanker assets to ensure rapid initial attack. We rely on private industry to provide these aerial assets. We must ensure air tanker companies can invest in staffing and preparedness efforts before the fire season and that assets are mobilized and strategically placed at bases to be rapidly deployed.

### **Increased Operator Costs**

Right now, while USFS is working on a strategy, field contractors are just beginning to understand what will be necessary to prepare for the upcoming 2020 fire season. In doing so, few have awarded contracts. Most know that there will be additional expenses at field camps related to the requirements that limit COVID-19 exposure at wildfire camps. Protecting our firefighters on the front line is always a key job and providing camp, meals, showers and the other suite of services necessary on the front lines is critically important to firefighting and keeping fighters safe.

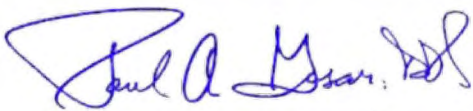
It is critical that the agencies issuing these contracts work closing with the impacted businesses to understand these costs, address the concerns and make clear what will be necessary to keep our firefighters on the front line safe.

### **Forest Maintenance**

Finally, now is the time for the most aggressive and concerted forest maintenance effort in the history of our nation. Every fire break, trimming, fuel reduction effort funded and executed now, before fires break out, can be handled with more measured and safer response dealing with social distancing guidelines and respecting additional worker safety issues necessary in this new COVID dynamic. Congress has granted tools to the agencies to address fire and every treated acre that reduces threat now can save lives and property on the fire front later. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to use every tool in the arsenal to bring better conditions and preparations to our forests before the fires break out.

Thank you for your service to our nation and your attention and hard work on these difficult issues. We stand ready to work with you to address these issues to protect American lives, property and the health and safety of our firefighting warriors on the front lines.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Paul Cook  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



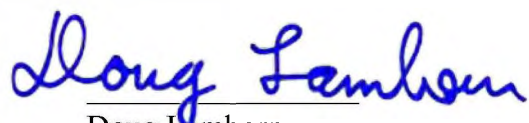
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress



David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to thank you for your leadership in signing Executive Order 13953 and declaring a National Emergency to address our nation's reliance on critical minerals from foreign adversaries. We strongly support your earlier efforts to recognize the importance of critical minerals, including Executive Order 13817 and your July 22, 2019 Presidential Determinations regarding rare earth elements, and believe your latest action is an imperative next step. Now more than ever, it is vital that we secure our critical mineral supply chain and end our dependence on China for the minerals necessary to maintain our economic and military strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As you know, despite an abundant supply of mineral reserves, the United States is 100 percent reliant on imports for 17 vital mineral resources and more than 50 percent dependent on imports for another 29 mineral commodities. Alarmingly, China is the world's leading producer of 23 of the 35 minerals the Departments of Interior and Defense list as critical, and controls 90 percent of global rare earth element production. We have seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic how a reliance on Chinese goods hinders our ability to respond here at home. We cannot allow China to cut off our access to these vital resources used in everything from computers and cell phones to electricity generation and defense systems.

By expanding the domestic mining industry, alleviating unnecessary permitting delays, and reducing our nation's dependence on China for critical minerals, Executive Order 13953 will protect both our economic and national security. We hope that under your leadership, the Department of Interior will quickly utilize all of the authorities conferred in Executive Order 13953 and provide immediate access to the funding with which to exercise them. We must work to quickly address the critical mineral national emergency and ensure reliable domestic access to the critical and strategic minerals that will usher in a second Industrial Revolution.

Again, we applaud Executive Order 13953, "*Addressing the Threat to the Domestic Supply Chain from Reliance on Critical Minerals from Foreign Adversaries and Supporting the Domestic Mining and Processing Industries.*" Through this Executive Order, you are once again taking decisive action to put Americans back to work and restore economic growth. We stand ready to support you in this and other efforts to shore up our nation's critical mineral supply chain.

Sincerely,



Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. Mark Meadows, White House Chief of Staff  
The Honorable David Bernhardt, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior  
The Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense  
The Honorable John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence

/s/  
Kevin McCarthy  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jim Jordan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Neal Dunn  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mike Kelly  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Dan Bishop  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Steve King  
Member of Congress

/s/  
John Joyce, M.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Robert B. Aderholt  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Matt Gaetz  
Member of Congress

/s/  
W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress

/s/  
David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jody Hice  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ted S. Yoho  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Scott Perry  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Fred Keller  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Denver Riggleman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alex X. Mooney  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Dr. James R. Baird  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Paul A. Gosar, DDS  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andy Barr  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Daniel P. Meuser  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress

/s/  
H. Morgan Griffith  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Don Young  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Paul Cook  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Steve Watkins  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Will Hurd  
Member of Congress

**HON. LOUIE GOHMERT**  
**FIRST DISTRICT, TEXAS**

**WASHINGTON OFFICE:**  
2267 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3035  
FAX: (202) 226-1230



RECEIVED

2020 NOV 19 PM 1:20  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
200415  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

COMMITTEES:

**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
REPUBLICAN LEADER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC  
LANDS  
**JUDICIARY**  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
CRIME, TERRORISM, AND HOMELAND  
SECURITY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND  
CIVIL LIBERTIES

November 9th, 2020

Secretary David Bernhardt  
Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

RE: Gold Star Families National Parks Admission Clarification

Dear Sec. Bernhardt,

First, allow me to thank you and the President for granting our Gold Star Families and veterans free admission to our National Parks, wildlife refuges and other Federal lands managed by the Department of the Interior starting on Veterans Day this year and every day onward. It is wonderful that those who put their lives on the line for their country, and the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms, can have open access to the wonderful bounty this nation has to offer its citizens.

However, my office has been informed by constituents that there is some confusion as to how our Gold Star Families are to gain admittance to our National Parks. Specifically, these families need to know what form of identification they have to display upon entry. Some have heard they need a Gold Star Base Access card, some any form of DoD ID, but no one at the National Park Service can give them a clear answer.

Our National Parks serve to protect and preserve the beauty of God's stunning landscapes and extraordinary wildlife. We must ensure that our veterans and Gold Star Families, who have given so much to protect and serve us, are able to enjoy all the natural wonders of the country that they and their loved ones have fought to protect. Please clarify what documentation these brave Americans must have to visit our National Parks as soon as possible.

Many thanks for your continued assistance to our nation's veterans. Getting this matter clarified and corrected will go a long way toward making veterans feel appreciated rather than feeling as though they are a victim of a lethargic federal government that promised something it did not deliver. I look forward to hearing from you concerning this matter.

With kindest regards, I am

Very Truly Yours,

Hon. Louie Gohmert



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/AES/DER/074949

November 1, 2021

The Honorable Andy Biggs  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Biggs:

Thank you for your letter of May 18, 2021, co-signed by several of your colleagues, to Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Haaland regarding DOI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on their aerial fire retardants activities. The Service is responding to your inquiry on behalf of the Secretary.

Your letter referenced USFS's National Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant on National Forest System Land.

The Service agrees that timely response to and control of wildfire is important, and we have been working collaboratively with the USFS for several years to ensure continued successful implementation of their aerial fire retardant program. While the Service is not directly involved with the SEIS or National Environmental Policy Act process, we are working with the USFS via interagency coordination in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (i.e., section 7 consultation). This consultation will ensure that implementation of the USFS fire retardant program is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or destroy or adversely modify their designated critical habitats.

Over the past year, the Service has coordinated closely with the USFS to ensure timely completion of section 7 consultation for implementation of this national program. We understand that at least one entity would like to test a new product under this program this calendar year. As such, the Service is exploring options that could allow completion of the consultation earlier than the current target of December 31, 2021.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue. The Service's Congressional Affairs staff will keep your office apprised of significant developments. If you have any questions, please contact the Service's Assistant Director for Ecological Services, Gary Frazer, at 202-208-4646 or [gary\\_frazer@fws.gov](mailto:gary_frazer@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

Shannon A. Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife  
and Parks



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D. C. 20240



In Reply Refer To  
FWS/R3/DCN:075367

November 2, 2021

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of July 29, 2021, regarding the status of the monarch butterfly and the voluntary efforts being undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and its partners to conserve this important species. We recognize the urgent need to reverse monarch butterfly declines, and we are working closely with partners across the country to undertake voluntary conservation measures.

The Service is committed to enhancing the proactive conservation of the monarch butterfly. We take a collaborative all-hands-on-deck approach to monarch conservation, engaging with a broad array of partners to enact large and small-scale conservation efforts for the benefit of monarchs and their habitats. We are grateful for the conservation efforts already underway by our partners in federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, and private citizens. Over the past five years, the Service has restored and enhanced more than one million acres of monarch and pollinator habitat through actions on Service lands and through partnerships with willing farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners.

As noted in your letter, one of the important tools the Service is using to encourage voluntary conservation efforts is the nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for energy and transportation rights-of-way holders. To date, 29 private and public energy and transportation partners have enrolled in (18) or applied to (11) the CCAA. These existing commitments cover more than 760,000 acres of monarch habitat across 31 states, and we expect more participants to enroll.

On December 17, 2020, the Service completed its 12-month finding on the petition to list the monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We determined that listing the monarch under the ESA is warranted but precluded at this time by higher-priority listing actions. As a part of this finding, we determined that an emergency listing was not necessary because of ongoing conservation measures, including implementation of the CCAA. Pursuant to Executive Order 13990, the Department of the Interior reviewed the December 2020 12-month finding, confirmed that it was based on the best scientific and commercial data available, and re-affirmed the Service's conclusion that listing the monarch under the ESA is warranted but precluded.

Ensuring the future of the monarch butterfly is important to Service. We appreciate your engagement as we work with our many partners to explore options to conserve the monarch and other pollinators. If you would like to discuss our monarch conservation efforts further, or if you have additional questions, please contact Midwest Regional Director Charlie Wooley at (612) 713-5302.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Martha Williams  
Principal Deputy Director  
Exercising the Delegated Authority  
of the Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D. C. 20240

In Reply Refer To  
FWS/R3/DCN:075367

November 2, 2021

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter of July 29, 2021, regarding the status of the monarch butterfly and the voluntary efforts being undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and its partners to conserve this important species. We recognize the urgent need to reverse monarch butterfly declines, and we are working closely with partners across the country to undertake voluntary conservation measures.

The Service is committed to enhancing the proactive conservation of the monarch butterfly. We take a collaborative all-hands-on-deck approach to monarch conservation, engaging with a broad array of partners to enact large and small-scale conservation efforts for the benefit of monarchs and their habitats. We are grateful for the conservation efforts already underway by our partners in federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, and private citizens. Over the past five years, the Service has restored and enhanced more than one million acres of monarch and pollinator habitat through actions on Service lands and through partnerships with willing farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners.

As noted in your letter, one of the important tools the Service is using to encourage voluntary conservation efforts is the nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for energy and transportation rights-of-way holders. To date, 29 private and public energy and transportation partners have enrolled in (18) or applied to (11) the CCAA. These existing commitments cover more than 760,000 acres of monarch habitat across 31 states, and we expect more participants to enroll.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Martha Williams  
Principal Deputy Director  
Exercising the Delegated Authority  
of the Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D. C. 20240

In Reply Refer To  
FWS/R3/DCN:075367

November 2, 2021

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gohmert:

Thank you for your letter of July 29, 2021, regarding the status of the monarch butterfly and the voluntary efforts being undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and its partners to conserve this important species. We recognize the urgent need to reverse monarch butterfly declines, and we are working closely with partners across the country to undertake voluntary conservation measures.

The Service is committed to enhancing the proactive conservation of the monarch butterfly. We take a collaborative all-hands-on-deck approach to monarch conservation, engaging with a broad array of partners to enact large and small-scale conservation efforts for the benefit of monarchs and their habitats. We are grateful for the conservation efforts already underway by our partners in federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, and private citizens. Over the past five years, the Service has restored and enhanced more than one million acres of monarch and pollinator habitat through actions on Service lands and through partnerships with willing farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners.

As noted in your letter, one of the important tools the Service is using to encourage voluntary conservation efforts is the nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for energy and transportation rights-of-way holders. To date, 29 private and public energy and transportation partners have enrolled in (18) or applied to (11) the CCAA. These existing commitments cover more than 760,000 acres of monarch habitat across 31 states, and we expect more participants to enroll.

On December 17, 2020, the Service completed its 12-month finding on the petition to list the monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We determined that listing the monarch under the ESA is warranted but precluded at this time by higher-priority listing actions. As a part of this finding, we determined that an emergency listing was not necessary because of ongoing conservation measures, including implementation of the CCAA. Pursuant to Executive Order 13990, the Department of the Interior reviewed the December 2020 12-month finding, confirmed that it was based on the best scientific and commercial data available, and re-affirmed the Service's conclusion that listing the monarch under the ESA is warranted but precluded.

Ensuring the future of the monarch butterfly is important to Service. We appreciate your engagement as we work with our many partners to explore options to conserve the monarch and other pollinators. If you would like to discuss our monarch conservation efforts further, or if you have additional questions, please contact Midwest Regional Director Charlie Wooley at (612) 713-5302.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Martha Williams  
Principal Deputy Director  
Exercising the Delegated Authority  
of the Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 26, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write in response to the forum held by the Department of the Interior on March 25, 2021 to discuss the federal oil and gas program. A public review process is long overdue, yet the Department should have completed any reviews and associated public comment periods before issuing directives halting the leasing program and creating administrative bottlenecks for existing leaseholders. Given the limited number of participants in this forum, the event was a missed opportunity to hear from those most affected by the Administration's actions. Millions of Americans depend on oil and gas development for employment, stable energy prices, and economic wellbeing. It is critical that you hear from those most impacted to fully understand the consequences of policy decisions made in Washington D.C.

The Department should have invited representatives from state and local governments, many of which rely on mineral revenues to maintain their budgets. Energy-producing states use their share of revenues to support public school funding, public safety, environmental restoration, coastal resiliency, and many other important programs. Oil and gas development also supports a variety of environmental programs at the federal level; for instance, production in the Gulf funds coastal restoration projects and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which was recently granted permanent, mandatory funding in law. It would have been very valuable to hear about the direct impacts of the Biden Administration's actions on these state and local programs during the forum.

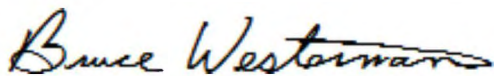
We are also dismayed that the Department did not invite energy operators from the small business community, as well as individually impacted workers from the Western and Gulf regions. Energy production is a national issue, but it is also a local one, and the Administration's actions are likely to hit small businesses and workers the hardest. For instance, the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline resulted in the direct loss of over 1,000 well-paying union jobs, not to mention nearly 11,000 job opportunities that were associated with the project. These job losses are only the beginning if these harmful policies stay in place. Nearly 500,000 jobs across the country could be lost by 2040 if the oil and gas leasing moratorium is made permanent.

Thousands of oil and gas operators in the United States are small businesses with fewer than 20 employees. These operators will be disproportionately impacted by policies like increased royalty rates, hiked fees, and additional uncertainty in the leasing process. According to recent witness testimony in the Committee on Natural Resources, in the state of New Mexico alone, increased federal royalties could drive any number of its 400 independent producers out of business. During this ongoing pandemic, small businesses and individual households are facing more challenges than ever, and their voices must be heard.


Finally, the Department should bear in mind the significant contributions of our federal oil and gas program to domestic energy production. Nearly a quarter of oil and gas produced in the U.S. comes from federal lands and waters, helping us to achieve global energy independence. Domestically produced energy provides greater benefit to the environment as well. Our emissions have been steadily dropping due to immense innovation in the oil and gas sector, and development takes place under vastly superior environmental and humanitarian standards compared to countries like Saudi Arabia and Russia. Handicapping production at home will not eliminate the demand for oil and gas, but merely require that overseas suppliers meet that need, leading to increased global emissions from foreign production and transportation.

A robust federal oil and gas program is vital to the economies of the Gulf coast, Western states, and the U.S. as a whole. We urge you to listen to a variety of impacted voices, not just those most convenient to your messaging, as you consider changes to the Administration's program.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



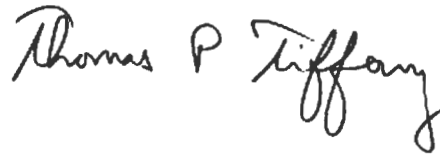
Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Jerry Carl  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



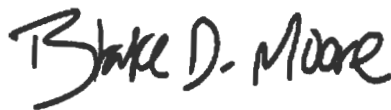
Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



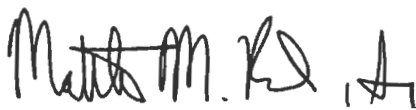
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
<https://www.blm.gov>



**June 16, 2020**

The Honorable Andy Biggs  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Biggs:

Thank you for your letter of May 4, 2020, to the Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt regarding the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Willow Master Development Plan (MDP). Secretary Bernhardt asked me to respond on his behalf.

To support efforts aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19, and to be a good neighbor to our isolated communities, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified its processes based on national, state and local health guidance to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission while delivering our services to the greatest extent practicable. Our recent use of virtual meeting technology allowed for communities to participate at their convenience using a variety of platforms, both traditional and virtual, to provide comments on the Supplement to the DEIS. BLM Alaska provided leadership and innovation in allowing for more public engagement than ever before through multiple social media and electronic platforms.

The continued use of virtual meeting technology allows for communities to request meetings at their convenience without concerns for weather or logistical costs, creating a more efficient way to provide information and receive feedback with minimal cost to the American taxpayer.

Thank you for your interest in the Willow MDP. If I can be of further assistance please contact me at (202) 208-3801, or your staff can contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief at (202) 912-7429. A similar response has been sent to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

William Perry Pendley  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs  
Exercising the Authority of the Director



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
<https://www.blm.gov>



**June 16, 2020**

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gohmert:

Thank you for your letter of May 4, 2020, to the Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt regarding the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Willow Master Development Plan (MDP). Secretary Bernhardt asked me to respond on his behalf.

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Sincerely,

William Perry Pendley  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs  
Exercising the Authority of the Director





United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
<https://www.blm.gov>



**June 16, 2020**

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of May 4, 2020, to the Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt regarding the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Willow Master Development Plan (MDP). Secretary Bernhardt asked me to respond on his behalf.

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Sincerely,

William Perry Pendley  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs  
Exercising the Authority of the Director



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gohmert:

Thank you for your letter of June 2, 2020, in which you expressed your support and requested the expeditious finalization of updated regulations managing the domestic production of locatable minerals on Federal lands. Secretary Bernhardt asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Department of the Interior shares your views on the importance of maintaining the security of the United States by accessing domestic mineral supplies, thereby ensuring an efficient supply chain for our industrial and military needs.

In support of establishing and supporting domestic security of locatable minerals in general, and critical minerals specifically, President Trump issued Executive Order 13875, "*A Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals*." Subsequently, Secretary's Order 3359, "Critical Mineral Independence and Security" was issued. Pursuant to this order, the relevant bureaus within the Department of the Interior are actively addressing the same concerns that you identified in your letter. As part of our implementation efforts, I have instructed the Bureau of Land Management to review and revise the 43 CFR 3800 regulations; this effort is currently underway.

Thank you again for your letter of support and acknowledgement of the importance of regulatory reform and modernization in developing a domestic supply of locatable minerals needed for the security of the United States. A similar reply is being sent to the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

Casey Hammond  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Exercising the Authority of the Assistant Secretary,  
Land and Minerals Management



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
<https://www.blm.gov>



April 1, 2021

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of February 1, 2021, to Acting Secretary of the Interior Scott de la Vega regarding the Western Rare Earth and La Paz Rare Earth Project in Arizona. The Acting Secretary asked me to respond on his behalf.

The exploration Notice for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Serial Number AZA38222 was accepted as complete by the Lake Havasu Field Office in accordance with 43 CFR 3809.301. The proponent submitted a Reclamation Cost Estimate and Financial Guarantee which was adjudicated and accepted on February 3, 2021.

The Secretary's Order 3395 referenced in your letter does not apply to Notice level operations. The BLM does not have the authority to deny exploration under a Notice unless it will cause unnecessary or undue degradation of public land. We have determined the operations under Notice AZA38222 will not result in unnecessary or undue degradation and that the reclamation cost estimate is sufficient. We have accepted the financial guarantee. Once the proponent has acquired the appropriate State of Arizona permits, it will be able to conduct its exploration activities under the 43 CFR 3809 regulations.

Thank you for your communication regarding this important issue. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (970) 256-4900, or your staff can contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief, at (202) 631-6346.

Sincerely,

Nada Culver  
Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director  
Bureau of Land Management

cc:  
BLM Lake Havasu Field Office



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter dated March 26, 2021, regarding the Department of the Interior's (Department) comprehensive review of the Federal oil and gas program. Secretary Haaland asked me to respond on her behalf.

On January 27, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, which directed the Department to conduct a comprehensive review of the Federal oil and gas program. In response, the Department held a forum on March 25, 2021, with participation from stakeholders representing environmental justice and frontline communities, academia, oil and gas industry trade associations, and indigenous, conservation, and labor organizations. The Department accepted comments and recommendations through April 15, 2021, to inform its report, expected to be completed in early summer.

Since the forum, we have continued to meet with state and local governments and individual oil and gas operators, while conducting outreach to and receiving input from Members of Congress, all of which will inform the Department's report and ongoing review. The report will include findings on the state of the program and recommendations for the Department and Congress to implement to improve stewardship of public lands and waters, create jobs, and build a just and equitable energy future.

While fossil fuels will continue to play a major role in America for years to come, we also acknowledge that too often the extraction of resources has been rushed to meet the false urgency of political timetables rather than reviewed with careful consideration of the impacts to the environment and future generations of Americans. During every step of this process, the Department will continue to engage diverse stakeholders across the country, as well as conduct formal consultation with Tribes.

Thank you for your interest in the program and the management of the public lands. A similar response has been sent to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

STEVEN  
FELDGUS

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Steven Feldgus  
Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Land and Minerals Management



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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Sincerely,

STEVEN  
FELDGUS

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Steven Feldgus  
Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Land and Minerals Management



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
<https://www.blm.gov>



September 15, 2021

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter of June 16, 2021, to Secretary of the Interior Haaland regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) review of land management plans for the Greater sage-grouse. The Secretary asked that I respond on her behalf.

The BLM's 2019 sage-grouse land use plans were preliminarily enjoined by the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho, and the 2015 plans are in effect. The BLM's review of these plans will help inform whether targeted plan amendments are needed to respond to issues raised in litigation and to address any new and relevant scientific information. The district court also ordered the BLM to "re-initiate the NEPA process" to inform the Department's decision about whether to withdraw Sagebrush Focal Areas from location and entry under the U.S. mining laws. The BLM expects to re-initiate that process soon.

The BLM recognizes the importance of addressing wildfire and drought as principal components of sage-grouse conservation. These related crises are caused or exacerbated by climate change. Since 2013, the BLM has invested over \$380 million into the treatment of nearly four million acres of sagebrush habitat to make these lands more resilient to environmental stressors. The FY 2022 President's Budget proposes to increase strategic sagebrush restoration projects in cooperation with our partners to leverage our resources and collectively prevent further declines in sage-grouse populations. Additionally, we will continue to invest in wildland fire prevention, responses, and post-fire rehabilitation in sagebrush habitat.

The BLM is committed to reversing the long-term downward trends in sage-grouse populations and habitats in a manner that respects our multiple-use and sustained yield mission and meets the needs of Western economies. As we proceed, we believe it is important to continue to work closely with states, local governments, Indian Tribes, and other partners, who have worked in a collaborative and bipartisan fashion for more than a decade toward sustainable and balanced management of sagebrush habitat. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at (202) 208-3801, or your staff can contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief, at (202) 631-6346. A similar response has been sent to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Nada Wolff Culver  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
<https://www.blm.gov>



September 15, 2021

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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Sincerely,

Nada Wolff Culver  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Gosar:

Thank you for your letter dated October 29, 2021, to Secretary Haaland regarding Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force's guidance to federal agencies. Secretary Haaland requested that I provide an update to you on the issues you raised in your letter.

On December 7, 2021, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Georgia issued a preliminary, nationwide injunction prohibiting the enforcement of vaccine mandates for federal contractors and subcontractors in covered contracts. *Georgia v. Biden*, Case No. 1:21-cv-163 (S.D. Ga. Dec. 7, 2021). The Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit is now considering an appeal of this injunction.

As a result of this injunction, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance that "the Government will take no action to enforce the [COVID] clause implementing requirements of Executive Order 14042" until such time as this matter is resolved.

The Department is complying with OMB's guidance. Should the injunction be lifted, we will further apprise you of our implementation plans, if any, with respect to federal contractors.

Sincerely,

Eric Werwa  
Deputy Assistant Secretary – Policy and  
Environmental Management,  
Exercising the Delegated Authority of Assistant  
Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget



Identical Letter Sent To:

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Stauber  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
Vice Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom McClintock  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry L. Carl  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
Vice Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Lamborn  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Tiffany  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blake Moore  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0603**

December 9, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
1849 C. Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We write in strong opposition to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) current reprogramming request that seeks to move the BLM Headquarters and significant personnel to Washington D.C. and ask that you rescind this significantly flawed proposal.

The BLM is responsible for overseeing 245 million acres of surface area and 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate, primarily out West. In fact, over 99 percent of the surface area managed by the BLM is located in the Western half of the United States. Agency decision-making and public land users both benefit when Bureau employees are closer to the land they are responsible for managing and are a part of the local communities impacted by their decisions. The establishment of the headquarters in the West reduced the number of long cross-country flights and travel costs, improved training, delegated more responsibility to employees in the field, increased operating hours due to proximity of time zones, improved customer service and coordination with local communities, ensured better decisions earlier in the decision-making process, reduced commute times for employees, and provided good-paying local jobs. In addition, the number of Asian and Hispanic employees within the BLM workforce increased following the move West by 18% and 16% respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the reprogramming effort now being pursued by your Department lacks transparency, is fundamentally flawed, and should be abandoned. BLM has made clear that this new reprogramming proposal will relocate senior staff further away from the lands they are responsible for managing and cause significant harm to local communities by moving nearly 50 good-paying jobs currently stationed in Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico to Washington D.C. While the agency has indicated that moving all these positions to Washington D.C. will cost taxpayers millions of dollars, BLM has failed to provide an accurate estimate of the total costs of this relocation request. The Bureau also indicated that another 45-80 positions, currently assigned to Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, California, Utah, and Colorado, will likely be moved back to Washington D.C. in a subsequent reprogramming request that will only cause further upheaval and negatively impact employees and Western states.

This reprogramming request stands in stark contrast to earlier public commitments made by the Department and Bureau. In its September 17, 2021, press release, DOI stated, "[u]nder this plan, the BLM's current presence in Grand Junction, Colo., will grow and expand as the bureau's official Western headquarters."<sup>2</sup> This promise was also consistently made to Colorado's Governor and bipartisan delegation. Reducing the number of positions assigned to Grand Junction from 41 to 16, while only physically assigning one new permanent position fails to uphold that commitment. It also completely disregards BLM's previous statements that numerous employees "are interested in keeping their positions

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104247.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild Bureau of Land Management | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#)

out West.” In addition, the Bureau has failed to release the detailed responses from their BLM-wide employee questionnaire on this issue, raising further questions about the transparency of this process. Claims that this move will boost agency moral and functionality have yet to be backed up by any actual data from your agency.

We are deeply concerned that the agency is relying on budget gimmicks and failing to disclose the actual costs and details associated with this request.

Less than two years ago, the previous administration spent \$20.3 million on its reprogramming effort that relocated 328 positions out West and established the BLM Headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado. This thoughtful and transparent reprogramming effort yielded strong benefits for taxpayers, the agency, and outdoor enthusiasts that utilize our public lands. The agency estimated it would save approximately \$5 million annually in salary and lease cost savings from the move West. The Department of the Interior also reported that it saved \$1.9 million on travel costs in fiscal year 2020.

That move cannot simply be undone. The lease for the Bureau’s M Street building where BLM employees previously worked in Washington D.C. has expired and the space is no longer available. The Bureau stated that it plans for all the new positions that are relocated to Washington to now be stationed in the Main Interior Building. While the agency indicated that significant remodeling costs may be necessary to make those accommodations, BLM failed to articulate how much this remodeling effort will actually cost. The Bureau also failed to include any estimates of the costs associated with higher leases and higher locality pay in Washington D.C.

Finally, the timing of this reprogramming request is misguided and will do even greater harm to BLM employees. Although the Department indicated it would not move employees until fiscal year 2023, this announcement and reprogramming request has created substantial uncertainty and will upend the lives of current employees living out West. Given that most of the agency is still teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic, moving headquarters now would only serve to disrupt employees lives and would do little to actually improve the functionality of the BLM.

This reprogramming request appears to be a politically motivated effort, not based on the merits, that fails to consider what is actually best for taxpayers, Americans that utilize our public lands, and agency functionality. In short, this new reprogramming request causes further uncertainty and lacks transparency. We respectfully request that the Department of the Interior rescind this reprogramming request and keep BLM headquarters where it belongs, in the West.

Sincerely,



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



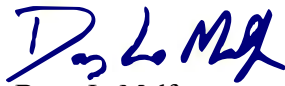
Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



Jerry Carl  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Jay Oberholte  
Member of Congress



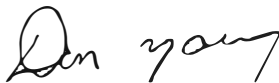
Matt M. Rosendale  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Don Young  
Member of Congress



Jason Smith  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0603

March 15, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary-designee  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C. Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary-designee Haaland:

Congratulations on your confirmation to lead the Department of Interior (DOI) as Secretary. We write to formally invite you and your staff to visit Colorado and the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters in Grand Junction. We would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our strong support for keeping and establishing a full national headquarters in Grand Junction and would like to have a dialogue and consult with you on this important issue.

According to U.S. News and World Report, Colorado offers four of the five best places to live in the United States. Colorado has amenities that attract and retain a highly educated and productive workforce. Grand Junction was selected for the headquarters location because of its substantial cost savings, travel accessibility, quality of life attributes, and increased representation among the communities affected by land management decisions. The national headquarters in Grand Junction is already providing an \$11 million initial local economic impact.

The West has unique challenges as you know. The value of having senior BLM leadership staff on the ground that understand these issues and is immersed in our communities cannot be understated.

There is strong bipartisan and bicameral support for keeping BLM's headquarters and existing jobs out West. We encourage you to continue work with us and other Westerners to ensure we get this right. Grand Junction should operate as a real headquarters and have all staff necessary to ensure that occurs.

Reversing the move at this juncture would impose hardships on public servants that were recently hired or willingly made the move West. Such action would be destructive and result in the loss of even more agency employees. More than 80 agency employees and families now reside in Colorado as a result of the move. More than 300 employees now reside in the West as a

result of the relocation including dozens of employees in your home state of New Mexico that support important cultural, paleontological, and tribal programs.


The posting of western BLM jobs drew a larger volume of highly-skilled applicants than what the agency would have traditionally received in Washington D.C. It is also important to note that not one employee was removed as a result of the move West. The agency found jobs for people that wanted to stay in D.C. and paid expenses to help employees make the move West. BLM's move West also successfully avoided any formal Equal Employment Opportunity or U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board complaints, legal challenges or adverse union activities.

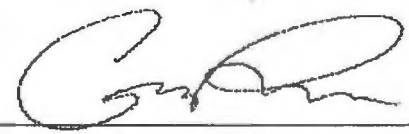
BLM's multiple-use mission aligns closely with the values of Coloradan's who use public lands for tourism, conservation, outdoor recreation, grazing, resource development, and other multiple uses. Improved customer service and better decisions earlier in the decision-making process also occur when senior agency officials are part of local communities. Keeping the BLM staff closer to the land they manage and the people they serve has everlasting benefits.

We would be happy to coordinate with you on your visit and connect you with other local stakeholders to discuss the positive impacts the Grand Junction Headquarters has had on the West and in our communities. Thank you for considering this invitation and we look forward to your visit.


Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Janet Rowland, Chair  
Mesa County Board of Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cody Davis, Commissioner  
Mesa County Board of Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott McInnis, Commissioner  
Mesa County Board of Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Schwenke, President/CEO  
Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3702

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OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
The Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

Congratulations on your confirmation on March 15. We appreciate your stated commitment to listening to all stakeholders. We are writing to raise an issue that deserves immediate consideration to correct agency overreach and a failure to follow the law.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) announced it was delaying the Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl, 86 Fed. Reg. 4820 (January 15, 2021); Delay Notice, 86 Fed. Reg. 11,892 (Mar. 1, 2021). To comply with governing law, provide greater certainty to land managers, rural communities, and to those that depend on sustainable forest management for their livelihoods, and to improve focus on the primary threats to the existence of the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO), we urge you to immediately implement the rule as published on January 15, which was scheduled to go into effect on March 16.

The 2021 designation aligns critical habitat for the NSO with a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision and with federal environmental law. It represents an opportunity to move past antiquated, ineffective habitat policies that have stymied critical federal forest restoration activities by focusing on the real threats to this species and its habitat, while supporting American jobs and rural communities across three Western states. Science and the law have changed since the NSO was listed 30 years ago, and DOI needs to adapt to this as well.

The previous 2012 NSO critical habitat designation was subject to litigation from a coalition of business, labor, and county governments. The coalition's litigation specifically took issue with the inclusion in the designation of at least 1.1 million acres of federal lands that are not NSO habitat but are expressly designated for active forest management activities under the Northwest Forest Plan. These are areas where a critical habitat designation does nothing for conservation but inflicts direct harm on rural communities.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) agreed to initiate a public regulatory rulemaking process for reevaluating NSO critical habitat following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 decision in *Weyerhaeuser Co. v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service et al. (Weyerhaeuser)*. The unanimous *Weyerhaeuser* decision clarified that to qualify as critical habitat it must first actually be *habitat* of the species.



After completing the rulemaking process and incorporating public input, FWS adopted the 2021 NSO designation, which better follows the Supreme Court's ruling in *Weyerhaeuser*, and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), by significantly reducing the amount of non-habitat that is incorrectly and now illegally designated as "critical habitat." In addition, this revised rule is consistent with the O&C Act of 1937 and recent court decisions requiring the Bureau of Land Management to manage Western Oregon O&C Lands for timber production under the principles of sustained yield. Further, it is consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan that promised a stable supply of timber from those federal lands identified as suitable for timber harvest. The 2012 critical habitat rule dismantled the Northwest Forest Plan, setting aside 75 percent of the suitable lands, which only make up about one-sixth of the plan area. And now we know, from *Weyerhaeuser*, that it was an illegal rule. FWS also refused to do an adequate economic analysis or to consider economic impacts, even though this is required by Section 4(b)(2) of the ESA.

A few Members of Congress have questioned the legality of changes that were made between the proposed rule and what was finalized in January. These claims are not supported by the facts. In addition to incorporating public input from the rulemaking process, the Secretary of the Interior followed his legal duty to consider economic impacts and exercised discretion under the ESA to make exemptions for economic reasons.

In so doing, the Secretary was recognizing that the previous designations resulted in an annual loss of an estimated \$100 million in Gross Domestic Product, \$66 million in worker earnings, and more than 1,200 jobs, the closure of businesses, the loss of forest products infrastructure critical to maintaining forest health, and the loss of revenues to county governments that sustain essential public services- all on land that provides little benefit to the NSO.

The resulting 2021 rule provides for critical habitat on over 6.8 million acres of federal land, which is comparable to the 6.8 million acres the FWS designated in 1992. This critical habitat does not include the millions of acres that are also set aside as National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and Wild & Scenic and congressionally designated Wilderness areas. It also does not include the many millions of acres that are protected under Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) governing management of many private and state lands, including 1.6 million acres of state lands in Washington. The 2021 rule also defers to Tribal management lands now held in trust for the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians and for the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. (The delay of the rule also delays the removal of critical habitat on these Tribal lands.)

After nearly a decade of lost opportunities, the 2021 rule will better allow FWS and other federal agencies to implement the overarching recommendations of NSO Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan calls for the use of active forest management tools to help mitigate the risks of stand-replacing wildfires, which today represents the greatest threat to NSO habitat. Statistics from Oregon's 2020 wildfire season illustrate the immediate nature of this threat.

According to U.S. Forest Service data, nearly half a million acres of federally managed forest land burned in western Oregon in 2021, where approximately 280,000 acres burnt at moderate and high severity. The Holiday Farm, Beachie, and Lionshead fires alone caused the loss of 45,220 acres of suitable NSO habitat on the Willamette National Forest. For comparison, the Northwest Forest

Plan 20-year monitoring report indicated that 5,805 acres of suitable NSO habitat was lost annually across the entire range of the species due to timber harvest on federally managed lands. **This means that more owl habitat was lost due to wildfire on a single National Forest in a single year than over the course of seven years of timber harvests on 17 National Forests.**

FWS must also take action to address the other primary threat to the NSO, competition with the barred owl. In a 2019 Species Assessment for the NSO, FWS acknowledged that “competition with barred owls, a species not native to the Pacific Northwest, has been identified as the *primary factor* associated with the observed population declines.” That assessment also concluded that “implementation of management that can effectively reduce the impact of barred owls on northern spotted owl population performance is *imperative*.”

Ultimately, this determination by FWS indicates that declining spotted owl populations are more a result of barred owl competition and the loss of habitat to wildfire, than sustainable timber harvesting. Yet, considerable time and taxpayer resources have been dedicated to locking up and ignoring habitat rather than controlling barred owls—contrary to FWS’s own findings and recovery plan. Furthermore, attempts to “protect” theoretical future NSO habitat as critical habitat have proven counterproductive to efforts to protect against NSO habitat’s largest threat: wildfire.

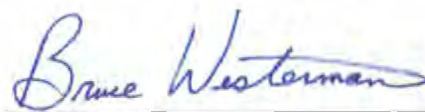
Reducing competition from the Barred Owl, combined with actively managing federal lands to reduce severe wildfire risks, can help reverse the decline of NSO populations and habitat that have only accelerated notwithstanding previous, larger critical habitat designations.

In closing, we urge you to implement the 2021 rule without further delay. We respectfully ask that the Administration not engage in political posturing over this important issue by further delaying a legally and scientifically justified rule that has real-world and devastating consequences for our rural communities and the health of our forests.

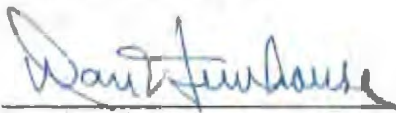
Sincerely,



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



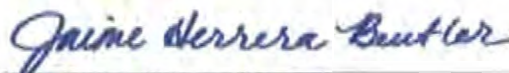
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



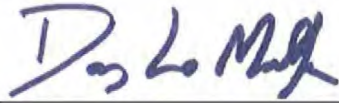
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



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Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



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Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



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Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress



May 21, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We are writing to express our support for the 2021 amendments to the Arizona Tribal-State Gaming Compact recently submitted to your Department for your approval. The amendments are the result of five years of negotiations between the Arizona tribes and the Governor of Arizona. They represent a great step forward for our State overall, and represent the best kind of agreement, which provides benefits for all.

This is the most significant amendment of the Arizona Tribal Compacts since the current version of the compacts were adopted in 2002. The amendments represent a carefully negotiated agreement between tribal government and state leaders on how best to modernize Arizona gaming policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, while retaining tribal exclusivity over nearly all forms of gaming in the State until 2046. The agreement reaffirms the rights of tribes to own gaming operations on tribal lands, eliminates tribal revenue share obligations for most tribes in the State, allows for a moderate expansion of gaming in our urban areas, continues and expands the sharing of tribal gaming revenue amongst all tribes in Arizona, and furthers state gaming regulation and oversight. It also takes the bold step of establishing sports betting in tribal casinos and at certain limited locations in or near professional sporting facilities.

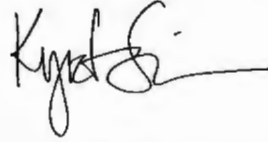
Tribal gaming has long been an economic win-win for tribes and the state. It has promoted economic development and self-sufficiency for tribes and employed thousands of Arizonans in industries such as hospitality, food service, and tourism. In recent years, operations have generated around \$4.75 billion in total sales and approximately \$691 million in revenue share payments to state and local governments and taxes paid by employees and customers. Gaming facilities provide tribes with essential funding sources for tribal education, health care, housing, water infrastructure, and other essential services. Since the original compacts were signed in 1993, gaming has generated nearly \$1.5 billion in tribal contributions to state, county, and municipal governments. These revenue payments are used for K-12 schools, wildlife habitat and conservation, and state tourism.

We encourage you to give the compact amendments your timely consideration and affirmative approval in accordance with the requirements of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

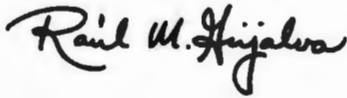
Sincerely,



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



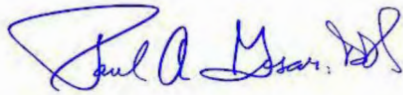
Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator



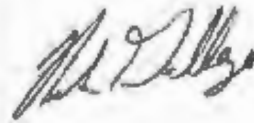
Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress



David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



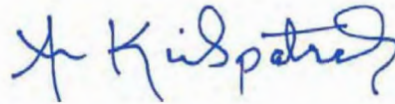
Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress

AUGUST PFLUGER  
11TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

RANKING MEMBER OF  
THE INTELLIGENCE &  
COUNTERTERRORISM SUBCOMMITTEE

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4311

1831 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3605

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY & THE HOUSE  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) proposal to list the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). **This proposed listing will negatively impact rural economies and will be detrimental to ongoing conservation efforts. For those reasons, we urge you not to move forward with final listing of the LPC under the ESA.**

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (WAFWA) Range-wide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for the LPC has been effective in conserving and growing the species. Under the LPC Range-wide CCAA, more than 180 oil and gas, agriculture, pipeline, electric transmission, and wind energy companies have enrolled in conservation agreements to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to the LPC from their operations. Private industry has invested more than \$64 million in enrollment and mitigation fees for conservation and over 6 million acres are enrolled in the partnership. These numbers don't even take into consideration the efforts carried out under individual CCAA's with Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas and progress made under the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program and the Natural Resources Conservation Services' Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative.

These voluntary public-private conservation partnerships for the LPC and its habitat have proven to be successful as recent aerial surveys indicate that the LPC's population has more than doubled since 2013, going from 15,397 to 34,408 in 2020. This includes a stable to increasing population in the Shinnery Oak Prairie Region where you have proposed an endangered listing.

A final ruling by the FWS to list the LPC also stands to negatively impact future private investment for conservation. Currently, WAFWA's Range-wide CCAA ensures that mitigation efforts are greater than impacts, resulting in a conservation benefit for LPC habitat, and ultimately populations. Once this listing is finalized, new acreage will be shut out of the CCAA, resulting in less investment and conservation efforts for the species.

Agriculture and energy production are the foundation and lifeblood of our states. The oil and gas industry contributed \$2.8 billion to New Mexico in fiscal year 2020 which equates to 33.5 % of the state's budget. This funding supports schools, teachers, hospitals, and other public services that New Mexicans rely on. The Permian Basin accounts for more than 35% of total U.S. crude

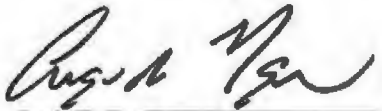
oil production and more than 15% of total U.S. natural gas production. This proposed action will result in significant job losses while diminishing American energy security, forcing us to rely on other countries who do not have our best interests in mind and have less stringent environmental standards. Similarly, U.S. agriculture contributes \$7 trillion to the U.S. economy and supports 40 million jobs nationwide. Unnecessary, unsound decisions stemming from Washington, D.C. will only serve to harm the livelihoods of the constituents we represent.

Additionally, the FWS notes in its proposed rule that the LPC “is particularly vulnerable to severe droughts due to being located in the dryer and hotter southwestern portion of the range.” We do not believe that our constituents should be punished with an ESA listing when something out of their control is a significant obstacle for recovery.

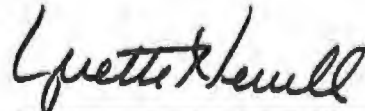
Considering over 95 percent of the LPC’s habitat is on private land and voluntary conservation efforts have been effective, it is disappointing that FWS would undercut private partners that have been diligently working towards a healthy recovery of the species. We urge you to continue prioritizing voluntary efforts – which has gained broad support from key stakeholders – as opposed to pursuing a federal overreach that will be devastating for rural economies.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



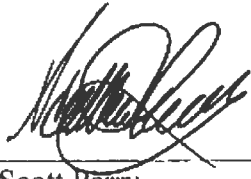
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



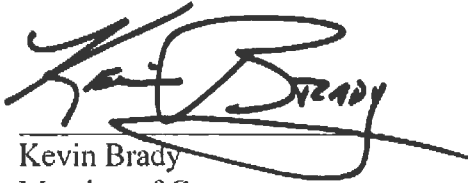
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



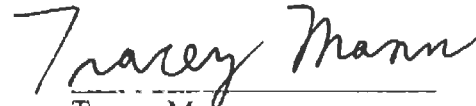
Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress



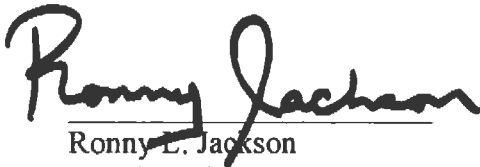
Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress




Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Bice  
Member of Congress



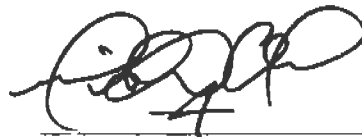
Ronny L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2308**

July 29, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write to strongly encourage you to allow proactive and voluntary conservation efforts for the monarch butterfly to work and ask that you promote these efforts to encourage increased landowner participation. We are opposed to you unfairly punishing American conservationists by using unilateral authority to designate the monarch butterfly as an endangered species, especially as foreign actors are partially responsible for the species' current status. Listing will close the door on proactive conservation work, impede collaborative efforts to recover the species, and will only result in severe economic harm for rural communities.

As you know, over 45 organizations from across the energy and transportation sectors have worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to develop a first-of-its-kind nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) designed to encourage landowners to adopt beneficial measures that increase conservation for the monarch butterfly. This effort is all-encompassing; it spans the entire contiguous 48 states and, with your support, is expected to protect, enhance, and create 2.3 million acres of monarch habitat. In fact, the CCAA will create a widespread network of conserved lands that also help facilitate monarch migration and connection to other areas of suitable foraging, breeding, and resting habitat.

The program is working exactly as intended. An electric cooperative, headquartered in Braham, Minnesota, entered into a first-of-its-kind CCAA for the monarch butterfly last year. The cooperative is implementing management practices to benefit monarch conservation while creating an effective model for use in the energy sector nationwide.<sup>1</sup> With your leadership, this program could be just the start of countless conservation success stories.

Last December, the Service published its 12-month finding for the monarch butterfly in the Federal Register. In the 12-month finding, the Service outlined that the primary threats to the monarch are "loss and degradation of habitat" along with irresponsible logging "at overwintering sites in Mexico."<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Service noted that the loss of milkweed is especially problematic as monarch

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<sup>1</sup> Kanabec County Times, *ECE first MN co-op to receive pollinator certificate*, [http://www.moraminn.com/news/ece-first-mn-co-op-to-receive-pollinator-certificate/article\\_0762caf2-08a7-11eb-8446-1fdd8417c9a5.html](http://www.moraminn.com/news/ece-first-mn-co-op-to-receive-pollinator-certificate/article_0762caf2-08a7-11eb-8446-1fdd8417c9a5.html)

<sup>2</sup> Federal Register, *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 12-Month Finding for the Monarch Butterfly*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, December 17, 2020, p. 81814, <file:///X:/Water,%20Power%20&%20Oceans/ESA/Monarch%20Butterfly/DOI%20Monarch%20Butterfly.pdf>.

“reproduction is dependent on the presence of milkweed, the sole food source for larvae.”<sup>3</sup> The Interior Department should not punish Americans participating in voluntary conservation efforts by listing the species and should hold other governments accountable for habitat degradation within their borders.

Under the CCAA, energy and transportation companies address these threats by providing “habitat for the species along energy and transportation rights-of-way corridors across the country, including a 100 foot extension of the right-of-way onto private agricultural lands” and carrying out conservation measures to reduce or remove threats to the species and create and maintain habitat annually.”<sup>4</sup> The conservation measures under the CCAA will provide “over 300 million additional stems of milkweed”<sup>5</sup> which will be critical for recovery.

We believe that by encouraging CCAA’s like this one and other voluntary efforts are the most effective way to ensure adequate conservation for the monarch. This approach allows those who would be impacted the most by a potential listing to proactively invest in essential conservation efforts. If the Service rushes to list the species, it will close the door on future conservation efforts like this and would result in stringent regulations that could have substantial economic impacts on communities across the country. For those reasons, we encourage you to allow this CCAA to continue working while collaborating with other local governments and stakeholders to promote this effort to increase participation. Instead of disrupting successful American conservation efforts, we encourage you to work with other government agencies to ensure that similar conservation efforts are undertaken in Canada and Mexico as they hold essential habitat and wintering grounds for the monarch butterfly.

As conservationists, we know we can work together to uphold successful conservation programs for the monarch butterfly without punishing good actors. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to ensure adequate conservation of the monarch without causing substantial economic harm.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 81815.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Jerry Carl  
Member of Congress



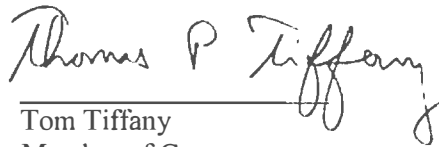
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Maria Salazar  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress

**PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S.**  
FOURTH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

2057 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2315

122 N. CORTEZ STREET, SUITE #104  
PRESCOTT, AZ 86301  
(928) 445-1683

6499 SOUTH KINGS RANCH ROAD, SUITE #4  
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220 N. 4TH STREET  
KINGMAN, AZ 86401  
(928) 445-1683

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0301**

**COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES**  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
RANKING MEMBER, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

**COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND REFORM**  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
ENVIRONMENT  
NATIONAL SECURITY

September 21, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Shawn Bengé  
Acting Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland and Acting Director Bengé,

I am deeply concerned that the process that the National Park Service (NPS) is using to prepare Air Tour Management Plans (ATMP) in place as ordered by the United States Court of Appeals to rush new ATMP that will reduce access, ignore public participation and result in significant job losses in the local tourism industry. I would urge your direct intervention to ensure that the air tour industry continues to be an important part of our gateway communities and National Park tourism.

The courts found that the NPS and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) failed to put any ATMP in place since required by the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000. However, the court order combined with the failure of the NPS in this area should not result in a rushed process that fails to protect this important tourism industry, engage public stakeholders, or protect air traffic safety. The current NPS process is doing all three.

The NPS is claiming that to meet the timeline of the court it must limit the public input from Congressionally established National Parks Over-flight Advisory Group (NPOAG) specifically designed to provide advice and guidance to the agencies in this process. Somehow NPS has decided that they can go behind closed doors and rush through the ATMP process without including the NPOAG and FAA Air Traffic and Local Tourism Operators to guide them. We believe that this disastrous decision will ultimately create tremendous safety concerns, one example is the restructuring of the air tour routes over Lake Mead.

Currently, the new NPS ATMP proposes to move, combine, and compress traffic over Lake Mead Recreation Area that underlies the Class B airspace in Las Vegas and will create an unsafe environment if approved. The NPS does not have the knowledge or understanding of the needs and conflicts in the airspace to set up a safe and efficient route structure. Meanwhile, tour operators in Las Vegas have put together and refined a standardization agreement for passenger safety that has worked flawlessly since its inception. That agreement was put together by all the Las Vegas Operators in meetings hosted by the local Flight Standards Office with Clark County, Local Police Department, Nellis Air Force Base, FAA Flight Standards, and FAA Air Traffic involved. This collaborative, public inclusive process continues to still meet quarterly to address any issues and

update the agreement when needed. Yet, the NPS plan will simply discard this process that has been proven to be safe and effective for the past 15 years and replace it with a document put together by the Park Service with little or no input. Such actions are unacceptable.

Additionally, operators are saying that the NPS is actively choosing to ignore what the current interim operating authority (IOA) permits that operators are using for the 23 parks identified by the court. The IOAs that have been issued are based on the number of flights flown when the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 was established. IOA operators currently have and use modeling data they have for 2017 through 2019 to adjust the number of flights allowed annually. That modeling is based on the reported flights over the 23 individual parks for those years. NPS has stated that due to the courts deadline of two years there is not enough time to model current IOA and still meet the deadline that the court has placed on them.

Therefore, NPS is choosing to use old data they currently have regardless of operators' input on how this would damage their business today. In short, the National Park Service does not really know if or how the airspace resource is currently impacted as they have not modeled the maximum flights allowed over the park, and how much of that impact comes from air tour operations compared to other aviation operations. In addition, any modeling done of recent activities will be seriously impacted by the fallout of the COVID-19 tourism downturn. This could result in operators losing potentially 60- 80% of the IOA they currently have to operate.

Air travel and helicopter tourism is an historic and important economic industry that supports communities around our National Parks. Tens of thousands of people, otherwise unable to visit or see these beautiful areas, have been able to do so through helicopter tours. The industry also generates billions in recreational commercial economic activity with no mark on the parks. However, the NPS needs to be careful to not arbitrarily limit operators currently authorized IOA in the Air Tour Management Process just for the convenience of meeting an unrealistic deadline for the court.

I am asking that you immediately reverse course in this process and directly engage with the public and the operators who encourage so much tourism of our National Parks. In addition, I ask that you ensure that as this process goes forward it will result in a decision that results in no flights banned, reduced, or restricted. Indeed, the benefit to Americans from this tourism is palpable, clear, and indisputable. The industry should be expanded to allow for more flights and provide more access to our National Parks. I am looking forward to your prompt response

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Gosar" followed by a stylized flourish.

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0603**

December 13, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Haaland and Secretary Buttigieg,

We strongly oppose the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) and the National Park Service's (NPS) current 15 draft Air Tour Management Plans (ATMPs) and have serious concerns with how your agencies are handling efforts to establish ATMPs at 24 national parks and monuments.<sup>1</sup> After 20 years of bickering and bureaucratic turf wars between FAA and NPS, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that both agencies have two years to implement new ATMPs.<sup>2</sup> While we understand both agencies' desire to comply with the Court's directives, the flawed plans put forth by NPS and FAA will cause adverse economic consequences, compromise safety, reduce access to national parks for seniors and the disabled, and may even diminish efforts to combat catastrophic wildfires. Contrary to federal law, the plans were also developed without the consultation of impacted stakeholders and undermine Congressional intent. Furthermore, your agencies fail to make a legitimate case for eliminating 8,984 flight allocations in the first 15 ATMPs.

In short, we fully support the continuation and expansion of air tours at the 24 parks and monuments currently under review and oppose the current draft plans for the following reasons:

***Bureaucratic Overreach and Economic Concerns***

The original ATMPs made no mention of reducing flight allocations for air tour operators. Shockingly, however, the first 15 of the 24 draft ATMPs for these national parks under review propose to eliminate 8,984 flight allocations.<sup>3</sup>

Some draft ATMPs also propose to require flight routes at excessive heights of 13,500 feet or above. This new requirement could necessitate onboard oxygen for all passengers thereby drastically increasing costs for air tour operators.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/sound/airtours.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [https://peer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5\\_1\\_20-Court-Decision-Overflights.pdf](https://peer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5_1_20-Court-Decision-Overflights.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/ara/programs/air\\_tour\\_management\\_plan](https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ara/programs/air_tour_management_plan)

<sup>4</sup> 10/1/21 letter from Utah Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office to NPS

In addition, air tour operators took out loans, including federal loans, and made significant investments in modifying equipment to comply with federal laws and regulations. Flight allocations are a measure of value for air tour operators' businesses and any reduction in the number of flight allocations will have negative impacts on the long-term health of their business.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Failure to Consult with Impacted Stakeholders***

During the ATMP drafting process, the FAA and NPS opted for a government-to-government tribal consultation, but excluded the National Parks Overflight Advisory Group (NPOAG), state and local governments, and other interested parties.<sup>6</sup> The National Parks Air Tour Management Act explicitly requires the FAA and the NPS to hold "at least one public meeting with interested parties to develop the air tour management plan."<sup>7</sup> Shamefully, despite repeated requests to participate, those facing negative impacts by these changes were excluded from the decision making process.<sup>8</sup> Many of the issues contained in the draft ATMPs are exactly the kind of information that NPOAG and other stakeholders could have conveyed to your agencies had you included them in the planning process.

### ***Safety Concerns***

NPOAG, a Congressionally created rulemaking committee, provides expert advice and recommendations to the agencies on implementing the National Park Air Tour Management Act of 2000 with respect to commercial air tour operations over and near national parks.<sup>9</sup> Sidestepping this important group undeniably compromises key FAA safety considerations.

For example, the draft ATMP for Bryce Canyon National Park creates an extreme safety concern. This flawed draft plan proposes stacking fixed and rotary wing aircraft at the same elevation on almost identical routes at the same time of day. Aerial collisions could occur as fixed and rotary wing aircraft descend and climb through each other's paths.<sup>10</sup>

The draft ATMP for Arches National Park seemingly ignores common sense. Despite Arches National Park's location less than two miles from the Canyonlands Regional Airport, the draft plan requires the use of a different frequency than the common traffic advisory frequency used by the airport.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Undermines Congressional Intent***

In 2012, Congress passed legislation with strong bipartisan support that required the FAA to

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<sup>5</sup> 9/14/21 letter from Helivision/Bryce Canyon Airlines

<sup>6</sup> <https://rotor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HAI-letter-on-ATMP-Oct-2021.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> 49 U.S.C.A § 40128 (b)(4)

<sup>8</sup> 9/14/21 letter from Helivision/Bryce Canyon Airlines

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/2021-11/NPOAG-Members-Terms.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://rotor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HAI-letter-on-ATMP-Oct-2021.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://rotor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HAI-letter-on-ATMP-Oct-2021.pdf>

provide incentives, including significantly increasing flight allocations, for air tour operators that invested tens of millions of dollars in quiet aircraft technology.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this clear direction from Congress and substantial investment from the private sector, in February 2014, the FAA announced more than 1,700 additional quiet flight allocations per year over Grand Canyon National Park.<sup>13</sup> There is no justifiable reason to significantly reduce flight allocations as proposed in many of the draft plans, especially given Congress's and the American peoples' desire to maintain or significantly increase current flight allocations.

### ***Reducing Access for Seniors and the Disabled***

Air tour operators provide an important service for our disabled and elderly communities, allowing them to fully enjoy the great outdoors and our national parks in a way they otherwise could not.<sup>14</sup> Capping air tours at the reduced levels proposed by NPS and the FAA will prevent demand from seniors and the disability community from being met.

### ***Ignores Contributions to Combatting Dangerous Wildfires***

Numerous air tour operators provide essential wildfire suppression and active management services that help prevent and extinguish catastrophic wildfires. In some instances, 30% of air tour operators' businesses come from providing these services.<sup>15</sup> Representatives from industry have indicated that without the commercial air tours portion of their business, the federal contracting wildfire portion is not economically sustainable and would be terminated.<sup>16</sup> Considering the massive wildfires that have plagued the nation in recent years, losing these essential services would be another unnecessary and preventable blunder.

### ***Conclusion***

While the court imposed a two-year deadline, both the FAA and the NPS bear responsibility for a two-decade protracted process. Excluding NPOAG and other interested stakeholders in the process jeopardizes the safety of the National Airspace, reduces access for seniors and the disabled, compromises safety, causes economic harms, undermines the will of Congress, and ignores important efforts to combat catastrophic wildfires.

We request that your agencies discard any draft ATMPs that drastically reduces flight allocations or ignore consultation with air tour operators and interested parties, as required by federal law.

We also ask that your agencies please provide answers within 30 days of receipt of this letter to the following questions:

(1) Why was NPOAG excluded from the planning process and developing the proposed plans?

---

<sup>12</sup> Public Law No: 112-141

<sup>13</sup> <https://gosar.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2208>

<sup>14</sup> 10/1/21 letter from Utah Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office to NPS

<sup>15</sup> 12/5/21 briefing provided for Members of the Congressional Western Caucus by Papillon

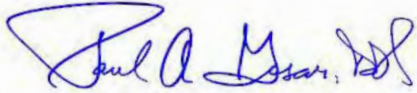
<sup>16</sup> 12/5/21 briefing provided for Members of the Congressional Western Caucus by Papillon



- (2) Why were states, local governments and other interested parties excluded from the planning process and developing the proposed plans?
- (3) What considerations were given to the elderly and disabled to view national parks in light of the reduced flight allocations for air tour operators?
- (4) How did your agencies determine that it was necessary to drastically reduce flight allocations in your draft ATMPs?
- (5) What agencies were included when structuring the routes over each park? How did you evaluate the safety of the routes?
- (6) What economic analysis and evaluations were conducted to ensure that a viable air tour industry can prevail under each ATMP?



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



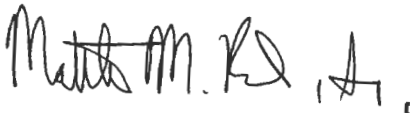
Paul Gosar D.D.S  
Member of Congress



Jerry Carl  
Member of Congress



Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Jason Smith  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



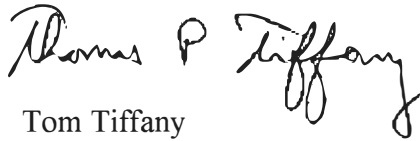
Madison Cawthorn  
Member of Congress



Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



Barry Moore  
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

cc: Charles Sams, III, Director, National Park Service  
Steve Dickson, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

We are writing you to express our strong support for the actions of the Department of the Interior in continuing to keep public rulemaking and public comment periods in place. It is important for the Department to continue the rulemaking process to ensure our economy and country are able to quickly recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Vital projects, like the Willow project in Alaska, will provide jobs for Americans during a time when they need it most.

You recently received a letter from our Democratic Colleagues in the House where they note that both the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Treasury Department extended deadlines on federal income tax filings, and that the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a moratorium on foreclosures and eviction for all Federal Housing Administration-insured mortgages as reasons for the Department of the Interior to pause or extend all public comment periods. Their argument is fundamentally flawed because maintaining the current process will not hurt the economy or financially injure Americans. In reality, delaying the process would mean further negative impacts to the economy. Additionally, it is a dangerous precedent for the government to cease government activities due to Covid-19 while we still have the means to move forward. Continuing on the current regulatory path will help the economy by making more jobs available to Americans once these important projects are approved.

In our Democratic Colleagues' letter, they specifically mentioned the Willow project in the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska (NPR-A). The development of Willow could generate hundreds of direct jobs and thousands of construction jobs. We applaud the State of Alaska on continuing to dedicate the necessary resources to the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement as a cooperative agency and thank the Bureau of Land Management for continuing to remain on schedule. With current oil prices diminishing daily, it is imperative now more than ever that the Department of the Interior does everything in its authority to move projects forward, especially projects that are beneficial to the economy and provide American jobs.

The federal government has had experience with using a variety of telecommunication tools to conduct meetings. For example, many agencies have had to rely on the virtual approaches for public meetings when weather or other social considerations limited agency travel throughout rural Alaska. The

federal government has been accommodating in ensuring Alaskans have the opportunity to participate in the comment process even when internet access is limited. Continuing to use virtual meetings and online resources, such as submitting comments via email or electronically, for the time being would not significantly hinder the comment period or the regulatory process, and is not a fair argument to hide behind in an attempt to prevent energy development in the United States.

When we make it through this pandemic, we will need to be prepared to revive our economy and workforce, and keeping important projects on time will be a huge step in that direction.

Sincerely,



DON YOUNG  
Congressman for All Alaska

### Signatories

Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress

Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress

Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress

Greg Pence  
Member of Congress

K. Michael Conaway  
Member of Congress

Jody Hice  
Member of Congress

Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress

Mike Johnson  
Member of Congress

Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

Bill Flores  
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress

Ron Wright  
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 2, 2020

Honorable David R. Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Re: Modernizing regulations for domestic mineral production (RIN# 1004-AE71 and RIN# 0596-AD32)

Dear Secretary Bernhardt and Secretary Perdue:

We write to thank you for your leadership in proposing rules to modernize regulations governing the domestic production of locatable minerals on federal land and encourage you to finalize these rulemakings as soon as possible. As you know, there are opportunities to improve the regulatory environment by streamlining authorizations, reducing costs, and improving security of tenure.

Such changes would help to strengthen domestic supply chains for every facet of the manufacturing economy, which would support the President's trade policy objectives. These potential changes would also be consistent with the spirit of the President's Critical Minerals Executive Order of December 20, 2017, which was focused on improving national security by reducing our reliance upon foreign suppliers of critical minerals. And modernizing these regulations will serve as a catalyst for investment, which is vital as the U.S. works to overcome the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Thank you in advance for your work to advance regulatory reform and modernization. We look forward to seeing the results of this work and stand ready to assist the Departments in completing these important rules as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator




Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress




John Barrasso  
United States Senator




Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress




James E. Risch  
United States Senator




Steve Daines  
United States Senator




Martha McSally  
United States Senator



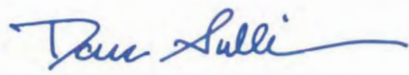
Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



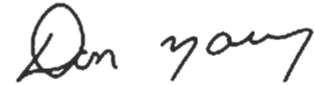
Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator




James Lankford  
United States Senator



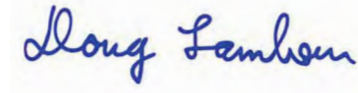
Don Young  
Member of Congress




Jody Hice  
Member of Congress




Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress




Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress




Paul Cook  
Member of Congress




David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress



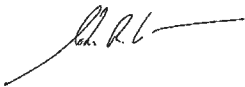
Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



John Curtis  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Jim Baird  
Member of Congress




Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



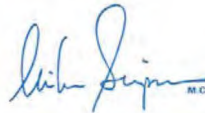
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress

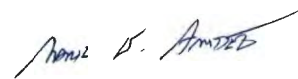


Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

APR 10 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Department of the Interior's (Department) role in ensuring a strong economy and an abundance of American jobs through continued robust energy and mineral development on Federal lands.

From ongoing actions in unsettled global energy markets to the impacts of COVID-19, America's energy producers face unprecedented challenges, which put essential jobs at risk. President Donald J. Trump made clear his intention to restore confidence and stability to our Nation's economy when he signed the recent economic relief package. President Trump supports keeping energy sector employees at work. This includes filling the strategic oil reserves while prices are low. The President supports economic aid to get Americans back to work.

Last week, Secretary Bernhardt talked to Republican and Democrat Governors, Members of Congress, and industry stakeholders about actions that the Department can take. This includes targeted relief from royalties on oil, gas, and mineral operations on public lands and the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), which are managed by the Department. In general, there is interest in relief that would require a modification of our existing practices.

The Department administers Federal leases on the OCS and Federal mineral leases on public lands and has within its regulations a process that provides for companies to apply for and receive discretionary royalty relief as well as processes through which companies may apply for the suspension of operations or production. These requests may be granted in cases where the operator is prevented from operating or producing on the lease for reasons beyond or outside the operator's control. At this time, it is our intent to continue to use these long-standing regulatory tools.

The Department recommends that such entities submit an application for relief to the appropriate bureau program, if they are interested in obtaining relief.

Sincerely,

Casey Hammond  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Land and Minerals Management





# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

APR 10 2020

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gohmert:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Department of the Interior's (Department) role in ensuring a strong economy and an abundance of American jobs through continued robust energy and mineral development on Federal lands.

From ongoing actions in unsettled global energy markets to the impacts of COVID-19, America's energy producers face unprecedented challenges, which put essential jobs at risk. President Donald J. Trump made clear his intention to restore confidence and stability to our Nation's economy when he signed the recent economic relief package. President Trump supports keeping energy sector employees at work. This includes filling the strategic oil reserves while prices are low. The President supports economic aid to get Americans back to work.

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The Department recommends that such entities submit an application for relief to the appropriate bureau program, if they are interested in obtaining relief.

Sincerely,

Casey Hammond  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Land and Minerals Management



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

MAR 05 2021

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gohmert:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 2021, seeking information regarding the implementation of Secretary's Order 3395 (SO 3395 or order) entitled, "Temporary Suspension of Delegated Authority" by the Department of the Interior (Department) and its Bureaus.

As a threshold matter, it is important to note that your letter characterizes SO 3395 as providing for a "60-day suspension of mineral leasing and permits on federal land." In fact, SO 3395 provides only for a targeted and time-limited suspension of delegated authority, elevating a range of decisions for senior leadership to review questions of fact, law, and policy. The order is in effect for 60 days, or until any of its provisions are amended, superseded, or revoked.

SO 3395 was issued separately from the President's Executive Order 14008 (EO 14008) on "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad." Section 208 of EO 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters in order to conduct a comprehensive review of that program, consistent with applicable law. The lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico that had been scheduled for March 17, 2021, and the oil and gas lease sale that had been scheduled for March 9, 2021, in Nevada and that are referenced in your letter were postponed pursuant to EO 14008.

SO 3395, which is currently being implemented nationwide, does not suspend existing operations under valid leases. It is applicable only to those actions identified in the order, and it does not preclude the issuance of leases, permits, or other authorizations by the leadership officials specified in section 4. Similarly, EO 14008 allows development to continue on valid existing leases, ensuring that royalty payments to State governments and the Federal Treasury will continue.

The limited changes in delegated authority in SO 3395 have allowed the incoming administration the opportunity to review pending actions for consistency with the priorities of the new administration, consistent with applicable law. Because the order addresses only the level of review for certain delineated actions, there is no need for a change in regulations or a cost benefit analysis. Other than this change in delegation and the resulting elevated review of some actions, the order does not change how the Department carries out decision-making or how it otherwise complies with its underlying authorities. Moreover, actions necessary to address incidents that might pose a threat to human health, welfare, or safety will continue to be taken without elevated review.

Since the implementation of SO 3395, permits and other decisions have continued to be the subject of timely reviews and approvals within the Department. For example, a review of the number of pending Applications for Permit to Drill, for both onshore and offshore leases, prior to the issuance of the order and the number today does not show a significant impact. The Department continues to process permits and other matters in a timely way.

Moreover, the temporary suspension of delegated authority for actions described in SO 3395 applies only to non-Indian Federal lands. As noted above, the order has not changed compliance with underlying laws or with timelines set in law and regulation.

With regard to revenue streams for conservation projects, it is not expected that the implementation of the elevated review will result in detrimental impacts to revenues or these programs. SO 3395 only temporarily suspends the delegations of authority to certain Department Bureaus and Offices, and the Department is committed to timely review of elevated decisions. Finally, with respect to pending Bureau of Land Management (BLM) actions, all of BLM's State offices were provided with the same information regarding the need to elevate review of actions under the order.

Similar letters are being sent to the co-signers of your letter. Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary of the Interior



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

MAR 05 2021

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 2021, seeking information regarding the implementation of Secretary's Order 3395 (SO 3395 or order) entitled, "Temporary Suspension of Delegated Authority" by the Department of the Interior (Department) and its Bureaus.

As a threshold matter, it is important to note that your letter characterizes SO 3395 as providing for a "60-day suspension of mineral leasing and permits on federal land." In fact, SO 3395 provides only for a targeted and time-limited suspension of delegated authority, elevating a range of decisions for senior leadership to review questions of fact, law, and policy. The order is in effect for 60 days, or until any of its provisions are amended, superseded, or revoked.

SO 3395 was issued separately from the President's Executive Order 14008 (EO 14008) on "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad." Section 208 of EO 14008 directs the Secretary to pause new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters in order to conduct a comprehensive review of that program, consistent with applicable law. The lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico that had been scheduled for March 17, 2021, and the oil and gas lease sale that had been scheduled for March 9, 2021, in Nevada and that are referenced in your letter were postponed pursuant to EO 14008.

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Similar letters are being sent to the co-signers of your letter. Thank you for your interest in this matter

Sincerely,



Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary of the Interior



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

MAR 05 2021

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 2021, seeking information regarding the implementation of Secretary's Order 3395 (SO 3395 or order) entitled, "Temporary Suspension of Delegated Authority" by the Department of the Interior (Department) and its Bureaus.

As a threshold matter, it is important to note that your letter characterizes SO 3395 as providing for a "60-day suspension of mineral leasing and permits on federal land." In fact, SO 3395 provides only for a targeted and time-limited suspension of delegated authority, elevating a range of decisions for senior leadership to review questions of fact, law, and policy. The order is in effect for 60 days, or until any of its provisions are amended, superseded, or revoked.

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Similar letters are being sent to the co-signers of your letter. Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary of the Interior

## U.S. House of Representatives

### Committee on Natural Resources

#### Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2021

Mr. Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary de la Vega,

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has failed to provide requested information from February 4, 2021, related to the implementation of Secretarial Order 3395 and analysis of its consequences. Despite assurances that DOI will take seriously its responsibilities to respond to Congressional inquiries,<sup>1</sup> it has not provided any substantive response. Additionally, DOI continues to show no efforts to coordinate a rolling production for information it failed to produce by the February 18, 2021, deadline.

My staff made immediate, good faith efforts to establish a productive working relationship with DOI's Congressional Affairs Office. DOI's blatant ignoring of Congressional inquiries, however, indicate an opposite desire. It is my sincere hope that the Biden Administration and DOI seek to operate with transparency. The disconcerting nature of ignoring even the first formal request for information unfortunately parallels the opacity reflected in the Biden Administration's refusal to share its plans to address unemployment caused by the flurry of executive orders.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, the details of Secretarial Order 3395's execution remain unshared. As a result, state officials seek clarification of the Order's scope and raise additional concerns of its negative economic impacts.<sup>3</sup> Questions of inconsistent enforcement across state offices are also prevalent.<sup>4</sup> Further, the postponement of lease sales in Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Briefing from Office of Congressional Affairs, Dept of the Interior*, to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Repub. Staff (Feb. 10, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Barrabi, *Psaki Spars with Fox News' Peter Doocy Over Keystone Pipeline Job Losses*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 9, 2021), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/psaki-spars-fox-news-peter-doocy-over-keystone-pipeline-job-losses>.

<sup>3</sup> *New Mexico Asks Biden Administration to Resolve Drilling Policy 'Confusion'*, REUTERS (Feb. 10, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-drilling/new-mexico-asks-biden-administration-to-resolve-drilling-policy-confusion-idUSKBN2AB03T>; Dan Boyd, *NM Looks for More Clarity on Biden's Drilling Orders*, ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL (Feb. 15, 2021), <https://www.abqjournal.com/2360011/nm-looks-for-more-clarity-on-bidens-drilling-orders-ex-state-says-uncertainty-has-already-prompted-rigs-to-move-to-texas.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Knight, *Oil Groups Say Biden Halting Permits Unevenly*, ARGUS MEDIA (Feb. 10, 2021), <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2185659-oil-groups-say-biden-halting-permits-unevenly?backToResults=true>



the Gulf of Mexico<sup>5</sup> was reported two days after DOI officials assured Committee staff that Secretarial Order 3395 simply implemented an additional layer of review and was mischaracterized as a “ban.”<sup>6</sup>

DOI’s actions have created industry uncertainty. In 30 days, Secretarial Order 3395 will expire.<sup>7</sup> DOI’s next steps, however, remain unknown. The harmful, long-term consequences of President Biden’s executive orders<sup>8</sup> and Secretarial Order 3395 remain a great concern. Therefore, in addition to responses to the February 4, 2021, requests for information,<sup>9</sup> please provide documents sufficient to detail DOI’s plan of action to address any backlogs caused by Secretarial Order 3395 upon its expiration. Guidance on how DOI will process permits and authorizations after Secretarial Order 3395’s expiration should also be included in the response. Please produce the response to these additional requests by 5:00 p.m., March 5, 2021.

Should DOI determine it is ill-equipped or unable to respond substantively and fully to the February 4, 2021, requests because no such analyses were conducted prior to Secretarial Order 3395’s issuance, please indicate in writing as such by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2021. Otherwise, please provide a schedule by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2021, for rolling production to satisfy the inquiries.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Ranking Member  
Oversight and Investigations  
Subcommittee

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

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<sup>5</sup> Janet McConnaughey, *Interior Postpones March Oil Leases Onshore and Offshore*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Feb. 12, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-climate-climate-change-gulf-of-mexico-oceans-07db2cbb5b23ea25a5d3f2040feb9f5a>.

<sup>6</sup> *Briefing from Office of Congressional Affairs, Dep’t of the Interior*, to H. Comm. on Nat. Res. Repub. Staff (Feb. 10, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Dep’t of the Interior, Secretarial Order 3395.

<sup>8</sup> Exec. Order No. 13990, 86 Fed. Reg. 14, 7037 (Jan. 20, 2021); Exec. Order No. 14008, 86 Fed. Reg. 19, 7619 (Jan. 27, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Nat. Res., et al. to the Honorable Scott de la Vega, Acting Sec’y, Dep’t of the Interior, February 4, 2021 (on file with Comm.).

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3102**

March 5, 2021

Scott de la Vega, Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary de la Vega,

We write to you concerning feedback we have received from constituents and industry stakeholders surrounding permits for rights-of-way on federal lands. These concerns stem from one of your first acts as Acting Secretary, under Secretarial Order No. 3395, which implemented a 60-day suspension on the approval of federal oil and gas permits, leases and rights-of-way, among other things, by Department Bureaus and Offices. This order has created great uncertainty and made day-to-day operations much more difficult for oil and gas producers operating on federal lands.

The views of your department on the 60-day suspension were spelled out by Interior Spokesperson Tyler Cherry, when he said the orders do not stop permitting, but “temporarily elevates review of relevant agency decisions” to “Department leadership for the purposes of reviewing questions of fact, law, and policy they raise.” He went on to say, “Nothing has been paused or suspended, just elevated for review.” In addition, your department has expressed the goal that existing operations on federal lands will be able to operate as normal.

Unfortunately, that is not the way things are working on the ground. The interference from political appointees in Washington has tied the hands of experienced agency officials on the ground and completely ground to a halt the process for approving rights-of-way. The rights-of-way in question involve several different types of access to the surface of federal lands, including but not limited to: pipelines for take-away of associated gas production from producing oil wells, pipelines to transport oil production to purchasers, permanent and temporary lines to transport produced water, fresh water and recycled water for operations.

The suspension on approving rights-of-way has caused significant problems for producers, as the lack of these right-of-way permits has threatened to completely shut down existing operations on existing federal leases with approved permits to drill (“APDs”) and increased the possibility for multiple types of environmental hazards on federal lands, such as producers needing to flare associated gas production for lack of a gas take-away lines and a significant increase in truck hauling of produced oil and water for operations. This impact to air quality and increase surface footprint would seem to run contradictory to the stated goals of your department and the Biden administration to protect the environment.

We are concerned these delays in rights-of-way permitting run counter to the statutory and regulatory obligations of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and agreements with producers via existing federal leases and approved APDs and could cause both economic and environmental harm. Current law gives the Department of Interior the authority to include additional

environmental obligations on an existing lease through special stipulations in the approved APD, but those stipulations should not prevent the operator from being able to operate or produce on the lease.

If delays continue, existing operations could be forced to shut down, which would cause the Department of Interior to be in violation of existing law through the unlawful taking of property rights, lack of due process and additional constitutional violations, and violation of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. By preventing an operator's vested right to operate and produce existing leases and APDs, the Department of Interior will be directly responsible for causing the loss of jobs and revenue to state and local governments.

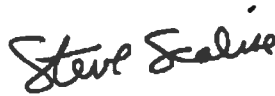
We ask that you restore the decision-making authority to issue permits for rights-of-way to local agency experts. An important process such as this cannot be bogged down by unnecessary bureaucracy, as the livelihoods of many of our constituents may well depend on a permit being approved in a timely manner.

This is a timely request; therefore we ask for a written reply by March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Sincerely,



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress



August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



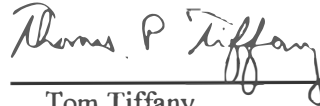
Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



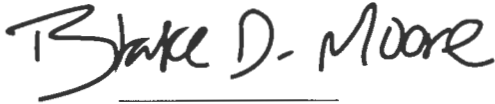
Ronny Jackson  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress




Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress




Jodey Arrington  
Member of Congress



Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

**JUN 29 2021**

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar D:D.S.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter dated May 21, 2021, addressed to Secretary Haaland, expressing your support for the 2021 amendments to the Arizona Tribal-State Gaming Compacts (Compacts) and requesting our timely consideration and affirmative approval of the Compacts. The Secretary has asked me to respond on her behalf.

On that same day you made the request, May 21, 2021, I was pleased to affirmatively approve the 2021 Compacts and commended the Tribes and the State for engaging in good-faith negotiations to arrive at the 2021 Compact. We completed our review of the Compacts and concluded that they do not violate the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, any other provision of Federal law that does not relate to jurisdiction over gaming on Indian lands, or the trust obligations of the United States to Indians. 25 U.S.C. § 2710(d)(8)(B). On May 24, 2021, the notice was published in the Federal Register (86 FR 27889) and as of that date the Compacts are in effect.

A similar letter is being sent to the cosigners of your letter. We appreciate your interest in this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Bryan Newland  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

## Nguyen, Brianna E

---

**From:** Giles, Ayesha R  
**Sent:** Monday, March 29, 2021 2:07 PM  
**To:** Nguyen, Brianna E  
**Cc:** Heard, Preston S; Wolfe, Shane B  
**Subject:** Fw: Incoming for tasking  
**Attachments:** 210326 Letter to Haaland.pdf

**Categories:** For follow up, For entry

Incoming for entry.

Ayesha Giles  
Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 208-3181 (General)  
(202) 208-7533 (Direct)

---

**From:** Howarth, Robert G <Robert\_G\_Howarth@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 29, 2021 2:06 PM  
**To:** Heard, Preston S <preston\_heard@ios.doi.gov>; Giles, Ayesha R <Ayesha\_R\_Giles@ios.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Incoming for tasking

Good afternoon. Please task the attached as follows:

Lead Action Office: ASLM  
Doc Type: CM  
Signature Level: DR  
Surnames: OCL and SOL

Robert G. Howarth  
Chief of Staff  
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 208-7693 (office)  
(202) 208-4754 (direct)  
(202) 445-0371 (cell)  
[Robert\\_g\\_howarth@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Robert_g_howarth@ios.doi.gov)

*NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.*

**PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S.**

FOURTH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

2057 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2315

122 N. CORTEZ STREET, SUITE #104  
PRESCOTT, AZ 86301  
(928) 445-1683

6499 SOUTH KINGS RANCH ROAD, SUITE #4  
GOLD CANYON, AZ 85118  
(480) 882-2697

220 N. 4TH STREET  
KINGMAN, AZ 86401  
(928) 445-1683

[WWW.GOSAR.HOUSE.GOV](http://WWW.GOSAR.HOUSE.GOV)



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0301**

COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
CHAIRMAN, ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
WATER, POWER AND OCEANS  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIRMAN, INTERIOR  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS  
CHAIRMAN

February 1, 2021

The Honorable Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Western Rare Earth and La Paz Rare Earth Project (BLM Serial Number: AZA38222)

Dear Secretary de la Vega:

The Department's recent announcement of nationwide mineral ban is already beginning to have significant impacts on new mineral exploration and domestic efforts to secure our national mineral security. In La Paz County, Arizona, Western Rare Earth has been conducting exploration efforts on a parcel of land in La Paz county in the hope of making a clear discovery of a developmental resources of rare earth elements.

This minor project is a simple Notice of Intent (NOI) project, requiring the most minimal impact and permitting. In fact, this exploration project would have land disturbance of less than 5 acres has a simple approval process at the State level of BLM through an NOI. The Western Rare Earth project was expecting a prompt approval and already submitted their bonding payment to BLM. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office in Lake Havasu has recommended approval of this small exploration project which consists of drilling 4 holes, each to 200 feet depth that would be immediately remediated the same week. However, the BLM office in Phoenix stopped the project citing the recent Secretarial order.

During the recent nomination testimony by Energy Secretary Nominee Granholm she expressed this Administration's concern over the issue of mineral security and stressed to Senators that the ban proposed by this Administration would not apply to ongoing operations but only to new leasing activities. However, it clearly appears that those statements were misguided.

Our nation desperately needs to break the global stranglehold by China on rare earth minerals and projects like the La Paz project, if successful, will help us do that. However, implementing bans on development, on in this case the least disruptive act of exploration, will only set our nation back. I am seeking your personal engagement in setting this project back on track and look forward to a response from you no later than Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at noon. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

RECEIVED  
Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20520  
027676  
MARCH 25 PM 12:09  
March 21, 2019  
OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Acting Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
Secretary  
Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Bernhardt and Secretary Ross:

Thank you for your work to improve the Endangered Species Act by proposing to revise the regulations for listing species and designating critical habitat. As you continue this process, we urge you to consider reinstating a requirement that the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Services) focus on the primary constituent elements (PCEs) when designating critical habitat.

PCEs are those physical and biological features of an environment that a species needs to survive and reproduce. From 1984 to 2016, regulations had required the Services, when considering designation of critical habitat, to “focus on the principal biological or physical constituent elements” essential for the conservation of a species. Identification of the PCEs obligated the Services to identify, with reasonable specificity, those elements that are essential to the conservation of the species and to only list areas as critical habitat based on the presence of those specific elements. Without PCEs being identified, affected stakeholders and the public lose visibility into whether critical habitat designations are proper.

This long-standing regulatory framework with decades of agency practice and established case law was upended on February 11, 2016 with publication of a rule (81 FR 7414) that replaced PCE analysis with a vague requirement to only consider physical and biological features without any defined criteria. At the time, the Services stated that these changes would simply “clarify the criteria and procedures for designating critical habitat.” However, this revision has only produced greater confusion and has removed any obligation to provide specificity when designating critical habitat. The 2016 regulatory language gives the Services broad discretion to designate critical habitat without clear guidance and clear limits, and to the detriment of the interested public and the management of species the law is designed to protect. It is our concern that future administrations may abuse this unchecked discretion by designating critical habitat in a manner inconsistent with Congressional intent.

Endangered species and the public are better served by a decision making process that is fair and transparent. The PCE concept works because it narrows the scope of a designation to the essential elements of habitat, and gives the critical habitat designation process a level of clarity, accountability and transparency that it currently lacks. Reinstatement of this approach will also assist the Services in its requirement to comply with the unanimous November 2018 Supreme Court ruling that only actual habitat is eligible for designation as critical. Without a clear





Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



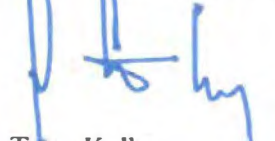
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Robert Aderholt  
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



Neal Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress



A. Drew Ferguson, IV  
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz  
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson  
Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

identification of the principal biological and physical constituents of habitat, the Services cannot fulfill that requirement. We urge the Services to return to identifying and listing PCEs when designating critical habitat. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

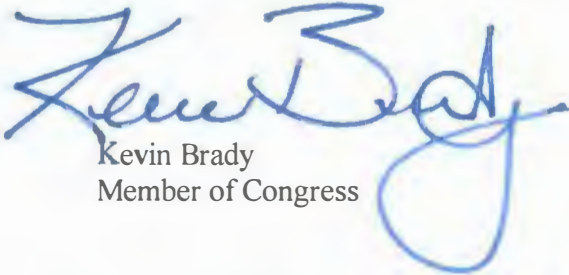
Sincerely,



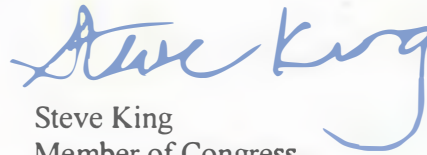
Ralph Abraham, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress



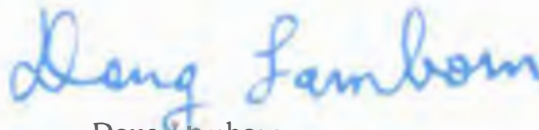
Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress



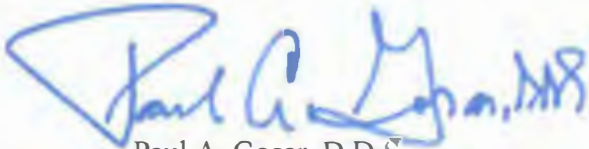
Steve King  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Steven M. Palazzo  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



Bradley Byrne  
Member of Congress



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
1609 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter in support of full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program in the FY 2022 President's Budget. PILT payments to local governments help offset losses in property taxes due to the presence of non-taxable Federal lands within their boundaries. The Department remains committed to maintaining resources vital to our Nation's rural economies through these annual payments to local governments.

The Department understands the importance of the program to rural communities for funding vital services such as emergency response and public safety, public schools, housing, social services, and roads and transportation. Since these payments began in 1977, the Department has distributed more than \$9.7 billion dollars in PILT payments to 49 States (all but Rhode Island), the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) appropriated full funding for the 2021 PILT program, and the Department is currently in the process of collecting and validating the data necessary to complete the 2021 calculations. The 2021 PILT payments are expected to be issued on or before June 30, 2021.

The Administration is interested in ensuring that the Federal Government can fulfill its role of being a good neighbor to local communities and recognizes that these payments are critically important to local governments. The Department annually affirms its commitment to continuing the PILT program through its budget request and will work to ensure continued efficient and effective program management.

Sincerely,

Rachael S. Taylor  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
—Policy, Management and Budget

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 4, 2021

Mr. Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary de la Vega,

In his first week in office, President Biden issued executive orders (EO) at an unprecedented pace.<sup>1</sup> President Biden's unilateral actions spared few policy areas and included drastic changes to our national energy supply and security. For example, EO 13990 halts leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, revokes the Keystone XL Pipeline permit, and instructs agencies to analyze past actions for consistency with the Biden Administration's climate agenda.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, EO 14008 includes a directive for the Department of the Interior (DOI) to pause new oil and gas leases until completion of a comprehensive analysis.<sup>3</sup> In response to EO 13990, DOI instituted a problematic 60-day suspension of mineral leasing and permits on federal land through Secretarial Order 3395.<sup>4</sup>

We are already seeing the harmful, long-term consequences of these abrupt orders. The revocation of Keystone XL Pipeline's permit immediately resulted in 1,000 lost jobs, and tens of thousands more will be eliminated if drilling on federal land remains prohibited.<sup>5</sup> This is a direct violation of President Biden's own campaign promises. Economic impacts of a permanent ban include a \$700 billion decrease in U.S. Gross Domestic Product, decreased natural gas exports, and increased reliance on foreign oil.<sup>6</sup> An annual loss of \$8.8 billion for conservation projects will also occur as a result of a prolonged ban.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Evan Koslof, *Verify: Yes, President Biden Has Signed More Executive Orders in His First Week than any Past President*, WUSA9 NEWS, (Jan. 27, 2021) <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/verify/verify-yes-biden-signed-more-executive-orders-in-his-first-week-than-any-past-president/65-06d6cad9-3027-41ef-96be-654216ad81e3>. (President Biden issued 22 executive orders in his first week, compared to President Trump's four, President Obama's five, and President George W. Bush's none).

<sup>2</sup> Exec. Order No. 13990, 86 Fed. Reg. 14, 7037 (Jan. 20, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Exec. Order 14008, 86 Fed. Reg. 19, 7619 (Jan. 27, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Dep't of the Interior, Secretarial Order 3395 (Jan. 20, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Puko, Ken Thomas, & Andrew Restuccia, *Biden's Climate-Change Policy Targets Oil Industry*, THE WALL ST. J. (Jan. 26, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-to-suspend-new-federal-oil-and-gas-leasing-11611672331?page=1>.

<sup>6</sup> *A Federal Leasing and Development Ban Threatens America's Energy Security and Economic Growth, Undermines Environmental Progress*, API, <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/exploration-and-production/federal-leasing-and-development-ban-study>.

<sup>7</sup> Press Release, Western Energy Alliance, *Biden's Leasing Ban on Public Lands Challenged by Western Energy Alliance in Federal Court* (Jan. 27, 2021) (on file with author).

Secretarial Order 3395's broad language foments industry uncertainty, especially in the oil, gas, mining, and timber sectors. Further, Secretarial Order 3395 consolidates decision-making authority to nine people, and it remains unclear how these individuals will address permit approvals, land sales and exchanges, mineral leases, and hiring while minimizing the susceptibility of an abuse of discretion.<sup>8</sup> The broad authority raises questions about the efficacy of processing requests, good faith efforts made to prevent delayed decisions, and the proper execution of legally mandated actions.

Congressional rebukes of Secretarial Order 3395 were swift and bipartisan. In addition to Republican-introduced legislation to counter the moratorium and prevent similar future actions,<sup>9</sup> Democrats urged President Biden to rescind the order, citing significant job and revenue losses.<sup>10</sup> The execution of these executive branch orders is opaque and ignores blatant harms to our nation's workforce and energy supply.

With a high level of anticipated damages to the American worker, industry, and consumer, it is imperative that due diligence, not arbitrary and capricious decisions, prevail prior to implementing these policies. Therefore, we request information related to the level of analysis, if any, conducted to assess the impact of Secretarial Order 3395, as well as information related to the execution and potential consequences of these policies. To assist us with our oversight activities, please produce the following as soon as possible, but no later than February 18, 2021:


1. All documents and communications referring or relating to a cost-benefit analysis conducted prior to issuing Secretarial Order 3395.
2. All documents and communications referring or relating to the procedures by which the nine individuals, vested with authority by Secretarial Order 3395, will make decisions.
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to implementation guidance issued to bureaus and state offices for Secretarial Order 3395.
4. All documents and communications referring or relating to regulations issued by bureaus and state offices to comply with Secretarial Order 3395.
5. All documents and communications referring or relating to alternative revenue streams for conservation projects, including those funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund.
6. All documents and communications with any organizations external to DOI referring or relating to the drafting or issuing of Secretarial Order 3395.

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<sup>8</sup> Dep't of the Interior, Secretarial Order 3395.

<sup>9</sup> The Protecting our Wealth of Energy Resources (POWER) Act of 2021, H.R. 543, 117th Cong. (1st Sess. 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, Rep. Henry Cuellar, Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, & Rep. Marc Veasey to the Honorable Joseph Biden, President (Jan. 27, 2021) (on file with author).

7. All documents and communications referring or relating to the decision to revoke previously issued drilling or mining permits.<sup>11</sup>
8. A document listing the companies and organizations whose drilling or mining permits were revoked after Secretarial Order 3395 was issued.
9. A document listing, categorized by state, all pending Applications for Permit to Drill, all other oil and gas approvals and authorizations, and mining permit approvals and authorizations categorized by state.
10. A document describing whether the lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico on March 17, 2021, as noticed prior to Secretarial Order 3395, will proceed.<sup>12</sup>
11. All documents and communications referring or relating to the March 17, 2021 lease sale noticed by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.
12. All documents and communications referring or relating to the execution of timber sales by the Bureau of Land Management.
13. A document sufficient to show the number of Bureau of Land Management timber contracts impacted by Secretarial Order 3395.
  - a. Provide a list of companies and organizations whose timber contracts are impacted.
14. All documents and communications referring or relating to compliance with federal mandates, including those detailed in the Minerals Leasing Act, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
15. A document listing land nominations submitted to the Bureau of Land Management, categorized by state, from January 20, 2020 through January 20, 2021.
  - a. Include the submission date of the land nomination by whom it was submitted.
  - b. Of those referenced in 15a above, the number of land nominations that are awaiting a response. 
16. The last sale conducted by the Bureau of Land Management in each state.

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<sup>11</sup> Jennifer Dlouhy, *Biden Yanks Just-Approved Drilling Permits for Additional Review*, BLOOMBERG GOVERNMENT (Jan. 29, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Notice of availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale for Gul of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Region-Wide Oil and Gas Sale 257, 85 Fed. Reg. 223, 73508 (Nov. 18, 2020).

17. A document sufficient to show Secretarial Order 3395's impact on leases that were successfully awarded from Lease Sale 256 conducted in November 18, 2020 and Lease Sale 257 scheduled for March 17, 2021 by Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.
18. All documents and communications referring or relating to DOI's plans to address the impact of Secretarial Order 3395 on "split estates" between federal government, state, or private lands.
19. All documents and communications referring or relating to the postponement of the oil and gas sale scheduled for March 9, 2021 in Nevada.
20. All documents and communications referring or relating to the completion of congressionally mandated land exchanges and transfers.
21. A document sufficient to show the timeline for completing all congressionally mandated land exchanges and transfers.
22. A document describing Secretarial Order 3395's impact on native communities in Alaska.

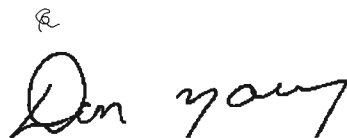
Please deliver your response to room 1329 of the Longworth House Office Building. An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request.

Please contact the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Minority staff and Energy and Mineral Resources Minority staff at (202) 225-2761 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,




Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member



Don Young  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



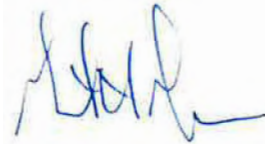
Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



Amata Coleman Radewagon  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



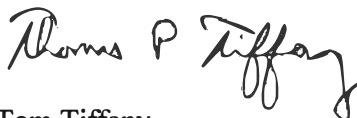
Jennifer González-Colón  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



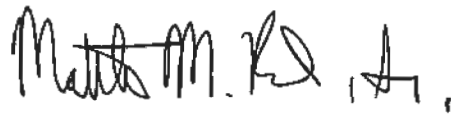
Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



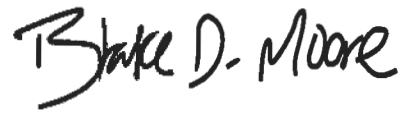
Jerry Carl  
Member of Congress



Mr. Scott de la Vega  
February 4, 2021  
Page 6



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress

Ⓜ

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

Enclosure

## Responding to Committee Document Requests

### A. Definitions

1. The term “document” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, recorded notes, letters, notices, confirmations, receipts, checks, envelopes, presentations, pamphlets, brochures, interoffice and intra office communications, electronic mails (e-mails), notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, voice mail, phone mail, meeting or other communication, diaries, analyses, summaries, messages, correspondence, circulars, opinions, work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind, and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape, or otherwise.
2. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether face-to-face, in a meeting, by telephone, mail, e-mail, discussions, releases, personal delivery, or otherwise.
3. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this document request. The singular includes the plural. The masculine includes the feminine.
4. As used herein, “referring” or “relating” means and includes “constituting,” “pertaining,” “evidencing,” “reflecting,” “describing,” or “having anything to do with,” and in each instance, directly or indirectly. These terms mean, without limitation, any reference or relationship which either (a) provides information with respect to the subject of the inquiry, or (b) might lead to individuals who, or documents which, might possess or contain information with respect to the subject of the inquiry.

### B. Instructions

1. In complying with this document request, you are required to produce all responsive documents, materials, or items that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employers, employees, representatives, subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, partnerships, and departments acting on your behalf. You are also required to produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy or to which you have access, as well as documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party. No records, documents, data or information called for by this request shall be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.

2. In the event that any entity, organization, or individual denoted in this document request has been, or is also known by any other name than that herein denoted, the document request shall be read also to include them under that alternative identification.
3. Each document produced shall be produced in a form that renders that document capable of being printed or copied.
4. Documents produced in response to this document request shall be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers, envelopes, or identifying markers with which they were associated when this document request was served. Documents produced to this document request shall also identify to which paragraph from the document request such documents are responsive. Moreover, please include with your response, an index identifying each record and label (preferably by bates stamping) the documents. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.
5. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity also possesses documents that are non-identical or identical copies of the same document.
6. If any of the requested information is available in machine-readable or electronic form (such as on a computer server, hard drive, CD, DVD, memory stick, or computer back-up tape), state the form in which it is available and provide sufficient detail to allow the information to be copied to a readable format. If the information requested is stored in a computer, indicate whether you have an existing program that will print the records in a readable form.
7. If compliance with the document request cannot be made in full, compliance shall be made to the extent possible and shall include a written explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
8. In the event that a document is withheld, in whole or in part, based on a claim of privilege, provide the following information concerning any such document: (a) the privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter of the document; (d) the date, author, and any recipients; and (e) the relationship of the author and recipients to each other. Claims of privileges are considered under Committee on Natural Resources Rule 4(h) and, similar to all common-law privileges, are recognized only at the discretion of the Committee.
9. If any document responsive to this document request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, identify the document (stating its date, author, subject and recipients) and explain the circumstances by which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control.
10. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this document request referring to a document is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you should produce all documents which would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.

11. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data or information, not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date, shall be produced immediately upon location or discovery subsequent thereto.

12. Production materials should be delivered to:

Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JUN 07 2021

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter dated March 5, 2021, regarding the implementation of Secretary's Order 3395, entitled "Temporary Suspension of Delegated Authority," (SO 3395) with respect to permitting rights-of-way (ROWs) on Federal lands.

The issuance of SO 3395 provided the incoming Biden administration the opportunity to review pending actions for consistency with the administration's new priorities. The targeted and time-limited suspension of delegated authority elevated a range of decisions for senior leadership to review, including the approval of ROWs, easements, or any notices to proceed authorizing ground-disturbing activities. All elevated decisions were reviewed appropriately, timely, and in accordance with existing laws.

SO 3395 was in effect for 60 days and expired on March 21, 2021. By its expiration, the temporary suspension of authority for those specific actions described in section 3 of SO 3395 had been lifted. It is worth noting that SO 3395 did not apply to existing operations under valid oil and gas leases and did not result in detrimental environmental impacts nor cause any operator to completely shut down its existing operations on Federal lands. Moreover, section 3(g) of SO 3395 was clear that, in the event of conditions that might pose a threat to human health, public safety, or adverse impacts to public land resources, any actions necessary would continue without elevation.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Department of the Interior and its programs. A similar reply is being sent to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Deb Haaland



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JUN 07 2021

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

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Sincerely,

Deb Haaland



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

August 18, 2023

In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/AES/DCC/BLPS/079309

The Honorable Pual A. Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter requesting an extension of the comment periods for three proposed rules to revise Endangered Species Act (ESA) implementing regulations that were published on June 22, 2023. We appreciate your interest in these regulations and share your desire to ensure that members of the public have adequate time for review.

For the following reasons, we find the 60-day comment period provides sufficient time for a thorough review of the proposed revisions. The majority of the proposed revisions are to portions of the regulations that were previously revised in 2019, and we publicly announced our intentions to revise these regulations in June of 2021. Additionally, we have opened a 60-day comment period on each rule, rather than the customary 30-day comment period, to provide sufficient time for review and comment. To date, we have already received over 100,000 comments on each proposed rule, indicating that members of the public are aware of the proposed rules and have adequate time to review. In addition, our staff provided seven informational sessions for a wide variety of audiences where we addressed questions from participants. Over 500 attendees participated in these sessions.

We encourage you and your constituents to submit comments on <http://www.regulations.gov> before the close of the comment period, 11:59 PM ET on August 21, 2023. The docket ID associated with each rulemaking is listed below:

- FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0104: Endangered and Threatened Species: Interagency Cooperation
- FWS-HQ-ES- 2021-0107: Endangered and Threatened Species: Listing and Designating Critical Habitat
- FWS-HQ-ES- 2023-0018: Endangered and Threatened Species: Regulations Pertaining to Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants

Additionally, we encourage you and your constituents to learn more about the regulations by visiting our website to view answers to frequently asked questions and to access a prerecorded presentation on the proposed revisions (<https://fws.gov/project/endangered-species-act-regulation-revisions>).

Thank you for your interest in our ESA regulation revisions. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chief of the Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Martin Kodis, at [martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov) or Makeda Okolo, Director, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at [makeda.okolo@noaa.gov](mailto:makeda.okolo@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



---

Martha Williams  
Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



---

Janet Coit  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration





**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

August 18, 2023

In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/AES/DCC/BLPS/079309

The Honorable Lauren Boebert  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

Thank you for your letter requesting an extension of the comment periods for three proposed rules to revise Endangered Species Act (ESA) implementing regulations that were published on June 22, 2023. We appreciate your interest in these regulations and share your desire to ensure that members of the public have adequate time for review.

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Thank you for your interest in our ESA regulation revisions. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chief of the Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Martin Kodis, at [martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov) or Makeda Okolo, Director, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at [makeda.okolo@noaa.gov](mailto:makeda.okolo@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



---

Martha Williams  
Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



---

Janet Coit  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your October 27, 2021 letter to Secretary Haaland regarding the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to ensure the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Federal wildland firefighting workforce and contractors are vaccinated. The Secretary has asked that I respond on her behalf.

The DOI has been proactive in keeping employees informed about the "Future of Work" and ensuring that employees have information regarding vaccination requirements and plans for the return to the physical workplace. It is the policy of the Administration, as directed by the President in Executive Order (E.O.) 14043, "Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees," that all employees were required to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination by November 22, 2021. DOI is using all communications channels to ensure that employees are aware of this mandate, understand the E.O.'s ramifications, and provide proof of their vaccination status in the Department's Safety Management Information System (SMIS), while maintaining individual privacy. Employees may seek an exception to the vaccination requirement by requesting a reasonable accommodation.

Ensuring an adequate, well-supported wildland firefighter workforce is a Department priority. Department leadership believes the vaccine requirement makes all employees and their communities healthier, better ensures their ability to do their critical jobs, and can help in retention and recruitment by giving firefighters assurance of a safer work environment.

The President also issued E.O. 14042, "Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors," which directs executive departments and agencies to ensure contractors and subcontractors comply with directives of the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force issued by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as it relates to vaccination requirements. Contractors may seek an exception to the vaccination requirements by requesting a reasonable accommodation using their employer's established processes.

DOI employees had until November 22, 2021, to provide their proof of vaccination and requests for accommodations are being submitted. As of December 6, 2021, 88% of DOI employees have had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccination. DOI employees continue to provide vaccination information and documentation through SMIS and submit exception requests. Information regarding the percentage of employees at each Federal agency who are in compliance with the vaccination requirement can be found on the White House website at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/11/24/update-on-implementation-of-covid-19-vaccination-requirement-for-federal-employees/>. Ongoing education and counseling regarding the importance of COVID vaccination is occurring across Federal agencies and we look forward to keeping you updated on DOI employees' vaccination status.

Thank you for your interest in DOI's implementation of E.O.s 14043 and 14042 regarding vaccine requirements for Federal employees and contractors. A similar response has been sent to the co-signers of your letter. If you have any further questions, please contact me at (202) 208-5673 or [lisa\\_branum@ios.doi.gov](mailto:lisa_branum@ios.doi.gov).

Sincerely,

Lisa Branum  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Public Safety, Resource Protection and  
Emergency Services

**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [Kelhart, Megan](#)  
**Cc:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#); [Conklin, Caralee S](#); [MacMullan, Troy](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 3 pm Phone Call - Bullhead Int. Airport  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 10:34:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [BLM 2020-07-06 Grant Issued.pdf](#)  
[Exhibit\\_BLM land Finals.051120.pdf](#)

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**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Megan,

We are attempting to run traps on the potential transfer from BLM/BOR??? to the County a small parcel (6.48 acres) nearly all inside the security fence at Bullhead Airport. Attached is a copy of the Airport's right of way with BLM and if you scroll to the 5<sup>th</sup> page of the pdf, you'll see the parcel. Also attached an exhibit that separately shows the parcel as well as some of the potential plans the airport could have if the parcel were theirs.

The reality is the parcel is virtually unusable to BLM or BOR (again, whoever actually owns or cares for this piece of land). However, the local BLM office has not ability to do anything with it but extend the right of way, charge the county for the land, and prohibit them from making improvements. Obviously at this point the County and Airport Authority would like to own it for numerous reasons, so we're hoping you can help us understand the BOR claims to the property, or why we can't get BOR to work with BLM to understand the clear title on the property so we can move this forward.

Since we started this process in February, somehow BLM figured out how [to give 141 acres to a Utah County](#) for an airport. Yet we can't even get clear answers on who actually cares about this 6.4 acre disjointed parcel of BLM/BOR land in Arizona to get a clear understanding of why we can't move an administrative process to dispose of the land.

I mean I can understand if I have to move forward legislatively, however, the idea that Congress must move legislation to transfer a 6.4 acres disconnected parcel, nearly entirely enclosed by an airport security fence because two federal agencies (and one Department) can't get answers straight on who owns, who needs and who wants this piece of property is ludicrous.

I hope that we can get this process really moving forward. I look forward to talking at 3 pm.

**Tim Charters**

Senior Advisor

Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-04)

202-480-7931 – Remote



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Lake Havasu Field Office  
1785 Kiowa Avenue  
Lake Havasu City, Arizona 86403  
[www.blm.gov/office/lake-havasu-field-office](http://www.blm.gov/office/lake-havasu-field-office)

JUL 06 2020

In Reply Refer to:  
2800 (AZC030)  
AZA 25271

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED 7018 1130 0001 1967 7075

## DECISION

|                                    |   |                      |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Mr. Jeremy Keating                 | : | Right-of-Way         |
| Mohave County Airport Authority    | : | Type: Site           |
| 2550 Laughlin View Drive Suite 117 | : | Serial No. AZA 25271 |
| Bullhead City, Arizona 86429       | : |                      |

### Right-of-Way Grant AZA 25271 Issued Monitoring Fee Determined

Enclosed is a copy of your right-of-way grant, serial number AZA 25271, which allows the use of public land for site right-of-way at the end of the Bullhead City Airport runway. The grant will expire on December 31, 2050.

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (request) pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 2801.10 or 43 CFR 2881.10 for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If you have any questions, please contact Realty Specialist Sheri Ahrens at (928)505-1284.

Adam Cochran

Digitally signed by Adam  
Cochran  
Date: 2020.07.02 13:54:23  
-07'00'

Jason West  
Field Manager

Enclosures  
Right-of-Way Grant AZA 25271  
BLM Form 1842-1



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Issuing Office  
**Lake Havasu (AZC030)**

**RIGHT-OF-WAY GRANT/TEMPORARY USE PERMIT**

Serial Number  
**AZA 25271**

1. A (right-of-way) or (permit) is hereby granted pursuant to:
  - a.  Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761);
  - b.  Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 185);
  - c.  Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Nature of Interest:
  - a. By this instrument, the holder Mohave County Airport Authority receives a right to construct, operate, maintain, and terminate a site right-of-way on public lands described as follows:

Gila & Salt River Meridian, AZ  
T. 21 N., R. 21 W.  
Section 30, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ .
  - b. The right-of-way or permit area granted herein is .00 feet wide, .00 feet long and contains .00 acres, more or less. If a site type facility, the facility contains 5.31 acres.
  - c. This instrument shall terminate on December 31, 2071, 30 year beyond the current expiration date unless, prior thereto, it is relinquished, abandoned, terminated, or modified pursuant to the terms and conditions of this instrument or of any applicable Federal law or regulation.
  - d. This instrument  may,  may not be renewed. If renewed, the right-of-way or permit shall be subject to the regulations existing at the time of renewal and any other terms and conditions that the authorized officer deems necessary to protect the public interest.
  - e. Notwithstanding the expiration of this instrument or any renewal thereof, early relinquishment, abandonment, or termination, the provisions of this instrument, to the extent applicable, shall continue in effect and shall be binding on the holder, its successors, or assigns, until they have fully satisfied the obligations and/or liabilities accruing herein before or on account of the expiration, or prior termination, of the grant.
3. Rental:

For and in consideration of the rights granted, the holder agrees to pay the Bureau of Land Management fair market value rental as determined by the authorized officer unless specifically exempted from such payment by regulation. Provided, however, that the rental may be adjusted by the authorized officer, whenever necessary, to reflect changes in the fair market rental value as determined by the application of sound business management principles, and so far as practicable and feasible, in accordance with comparable commercial practices.
4. Terms and Conditions:
  - a. This grant or permit is issued subject to the holder's compliance with all applicable regulations contained in Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations parts 2800 and 2880.

b. Upon grant termination by the authorized officer, all improvements shall be removed from the public lands within 90 days, or otherwise disposed of as provided in paragraph (4)(d) or as directed by the authorized officer.

c. Each grant issued pursuant to the authority of paragraph (1)(a) for a term of 20 years or more shall, at a minimum, be reviewed by the authorized officer at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> year and at regular intervals thereafter not to exceed 10 years. Provided, however, that a right-of-way or permit granted herein may be reviewed at any time deemed necessary by the authorized officer.

d. The stipulations, plans, maps, or designs set forth in Exhibit(s) 1, 2, and 3, dated June 16, 2020, attached hereto, are incorporated into and made a part of this grant instrument as fully and effectively as if they were set forth herein in their entirety.

e. Failure of the holder to comply with applicable law or any provision of this right-of-way grant or permit shall constitute grounds for suspension or termination thereof.

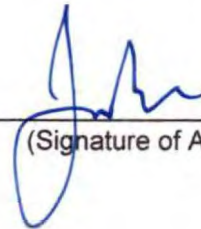
f. The holder shall perform all operations in a good and workmanlike manner so as to ensure protection of the environment and the health and safety of the public.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The undersigned agrees to the terms and conditions of this right-of-way grant or permit.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Holder)

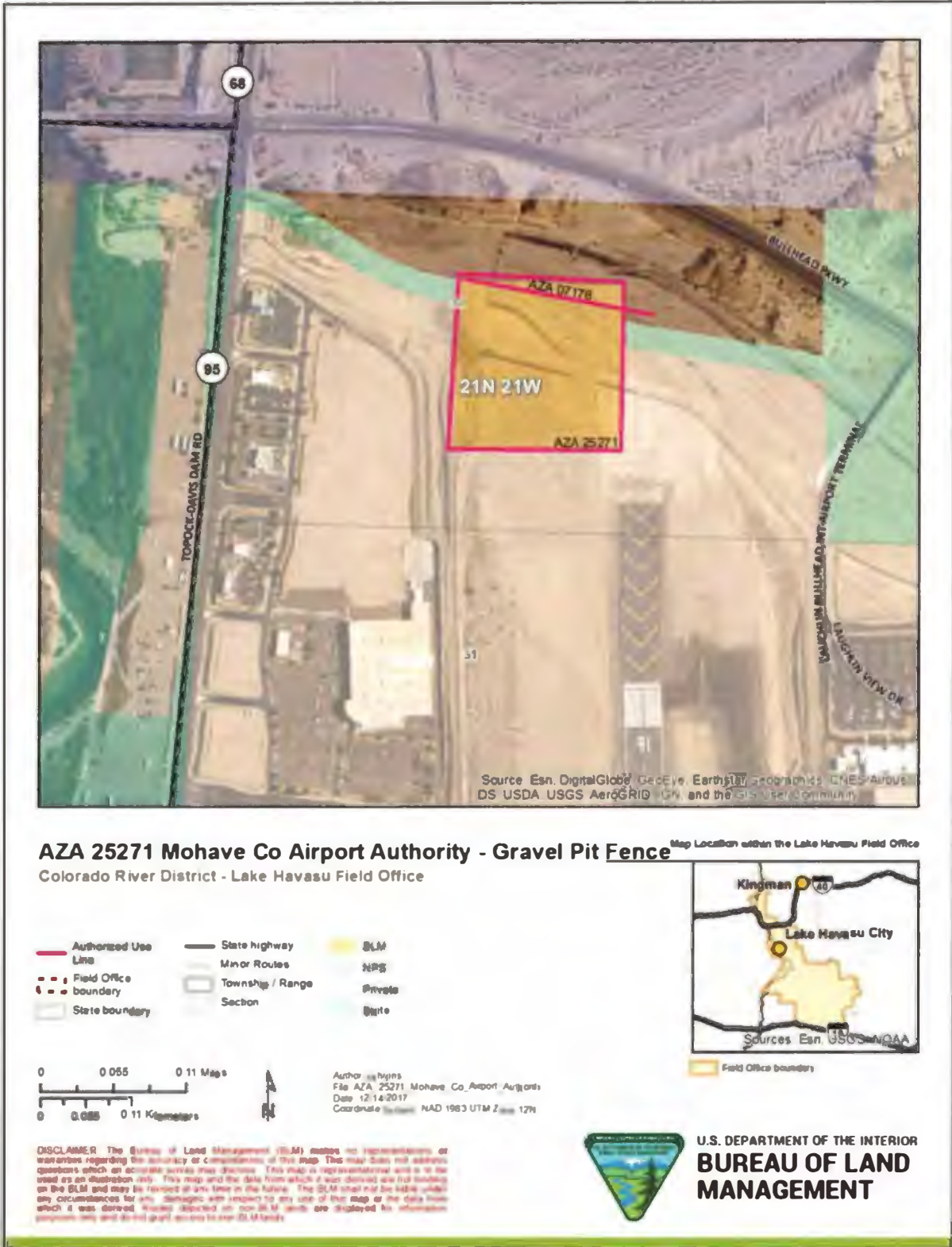
Airport Director  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

6.29.2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Authorized Officer)

Field Manager  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

6.30.2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Effective Date of Grant)



Attachment 2  
Stipulations  
Right-of-Way  
Arizona

**Construction, Maintenance, Operations, and Termination**

1. All activities directly or indirectly associated with construction, operation and maintenance shall be conducted **within** the limits of the approved right-of-way. This right-of-way does not allow for any surface disturbing activities outside the right-of-way area.
2. The holder shall give written notice to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of any anticipated changes in the plan of development and management, construction timetables, and shall obtain approval from the BLM prior to initiating changes.
3. During construction activities, all open trenches should have a soil ramp to allow wildlife to escape and should be inspected routinely and prior to back filling for entrapped desert tortoise (as well as other species).
4. All construction material staging areas should be checked for tortoises and other species prior to moving materials (e.g. pole piles, culverts, trailers, etc.).
5. The holder shall remove trash, rubbish, and other construction debris shall be removed from the site and disposed of at a designated sanitary landfill, and the grounds shall be maintained in a neat and orderly manner at all times.
6. Vehicles should stay on BLM designated routes. Cross-country travel is unauthorized, unless otherwise approved by the BLM.
7. The holder shall maintain the facilities constructed on the lands in a as good or better condition.

**Conveyance of Property**

8. In the event that the public land underlying the right-of-way encompassed in this right-of-way, or a portion thereof, is conveyed out of Federal ownership and administration of the right-of-way or the land underlying the right-of-way is not being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed and/or the right-of-way is not within a right-of-way corridor being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed, the United States waives any right it has to administer the right-of-way, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land under Federal laws, statutes, and regulations, including the regulations at 43 CFR Part [2800], including any rights to have the holder apply to BLM for amendments, modifications, or assignments and for BLM to approve or recognize such amendments, modifications, or assignments. At the time of conveyance, the patentee/grantee, and their successors and assigns, shall succeed to the interests of the United States in all matters relating to the right-of-way, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land and shall be subject to applicable State and local government laws, statutes, and ordinances. After conveyance, any disputes concerning compliance with the use and the terms and conditions of the right-of-way shall be considered a civil matter between the patentee/and the Holder.

### **Cultural and Paleontological Resources**

9. The holder shall immediately bring to the attention of the Lake Havasu Field Manager (or designated representative) any cultural resources (prehistoric/historic sites or objects) and/or paleontological resources (fossils) encountered during permitted operations and maintain the integrity of such resources pending subsequent investigation. All permitted operations within 30 meters (100 feet) of the cultural resources shall cease until written authorization to proceed is received from the Authorized Officer.
10. Actions which result in impacts to archaeological or historical resources shall be subject to the provisions of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 as amended (ARPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. These statutes protect cultural resources for the benefit of all Americans. No person may excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historic or prehistoric site, artifact or object of antiquity located on public lands without authorization. Damaging cultural resources more than 100 years of age is a punishable act under the ARPA. Criminal and/or civil penalties may result if damage to archaeological resources is documented, as provided under ARPA and its implementing regulations at 43 CFR 7.

### **Dust Control**

11. The holder shall not violate applicable air standards or related facility siting standards established by or pursuant to applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations. The holder shall be responsible for dust abatement within the limits of the right-of-way and is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits from appropriate authorities for acceptable dust abatement and control methods (e.g., water, chemicals). The holder shall be solely responsible for all violations of any air quality permit, law or regulation, as a result of its action, inaction, use or occupancy of the right-of-way.

Notwithstanding whether a violation of any air quality permit, law or regulation results, the holder would cooperate with the Authorized Officer in implementing and maintaining reasonable and appropriate dust control methods in conformance with law and appropriate to the circumstances at the sole cost of the holder.

12. Prior to relinquishment, abandonment, or termination of this right-of-way, the holder shall apply reasonable and appropriate dust abatement and control measures to all disturbed areas. The abatement and measures shall be designed to be effective over the long-term (e.g., rock mulch or other means) and acceptable to the Authorized Officer

### **Hazardous Material**

13. No hazardous material, substance, or hazardous waste, (as these terms are defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9601, *et seq.*, or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6901, *et seq.*) shall be used, produced, transported, released, disposed of, or stored within the right-of-way area at any time by the holder. The holder shall immediately report any release of hazardous substances (leaks, spills, etc.) caused by the holder or third parties in excess of the reportable quantity as required by federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A copy of any report required or requested by any federal, state or local government agency as a result of a

reportable release or spill of any hazardous substances shall be furnished to the Authorized Officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved federal, state or local government agency.

The holder shall immediately notify the Authorized Officer of any release of hazardous substances, toxic substances, or hazardous waste on or near the right-of-way potentially affecting the right-of-way of which the holder is aware.

As required by law, holder shall have responsibility for and shall take all action(s) necessary to fully remediate and address the hazardous substance(s) on or emanating from the right-of-way.

#### **Insurance and Bonding (if required)**

14. The holder shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal air, water, hazardous substance, solid waste, or other environmental laws and regulations, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated. To the full extent permissible by law, the holder agrees to indemnify and hold harmless, within the limits, if any, established by state law (as state law exists on the effective date of the right-of-way), the United States against any liability arising from the holder's use or occupancy of the right-of-way, regardless of whether the holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the right-of-way, from the time of the issuance of this right-of-way to the holder, and during the term of this right-of-way. This agreement to indemnify and hold harmless the United States against any liability shall apply without regard to whether the liability is caused by the holder, its agents, contractors, or third parties. If the liability is caused by third parties, the holder will pursue legal remedies against such third parties as if the holder were the fee owner of the right-of-way.

Notwithstanding any limits to the holder's ability to indemnify and hold harmless the United States which may exist under state law, the holder agrees to bear all responsibility (financial or other) for any and all liability or responsibility of any kind or nature assessed against the United States arising from the holder's use or occupancy of the right-of-way regardless of whether the holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the right-of-way from the time of the issuance of this right-of-way to the holder and during the term of this right-of-way.

15. A bond in the amount of \$ N/A will be required according to 43CFR2805.12(i): Comply with project-specific terms, conditions, and stipulations, including requirements to (1) Restore, re-vegetate, and curtail erosion or conduct any other rehabilitation measure BLM determines necessary, (2) Ensure that activities in connection with the grant comply with air and water quality standards or related facility siting standards contained in applicable Federal or state law or regulations, (3) Control or prevent damage to (i) Scenic, aesthetic, cultural, and environmental values, including fish and wildlife habitat (ii) Public and private property; and (iii) Public health and safety.

#### **Survey Markers**

16. The holder shall protect all survey monuments found within the right-of-way. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land

Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coastal and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the above, the holder shall immediately report the incident, in writing, to the authorized officer and the respective installing authority if known. Where General Land Office or Bureau of Land Management monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the holder shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor or a Bureau cadastral surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the *Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands in the United States*, latest edition. The holder shall record such survey in the appropriate county and send a copy to the authorized officer. If the Bureau cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monument, the holder shall be responsible for the survey cost.

### **Vegetation**

17. The holder shall be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the limits of the right-of-way. The holder is responsible for consultation with the Authorized Officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods within limits imposed in the right-of-way stipulations.
18. Use of pesticides shall comply with the applicable Federal and state laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, the holder shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. The plan shall be submitted no later than December 1 of any calendar year that covers the proposed activities for the next fiscal year. Pesticides shall not be permanently stored on public lands authorized for use under this right-of-way.
19. All vehicles should be thoroughly washed before entering Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) administered public lands. All mud, debris, and dust should be removed prior to transport to prevent the spread of exotic and invasive species.
20. State protected plant species should not be disturbed, damaged, or destroyed prior to consulting Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) Wildlife biologist.
21. Milkweed plant (*Asclepias* spp.) removal is prohibited to conserve monarch butterfly habitat. If milkweed removal is required, consult the Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) wildlife biologist prior to removal. Operators may be asked to plant milkweed and or seed to replace removed plants.
22. BLM is a state cooperator and partner in habitat conservation for State protected species on BLM lands (see Table/s below). Consult with the Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) wildlife Biologist by email at [blm\\_az\\_lhfo@blm.gov](mailto:blm_az_lhfo@blm.gov) prior to removal of trees, saguaros, or BLM sensitive plant species on LHFO BLM managed lands. Operators may be asked to allow BLM to offer State Protected and BLM sensitive species for public salvage (Allow citizens to

remove and replant trees, saguaros, or other plant species marked for destruction on BLM lands for private use).

**Mohave County:**

**\* = BLM Sensitive**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Aquarius Milkvetch*     | <i>Astragalus newberryi</i> var. <i>aquarii</i>    |
| Aravaipa Woodfern*      | <i>Thelypteris puberula</i> var. <i>sonorensis</i> |
| Blue Palo Verde         | <i>Parkinsonia florida</i>                         |
| Desert Ironwood         | <i>Olneya tesota</i>                               |
| Flannel Bush*           | <i>Fremontodendron californicum</i>                |
| Foothill Palo Verde     | <i>Parkinsonia microphylla</i>                     |
| Joshua Tree*            | <i>Yucca brevifolia</i>                            |
| Parish's Onion*         | <i>Allium parishii</i>                             |
| Parish's Phacelia*      | <i>Phacelia parishii</i>                           |
| Pinto Beardtongue*      | <i>Penstemon bicolor</i> ssp. <i>roseus</i>        |
| Saguaro                 | <i>Carnegiea gigantea</i>                          |
| Screwbean Mesquite      | <i>Prosopis pubescens</i>                          |
| Smoke Tree              | <i>Psoralea argophylla</i>                         |
| Western Honey Mesquite  | <i>Prosopis glandulosa</i> var. <i>torreyana</i>   |
| White Margin Penstemon* | <i>Penstemon albomarginatus</i>                    |

**Wildlife**

23. All wildlife and migratory birds should be observed from a distance sufficient to not disturb their activities. Reports of injured wildlife should be submitted to the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. at (928) 342-0091. To improve the quality of BLM habitat management, foster Public Lands Stewardship, and incorporate Citizen science; the Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) wildlife biologist invites the public to participate in reporting of All Wildlife Species encountered on BLM Lands. This reporting is encouraged but not required. Report wildlife encounters using a smartphone to photograph the specimen and submit it by email to [blm\\_az\\_lhfo@blm.gov](mailto:blm_az_lhfo@blm.gov). Alternatively, the location information (latitude and longitude or UTM), time, date, and suspected species common name can be submitted by email.
24. Harassment of wildlife or destruction of private and public improvements, such as fences and gates, is prohibited.
25. It is the responsibility of the operator to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Eagle Act) with respect to “take” of either eagle species. Under the Eagle Act, “take” includes to pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest and disturb. “Disturb” means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, (1) injury to an eagle; (2) a decrease in its productivity by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering; or (3) nest abandonment by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior. Avoidance of eagle nest sites, particularly during nesting season, is the primary and preferred method to avoid a take. If an eagle is sighted during construction, the BLM Lake Havasu Wildlife Biologist can be notified by email at [blm\\_az\\_lhfo@blm.gov](mailto:blm_az_lhfo@blm.gov).



26. Personnel will be prohibited from approaching bighorn sheep on foot or by vehicle. Site visits to water tanks, wildlife catchments, or any other wildlife related facility are prohibited.
27. For protection of desert bighorn sheep sensitive habitat/lambing areas, no blading or ground disturbing maintenance should occur between March and June.
28. During construction and maintenance activities, vehicles should not exceed posted speed limits within project site. The area near and under all vehicles should be inspected for desert tortoise before being moved.
29. Operators/contractors should receive a copy of the tortoise handling guidelines (Attachment A) and distribute to all workers the day of the project and advise on handling procedures.
30. Care should be taken not to disturb or destroy Sonoran Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) or their burrows. Pursuing, shooting, hunting, trapping, killing, capturing, snaring or netting desert tortoises are prohibited by Arizona State Statute. If a desert tortoise is in danger of being harmed by any activity that activity should cease until the desert tortoise moves out of harm's way on its own accord or is moved following the attached guidelines "Guidelines for Handling Sonoran Desert Tortoise Encountered on Roads and Vehicle Ways". To improve the quality of Desert Tortoise habitat management, foster Public Lands Stewardship, and incorporate Citizen science the Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) wildlife biologist invites you to participate in reporting of Sonoran Desert Tortoise or their burrows encountered. This reporting is encouraged but not required. Report wildlife encounters using a smartphone to photograph the specimen and submit it by email to [blm\\_az\\_lhfo@blm.gov](mailto:blm_az_lhfo@blm.gov). Alternatively, the location information (latitude and longitude or UTM), time, date, and suspected species common name can be submitted by email to [blm\\_az\\_lhfo@blm.gov](mailto:blm_az_lhfo@blm.gov).

# IFP AFFECTED PARCEL OWNED BY BLM



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Rezaeero, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Additional 30 x 30 Briefing Request for Counties  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 2:35:19 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[Garfield County Resolution Opposing the Federal Government's 3- x 30 Land Preservation Goal.pdf](#)  
[30 x 30 resolution 2021-23-Moffat County Co.pdf](#)

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**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Paniz,

We also have two counties that have requested briefings on the 30 x 30 program. Those requests are included in the attached documents.

Is it possible to loop in External and Intergovernmental Affairs and/or the folks from yesterday and provide a briefing for them?

Sincerely,

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



RESOLUTION NO. 2021- 23

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S "30 X 30" LAND INITIATIVE AND PRESERVATION GOAL

WHEREAS, Moffat County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Colorado for which the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Moffat County is the second largest county in Colorado with over 3,000,000 acres of land, over ½ of which is federally owned/managed land in NW Colorado.

WHEREAS, Moffat County already hosts 339,036 acres of Wilderness Study Areas (9 WSA's) and Lands With Wilderness Character. Moffat County hosts 10's of thousands acres of private perpetual conservation easements. Moffat County hosts, over 150,000 acres of National Monument, 14,000 acres of US Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and 10's of thousands of acres of State Wildlife Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and other conserved lands. Furthermore, every single acre of public land in Moffat County is protected and conserved with an active federal land management plan.

WHEREAS, because of the predominance of federal land in Moffat County, the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the County, its businesses, and its citizens depend on the manner in which these lands and their resources are used and access to these lands; and

WHEREAS, many of Moffat County's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize federal lands and their resources, including the forest products industry, livestock grazing, oil and gas exploration and production, coal mining, precious metal mining, and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the Colorado economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Moffat County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the top ten taxpayers make up 62% of Moffat County's Assessed Value, and all of those top 10 taxpayers are directly dependent upon federal lands and/or the resources under the surface; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619); and

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the "30 x 30" program; and

WHEREAS, under the 30 x 30 program, some 680 million acres of our Nation's lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in its natural state, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources; and

WHEREAS, there is no constitutional or statutory authority for the President, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, or any other federal agency to set aside and permanently preserve 30 percent of all land and water in the United States, and no such authority is referenced in Executive Order 14008; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, is likely to cause significant harm to the economy of Moffat County, and injure the County's businesses and its citizens by depriving them of access to public lands and national forest system lands and preventing the productive use of these lands' resources; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of some 680 million acres of federal lands from multiple use and placement of such lands in permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economies of many western states, including Colorado, and in particular rural counties such as Moffat County whose citizens depend on access to federal lands for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at Sec. 216(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant federal agencies to "submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Moffat County, Colorado, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands in its natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The Board further opposes any unilateral special designations of public lands and national forests in Moffat County without full public participation and local support. Public and local involvement in designation for wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands must directly involve and defer to the preferences of our community.
3. The Board supports the continued management of the public lands and the national forests under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber, and in careful coordination with Moffat County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies, as required by law.

4. The Board supports maintaining and enhancing public access to public lands and national forests and opposes road closures, road decommissioning, moratoria on road construction, and other limitations on public access for the purpose of fulfilling the 30 x 30 program's objectives.

5. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Colorado's water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Colorado law.

6. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global air pollution emission policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities, but opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.

7. The Board maintains that the designation of public lands and national forest lands as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives may lawfully occur, if at all, only through the planning process mandated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (for public lands) or the National Forest Management Act (for national forest lands), including public notice and an opportunity to comment, analysis and disclosure of the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Moffat County, its businesses, and its citizens, and careful coordination with Moffat County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies.

8. The Board also maintains that any non-federal lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should comply with Moffat County's No-Net-Loss of Private Lands Policy. In addition lands should only be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Moffat County, its businesses, and its citizens.

9. The Board, recognizing the President has directed the federal departments to work with local governments to implement the 30 x 30 program, will request a meeting with the Department of Interior to occur within the next 60 days and begin discussions of the Board's position on the 30 x 30 program.

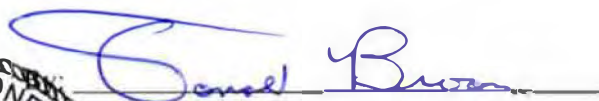
DATED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2021.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
MOFFAT COUNTY, STATE OF COLORADO



Erin Miller, Clerk of the Board



Donald Broom, Chairman



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#); [Rezaeerood, Paniz](#)  
**Cc:** [Curto, Mike](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BLM HQ Reprograming docs?  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 5, 2021 3:46:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Hi Drew and Paniz,

Hope you both are having a good week. Paniz, it was great to see you last week in person.

I heard that the Department/BLM sent reprogramming details and documents to the Appropriations Committees in relation to the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters.

Can you all send us what was sent to them and any briefing materials? Can you all also consider potentially do a briefing for House staff given the interest on this topic?

We'd also be grateful if you all passed along any questions you have received to date from the Committees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G; Rezaeero, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] embargoed release?  
**Date:** Friday, September 17, 2021 3:01:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Drew,

Thank you again for calling me back earlier.

Can you send over the embargoed release you mentioned?

We will respect the embargo as I mentioned.

Sincerely,

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>





**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G; Rezaeerood, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] FW: Rep. Boebert Condemns the Partisan Decision to Move the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters back to D.C. and Condemns Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper for Failing to Stand up for Colorado  
**Date:** Friday, September 17, 2021 5:08:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Passing along Drew and Paniz.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



---

**From:** Press, Boebert <[Boebert.Press@mail.house.gov](mailto:Boebert.Press@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 17, 2021 3:57 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** Rep. Boebert Condemns the Partisan Decision to Move the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters back to D.C. and Condemns Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper for Failing to Stand up for Colorado



**For Immediate Release**  
September 17, 2021

**Contact**  
(202) 225-4761

## **REP. BOEBERT CONDEMNS THE PARTISAN DECISION TO MOVE THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT HEADQUARTERS BACK TO D.C. AND CONDEMNS SENATORS BENNET AND HICKENLOOPER FOR FAILING TO STAND UP FOR COLORADO**

Today, Rep. Boebert condemned the Department of Interior's partisan decision to move the Bureau of Land Management headquarters back to D.C. and condemned Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper for failing to stand up for Colorado by using procedural tactics easily available to them.

**Rep. Lauren Boebert** stated: "The fight to keep the Bureau of Land Management in Grand Junction was always bipartisan, but when it came down to the wire, Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper folded and failed to stand up for Colorado by using procedural tools to leverage the Biden regime to keep the main Bureau of Land Management headquarters, Director, and senior leadership in Grand Junction. The junior senator from Michigan held up eight high-level Department of Defense nominations to leverage a win for his state, but Bennet and Hickenlooper combined couldn't find the courage to place a hold on just one nominee. As usual, these politicians' promises were nothing more than empty words. I hope they will be vigilant in ensuring the rug isn't pulled out from under them and that the new promises the Biden regime made them materialize. These new Grand Junction jobs need to be delivered, people should know about them and what they are, and the details shouldn't be changed later.

"Today's rushed decision isn't about helping western communities. It is clearly a partisan attack on rural communities. It hasn't been thought-out, and important questions have yet to be answered, including where will employees that move back to D.C. work? As the Department of the Interior is essentially empty currently, when will these employees go back to in-person work? How many employees will move to D.C. and Grand Junction? What employees will move to D.C. and Grand Junction? Where will the employees that move to D.C. and Grand Junction move from? When will impacted employees receive written notice? Given the lack of detail and information provided for this reprogramming, appropriators should immediately reject this political, partisan move that isn't in the best interest of taxpayers, the agency, or its employees.

"From my first days in Congress, I have done everything I can to keep the Bureau headquarters in Grand Junction. While I'm disappointed with today's decision and the details are light, this could still ultimately be a win for Grand Junction and the West as a western headquarters will remain in Grand Junction, more jobs will move to Grand Junction, and all the jobs that moved out West won't be moved back to D.C."

### **House Committee on Natural Resources Ranking Member Bruce**

**Westerman** stated: "Today's misguided, partisan decision has nothing to do with executing good land management and everything to do with centralizing and growing big government. A two-quarterback BLM system with one headquarters in D.C. and another headquarters in Colorado will layer bureaucracies, further confusing and complicating an already confused and complicated agency. A Friday afternoon audible to reverse a move that would save millions of taxpayer dollars and put employees closer to the people affected by their decisions is another bad play call by a Biden administration already on the hot seat. Unfortunately American farmers,

ranchers and all the rural communities that rely on public lands are the ones who bear the brunt of the confusion. I strongly oppose the administration's decision and urge them to reconsider and actually listen to what the communities out west need most.”

**Western Caucus Chairman Dan Newhouse** said: “Putting management of lands in the West back into the hands of D.C. bureaucrats will only result in less effective management, loss of economic activity, and even greater mistrust of the federal government. It’s inconceivable that the Administration would ignore the wishes of not only Colorado’s local communities but also those of rural communities throughout the West who are impacted by the Bureau of Land Management’s decision-making. The Headquarters’ move to Grand Junction garnered strong bipartisan support in the House, the Senate, the state of Colorado, and the entire West. The Biden Administration’s betrayal of rural America will not be forgotten. The question now is for Colorado Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper: Will you still vote to confirm Tracy-Stone Manning if she does not commit to reversing this terrible decision for the people of Colorado?”

### **Background:**

Rep. Boebert’s amendment prohibiting the use of funds made available in the FY2022 budget from being used to close the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction passed with unanimous, bipartisan support, reaffirming that moving the agency back to D.C. is only a position held by radical entrenched swamp creatures like Secretary Haaland and Tracy Stone-Manning.

The misguided decision to move the Bureau’s headquarters back to D.C. will hurt taxpayers. The Bureau’s initial move West cost taxpayers approximately \$18 million and the move back will likely cost at least that and more. Furthermore, there is no identified location to move the agency back to as the M Street location no longer exists due to skyrocketing leasing costs.

Rep. Boebert fought hard to keep the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction, and she will continue to work protect the remaining jobs at the Bureau’s Grand Junction location.

- In her first month in office, Rep. Boebert led a [letter](#) to President Biden requesting that the Bureau of Land Management headquarters remain in Grand Junction.
- In February, Rep. Boebert participated in a bipartisan and bicameral roundtable with Governor Polis and Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper calling on the Biden administration to keep the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction.
- In March, Rep. Boebert joined local stakeholders in [inviting](#) Secretary Haaland to visit the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction to hear how the agency’s move West has benefited rural Americans.
- Later in March, Rep. Boebert introduced the [Local Opportunities, Conservation, and American Lands \(LOCAL\) Act](#) to require that the Bureau of Land Management headquarters remain in Grand Junction.
- In April, Rep. Boebert joined Chairman of the Western Caucus, Congressman Dan Newhouse, at a [roundtable](#) with rural stakeholders discussing how the

Bureau's move West has given them a voice in land management decisions.

- In July, Rep. Boebert joined a bipartisan and bicameral [roundtable](#) with Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper, Congressman Neguse, Governor Polis, and Secretary Haaland at the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction. Secretary Haaland heard from the farmers, ranchers, and rural community members that would be harmed if she moved the Bureau's headquarters back to D.C.
- Later in July, Rep. Boebert led Reps. Doug Lamborn and Ken Buck in [calling](#) on Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper to hold up Tracy Stone-Manning's nomination in order to secure a commitment from the Biden administration to keep the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction.
- This month, Rep. Boebert's [amendment](#) prohibiting the use of funds made available in the FY2022 budget from being used to close the Bureau of Land Management headquarters in Grand Junction passed the House Committee on Natural Resources with unanimous, bipartisan support.

### **Background on the Bureau of Land Management headquarters' move West:**

The Bureau of Land Management headquarters was established in Grand Junction in August of 2020 after a competitive process to select the new location. Grand Junction was chosen because of its substantial cost savings, travel accessibility, quality of life attributes, and increased representation among the communities affected by land management decisions. Since its opening, the headquarters has proven to be an overwhelming success for rural Colorado, taxpayers, federal employees, the Bureau of Land Management, and communities impacted by land management decisions.

99% of the 245 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management are in the West, so it only makes sense that the agency's headquarters should be near its field offices and near the people its decisions affect. Since its opening, the headquarters' western location has allowed diverse constituencies to have a voice in land management decisions, and Western stakeholders like sheriffs, ranchers, and county commissioners who would never have traveled to Washington D.C. for a meeting have already found their way to Grand Junction to meet with senior leadership.

The move has already started to benefit taxpayers. The agency estimates it will save more than \$2 million in fiscal year 2021 in lease costs and \$1.9 million in salary savings annually based on locality pay. The Department of the Interior has also reported that it saved \$1.9 million on travel costs in fiscal year 2020.

The establishment of the headquarters in Grand Junction has reduced the number of long cross-country flights and travel costs, improved training, delegated more responsibility to employees in the field, increased operating hours due to proximity of time zones, improved customer service and coordination with local communities, ensured better decisions earlier in the decision-making process, reduced commute times for employees, and provided good-paying local jobs.

Any misguided effort to move the Bureau back to D.C. would have significant costs. The initial move West cost taxpayers approximately \$18 million and any move back would cost at least that and more. Furthermore, there is no identified location to move them back to as the M Street location no longer exists.

Land management decisions are best made by the people who live, work, and raise their families on or near public lands and that are invested in local communities. Many Bureau employees excitedly made the move, grateful to escape the swamp and to experience many of the issues firsthand that they had been working on for years. Several have done interviews and gone on the record to make clear that this is where they want to be, and that they don't want to live or work in Washington D.C. It is rewarding for Bureau employees to be able to have access to the types of recreation activities available on the public lands they manage like hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, skiing, off-roading, climbing, and wildlife viewing.

Additionally, as a result of the Bureau's move West, it received an overwhelming number of job applications from Westerners with expertise in public lands management. The resulting expansion of the Bureau of Land Management's talent pool is already improving public land management decisions and helping the agency serve its constituency effectively.

The Bureau's move West was flawlessly executed by senior leadership and dedicated career staff, and not one federal employee was removed as a result of the agency's move West. The Department of the Interior found jobs for people that wanted to stay in D.C. and paid expenses to help employees make the move West. The Bureau's move West also successfully avoided any Equal Employment Opportunity or U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board complaints, legal challenges, or adverse union activities.

The local Mesa County community gave the Bureau a warm welcome and created a Relocation Task Force to ensure an easy transition for all employees and their families. Task force services included pre-move visits to provide a single point of contact and provide information, a real estate team to help locate housing, and a school placement team to ensure the best education options were available including charter schools.

Colorado benefitted immensely from the move West by having more than 80 Bureau employees assigned to our state, including more than 40 in Grand Junction that are estimated to provide \$11 million in annual economic benefits. Additionally, more than 300 other positions were assigned out West as a result of the relocation.

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE

1609 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-4761

### GRAND JUNCTION DISTRICT OFFICE

743 Horizon Court  
Suite 112  
Grand Junction, CO 81506  
Phone: (970) 208-0460

### DURANGO DISTRICT OFFICE

835 E. 2nd Ave.  
Suite 204  
Durango, CO 81301  
Phone: (970) 317-6130

### PUEBLO DISTRICT OFFICE

503 N. Main  
Suite 426  
Pueblo, CO 81003  
Phone: (719) 696-6970

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**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [Conklin, Caralee S](#)  
**Cc:** [Wilkinson, Patrick](#); [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#); [MacMullan, Troy](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] MAP REQUEST - Bullhead Int. Airport  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 7, 2021 11:31:23 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Caralee,

Following up on my call with BOR, Mr. Gosar is asking for a legislative map of the BLM/BOR (since we still don't actually know who cares) property that we have been discussing. I can resend the attachments if you still don't have, but I believe the lease refers to the property as



However, that appears to only be 5+ acres, while the provision the Airport authority highlights is 6.48 acres. We would like a map to incorporate the entire parcel, which ever is correct. This may be that they are only leasing what is "inside" the fence line, but that is purely my speculation. Any questions about what we are exactly asking for please let me know.

In addition, we will be sending formal correspondence asking the Secretary to find a path for disposal for this property. The conflict between BOR and BLM is a clear hold up. I truly believe this could be done much more cleanly and quickly administratively. However, we will be working on the legislative path as well.

Tim

---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 8:29 AM  
**To:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>; Conklin, Caralee S <[cskonklin@blm.gov](mailto:cskonklin@blm.gov)>; MacMullan, Troy <[Troy.MacMullan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Troy.MacMullan@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 3 pm Phone Call - Bullhead Int. Airport

**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#); [Higgins, Ashley](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: BLM HQ staffing numbers  
**Date:** Thursday, January 28, 2021 10:06:04 AM

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Thanks for sending.

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 28, 2021 9:46 AM  
**To:** Higgins, Ashley <Ashley.Higgins@mail.house.gov>  
**Cc:** Small, Jeff <Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov>  
**Subject:** BLM HQ staffing numbers

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. The Department is going to be responding to some long-standing congressional and media requests for these numbers today. Please let me know if you have any questions.

### **July 2019**

Total Staffing Levels for BLM Headquarters – 556 career positions. Of those, 80 positions were vacant (476 HQ employees).

Of the 556 positions:

- 168 HQ positions were already located outside of DC
- 328 positions were moved out of DC by the Trump administration
- 60 HQ positions remained in DC

From the 328 positions moved:

- 41 people moved
- 287 HQ employees either retired or found new employment between July 2019-December 2020

### **January 2021**

Current Staffing Level for BLM Headquarters - 480 career positions (difference reflects 76 positions



that were moved from HQ to the field). Of those, 100 positions are vacant (380 HQ employees).

Best,

Paniz Rezaeero  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Rezaeero, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Briefing  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 2:27:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

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Hi Paniz,

Thank you for organizing the briefing yesterday.

Was helpful. We'd like to be kept in the loop as we have a lot of folks interested in this subject.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Rezaeero, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Rep. Boebert Response Letter re. PILT  
**Date:** Thursday, April 29, 2021 12:35:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Paniz,

Hope you are having a good week.

Have you all completed/released the 30 x 30 report?

If so, is that something you can send us a copy of?

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#)  
**Cc:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild Bureau of Land Management  
**Date:** Friday, September 17, 2021 5:55:48 PM

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Thank you.

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**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 17, 2021 3:42 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild Bureau of Land Management

Officially out

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**From:** U.S. Department of the Interior <[info@updates.interior.gov](mailto:info@updates.interior.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 17, 2021 3:40 PM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild Bureau of Land Management

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US Department of the Interior News Release



Date: Friday, September 17, 2021  
Contact: [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

**Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild  
Bureau of Land Management**

*Announces plans to restore national headquarters to Washington, D.C.; Western headquarters will be expanded*

**WASHINGTON** — Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland today outlined steps that the Department plans to take to rebuild and strengthen the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) following years of transition and upheaval among the workforce. These changes, which will be done in coordination with Congress, will improve the function of the bureau, help provide clarity for the BLM's more than 7,000 employees across the country, maintain and increase access for stakeholders, and enable the bureau to better serve the American public and fulfill its mission as the steward of nearly one-fifth of the nation's public lands.

In a meeting with BLM employees today, Secretary Haaland announced her intention to restore the BLM national headquarters to Washington, D.C., ensuring the bureau has a presence in the nation's capital. Under this plan, the BLM's current presence in Grand Junction, Colo., will grow and expand as the bureau's official Western headquarters. This office will reinforce western perspectives in decision-making and have an important role to play in the bureau's clean energy, outdoor recreation, conservation, and scientific missions, among other important work as a leadership center in the West.

"The Bureau of Land Management is critical to the nation's efforts to address the climate crisis, expand public access to our public lands, and preserve our nation's shared outdoor heritage. It is imperative that the bureau have the appropriate structure and resources to serve the American public," said **Secretary Haaland**. "There's no doubt that the BLM should have a leadership presence in Washington, D.C. – like all the other land management agencies – to ensure that it has access to the policy-, budget-, and decision-making levers to best carry out its mission. In addition, the BLM's robust presence in Colorado and across the West will continue to grow."

"The past several years have been incredibly disruptive to the organization, to our public servants, and to their families. As we move forward, my priority is to revitalize and rebuild the BLM so that it can meet the pressing challenges of our time, and to look out for our employees' well-being," added **Secretary Haaland**. "I look forward to continuing to work with Congress, Tribes, elected officials and the many stakeholders who care about the stewardship of our shared public lands and healthy communities."

The Department intends to locate the Bureau Director and other key leadership positions in the national headquarters where they can ensure coordination with Congress, other federal agencies, and stakeholders that visit Washington, D.C. Additional senior personnel will operate from the Western headquarters, as part of the more than 95 percent of BLM employees that are already located outside of Washington, D.C.

The Secretary's vision for the BLM comes after substantive engagement with employees, Tribal consultations, and meetings with local, state, and federal leaders. The Secretary visited Grand Junction in July, and pledged to provide clarity and direction. Additional logistics and planning will occur in the months to come in close coordination with BLM employees, Congress, Tribes, and elected leaders.

The Department plans to take a number of additional steps, in coordination with leaders in Congress, to ensure that the BLM is best positioned to serve the American public. This includes establishing a new BLM Foundation – as authorized in legislation – to support the bureau's efforts and to help build new partnerships. The BLM will strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes by supporting Tribal Liaisons in

each state. The BLM will also seek to improve coordination and capacity to implement clean energy projects.

The previous administration relocated the BLM headquarters to Grand Junction, Colo., a move that failed to deliver promised jobs across the West and drove hundreds of people out of the agency. Of the 328 positions moved out of Washington, D.C., only 41 of the affected people relocated, with 3 moving to Grand Junction. This led to a significant loss of institutional memory and talent. The headquarters transition will be conducted with a goal of minimizing further disruption to employees and their families. Outside of the aforementioned core leadership positions, the BLM does not plan to require employees to relocate.

###

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## About the U.S. Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior (DOI) conserves and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provides scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honors the Nation's trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper.

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**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Air Tourism Letter  
**Date:** Thursday, September 23, 2021 11:51:42 AM

---

Thanks! Hope you are well.

---

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 23, 2021 11:31 AM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>; Hunt, Charles E <[Charles\\_Hunt@nps.gov](mailto:Charles_Hunt@nps.gov)>  
**Cc:** Nadas, Joshua <[joshua\\_nadas@nps.gov](mailto:joshua_nadas@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Air Tourism Letter

Hey Tim! Confirming receipt.

Best,

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

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---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 23, 2021 10:41 AM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>; Hunt, Charles E <[Charles\\_Hunt@nps.gov](mailto:Charles_Hunt@nps.gov)>  
**Cc:** Nadas, Joshua <[joshua\\_nadas@nps.gov](mailto:joshua_nadas@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Air Tourism Letter

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Please find the attached correspondence from Rep. Gosar

**Tim Charters**

Senior Advisor

Rep. Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S. (AZ-04)

202-480-7931 - Remote



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#); [RezaeeroD, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021 5:50:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)

---

Sorry I missed you. Was in a meeting. Will buzz you back at 6:30ish.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



---

**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021 5:06 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Just tried you – can talk at 630ish tonight or can connect mid-day tomorrow at like 1230-1pm or 130-2pm

---

**From:** Wallace, Andrew G  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:55 PM  
**To:** 'Small, Jeff' <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Hi Jeff,

Will give you a call shortly on this.

-Drew

---

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2021 6:03 PM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Drew,

Hope you had a good weekend.

Following up on our requests to send Rep. Boebert a copy of the reprogramming letter and also on our request for a briefing for Rep. Boebert on this issue.

Can you provide an update on these two requests?

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Small, Jeff  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 3:17 PM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Appreciate the consideration. Thank you sir.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 3:09 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

I appreciate that example from the previous administration and again, the request is under consideration. It is my understanding that example from the previous administration was an atypical exception, and that other reprogramming letters during the previous administration followed the long-standing practice.

Will be back in touch to schedule a briefing for Congresswoman Boebert. -Drew

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 11:33 AM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Drew,

Thank you for the response.

The previous administration made public the BLM reprogramming letters to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees dated July 16, 2019, and August 8, 2019. In fact, there are several links including one of the letters still on your website. Reprogramming letters are public documents. This seems to disprove your long-standing practice theory.

Why is the current administration afraid to utilize the same transparency?

My boss wants an electronic copy of the reprogramming letter asap and is getting more and more irritated each day that passes that we don't have it.

The briefing would be Member level.

We will definitely send some questions as well.

[https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/2019.07.16\\_-\\_chairman\\_murkowski\\_letter\\_-\\_blm\\_realignment.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/2019.07.16_-_chairman_murkowski_letter_-_blm_realignment.pdf)

[https://westerncaucus.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019.07.16\\_-\\_chairman\\_murkowski\\_letter.pdf](https://westerncaucus.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019.07.16_-_chairman_murkowski_letter.pdf)

<https://www.doi.gov/ocl/blm-reorganization>

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-bernhardt-statement-blm-realignment>

<https://www.blm.gov/press-release/BLM-statement-on-the-GAO-Report-concerning-the-agency-Headquarters-move-West>

<https://www.blm.gov/press-release/The-Bureau-of-Land-Management-Headquarters-Officially-Established-in-Grand-Junction-Colorado>

Sincerely,

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)

Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



---

**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 9:51 AM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; Rezaeero, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

Hi Jeff – we talked about this reprogramming letter the last time we talked. Any agency reorganization process that involves reprogramming goes through this process so this letter is part of that.

It is the long-standing practice of the Department to respect the wishes of the appropriations committee and not circulate those externally to that process but we are looking into an exception in this case for the reasons that you note below in your note. We will aim to get back to you early next week on that question.

It is my understanding that the reprogramming process is still ongoing so the outcomes of certain specifics may not yet be finalized, but we will work with BLM re: your request for a briefing – will be back in touch as soon as we can on that front. Do you envision a member-level briefing or staff-level?

In the meantime, if there are any specific Qs you would like to send, Paniz and I can work to track down info as part of this process. Best,  
Drew

---

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 3, 2021 2:30 PM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Rezaeero, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BLM Reprogramming Letter to Appropriators?

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Drew and Paniz,

Hope you all are having a good day.

Just tried to call you both via cell but figured I'd follow-up with an email.

In short, Rep. Boebert is very upset with the Department at the moment in relation to reprogramming and the BLM HQs.

The things we were told by the Department on 9/17/21 don't appear to be true. At that time, I also requested that you all send us anything you can on this issue in writing. Nothing was ever sent.

We recently learned of a reprogramming letter that was sent to Appropriators. Why weren't we provided a copy of that letter and why weren't we asked to meet or if we'd like a briefing on the letter? What is the Department trying to hide?

As the Member whose district is most impacted by this decision, some transparency and continued discussion on this issue would be appreciated.

Will you all send us a copy of the reprogramming letter today? If not, why not as this is a public document? We are prepared to send a FOIA if it is not sent.

I apologize for being gruff in this email but as you can tell we are very frustrated with this whole process and the way it has been handled by the Department.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [Kelhart, Megan](#); [RezaeeroD, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Chat  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 10:01:31 AM

---

I will call you at 3 pm today if that works. Will send you an email in advance with some background.

---

**From:** Kelhart, Megan <MKelhart@usbr.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 10:00 AM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov>; RezaeeroD, Paniz <paniz\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Chat

hi Tim,

sure, i'm free 3-5pm ET today and most of tomorrow.

Megan

---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 9:52 AM  
**To:** RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Chat

Megan, do you have time to talk today or tomorrow?

---

**From:** RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 1, 2021 3:43 PM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Chat

Hi Tim,

Thanks for chatting earlier. Megan Kelhart with BOR will be able to assist with your inquiry. She is out of office until next Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup>, but please feel free to reach out to her then. Her cell is [REDACTED] and she is also cc'd on this email.

Best,

Paniz RezaeeroD  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior

1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

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**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 1, 2021 12:16 PM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Chat

(b) (6)

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On Jul 1, 2021 12:06 PM, "Rezaeerod, Paniz" <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:  
Hi Tim,

Thank you for reaching out. What is the best number to reach you?

Best,

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

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**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 1, 2021 11:38 AM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Chat

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Could we schedule a chat I am having issues with a land issue at Bullhead Airport in AZ. The land is BLM administrative control but BOR has a claim. It is a small parcel within the security fence of the airport and the county is interested in securing the property for airport use but we can't get actual answers.

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer



**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Howarth, Robert G; Rezaeerod, Paniz](#)  
**Cc:** [Butler, Aniela](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Copy of 30 x 30 Letter and Report?  
**Date:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 11:01:44 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.jpg](#)

No worries. Thank you sir!

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Howarth, Robert G <[Robert\\_G\\_Howarth@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Robert_G_Howarth@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:59 AM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Butler, Aniela <[Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov](mailto:Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Copy of 30 x 30 Letter and Report?

Hi Jeff...sorry you were missed...you are now on the list.

Rob

Robert G. Howarth  
Chief of Staff  
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 208-7693 (office)  
(202) 208-4754 (direct)  
(202) 445-0371 (cell)  
[Robert\\_g\\_howarth@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Robert_g_howarth@ios.doi.gov)

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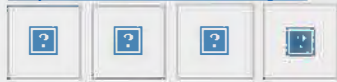
**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:57 AM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>; Howarth, Robert G <[Robert\\_G\\_Howarth@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Robert_G_Howarth@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Butler, Aniela <[Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov](mailto:Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Copy of 30 x 30 Letter and Report?

Thank you Paniz for the quick response. I didn't receive from Rob though unfortunately.

Rob, can you make sure I'm on your list?

Thank you all. Have a good day.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



---

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:49 AM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Butler, Aniela <[Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov](mailto:Aniela.Butler@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Copy of 30 x 30 Letter and Report?

Hi Jeff,

The report is linked in the press release that you received from Rob Howarth.

It is also available at [Biden-Harris Administration Outlines "America the Beautiful" Initiative | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#).

Thanks,

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

---

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:44 AM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Copy of 30 x 30 Letter and Report?

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Hi Paniz,

Looks like the 30 x 30 report is being released to the public this morning.

Is it possible for you to send a copy of the report and the letter referenced below?

Thank you.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Bloomberg Government <[alerts@bgov.com](mailto:alerts@bgov.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:15 AM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** Alert: Biden Enlists Ranchers, Tribes to Conserve 30% of Land and Water

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## Bloomberg Government

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### Biden Enlists Ranchers, Tribes to Conserve 30% of Land and Water

- Broad new environmental strategy leans on voluntary efforts
- Initiative sidesteps government land purchases, monuments

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy / May 6, 2021 10:15AM ET / Bloomberg Government

The Biden administration is unveiling a plan to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by the end of the decade, a top priority for environmentalists who see the initiative as a way to fight climate change and safeguard species on the brink of extinction.

The blueprint, set to be released by top administration officials Thursday morning, offers a broad-ranging strategy for encouraging tribes, farmers and ranchers to voluntarily protect land, including by enrolling territory in existing federal conservation programs and the creation of new parks near urban areas.

Yet it does not detail expansive new plans for buying private land or enshrining new national monuments -- ideas that have been battled by conservatives on Capitol Hill. The initiative also does not include specific financial pledges to encourage land protection or set mandates. Even the report itself acknowledges that it is "only the starting point" on a path to fulfilling President [Joe Biden's](#) conservation goal, with the outcome dictated by local communities, not the federal government.

Americans are being asked to "join together" in the conservation effort, wrote Interior Secretary [Deb Haaland](#), Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory in a letter accompanying the report.

[Read More: Global Warming Forecast Improves Slightly After Biden's Pledge](#)

"The president's challenge is a call to action to support locally led conservation and restoration efforts of all kinds and all over America, wherever communities wish to safeguard the lands and waters they know and love," the four officials wrote.

The effort builds on a campaign pledge by Biden and an [executive order](#) he issued in January directing federal agencies to collaborate on the conservation goal. While Republicans in Congress and in statehouses are likely to oppose the program outright, the scaled-back, voluntary approach could have more appeal with Republicans from western states who have regarded previous Democratic environmental

initiatives as regulatory juggernauts and potential land grabs.

By almost any measure, the U.S. has a long way to go toward Biden's 30% target, with some records indicating just 12% of land and 26% of waters have been designated for permanent protection. That may undercount how much territory is actually safeguarded, and the administration is now planning to develop an American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas to better measure protected areas. A new interagency working group would focus on the survey.

Environmentalists praised the initiative, saying it would help drive the restoration and conservation of shrublands, waterways and grasslands critical to the survival of some species. The destruction and fragmentation of milkweed-filled meadows and other habitat along the Monarch butterfly's migration flyway through the American Midwest, for instance, has been cited for declines in that species.

[Read More: Biden 'Moratorium' on Oil Leasing Targeted by GOP-Led States](#)

The plan "rightly focuses on collaboration and restoration" instead of "regulation and designations" to hit the 30% conservation target, said Collin O'Mara, president of the National Wildlife Federation. "It's a thoughtful blueprint for how we can work together to save one-third wildlife species at heightened risk of extinction, revitalize rural and urban communities, strengthen the outdoor economy and bolster resilience to escalating climate-fueled megafires, floods, and hurricanes."

The administration envisions conservation extending to working lands -- such as farms where the use of no-till farming and other agricultural practices can reduce erosion and enhance the storage of carbon in soils. Farmers can tap into existing U.S. Department of Agriculture programs that reward the efforts. And while the commitments are made on a voluntary basis, federal programs can ensure they confer enduring protection. In the administration's vision, science and humanitarian benefits would guide and inspire the conservation effort. The report also takes pains to emphasize the need to "respect the rights of private property owners" and preserve ranching in the West.

"The conservation value of a particular place should not be measured solely in biological terms, but also by its capacity to purify drinking water, to cool the air for a nearby neighborhood," or "to provide a safe outdoor escape for a community that is park-deprived," the report says.

To contact the reporter on this story:

Jennifer A. Dlouhy in Washington at [jdrouhy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdrouhy1@bloomberg.net)

To contact the editors responsible for this story:

Jon Morgan at [jmorgan97@bloomberg.net](mailto:jmorgan97@bloomberg.net)

John Harney, Elizabeth Wasserman

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**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [Langhenry, James M](#)  
**Cc:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Desal plant in Arizona  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 4, 2021 12:11:46 PM

---

That would work great do you have a call in or want me to set something up.

---

**From:** Langhenry, James M <[jlanghenry@usbr.gov](mailto:jlanghenry@usbr.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 4, 2021 11:53 AM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Desal plant in Arizona

Hi Tim,

Thanks for your patience, could we do Thursday at 2pm ET?

Thanks!

James

---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:17  
**To:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Cc:** Langhenry, James M <[jlanghenry@usbr.gov](mailto:jlanghenry@usbr.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Desal plant in Arizona

Could we do Wednesday Afternoon (1-3) or Thursday 2-4?

I am looking for an update on the status of the DeSal plant. The thought is we are reaching an energy dynamic in the state where the overwhelming surplus of solar during the day is resulting in significant negative price rates. The thought is we would capture that negative price energy to create water at the plant.

---

**From:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 30, 2021 2:28 PM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Langhenry, James M <[jlanghenry@usbr.gov](mailto:jlanghenry@usbr.gov)>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Desal plant in Arizona

Hi Tim,

absolutely! Let us know what dates might be best for you. I will be out starting Monday afternoon, but James Langhenry (copied) will work with the Region to have the right experts on the phone.

Megan

---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, July 30, 2021 1:59 PM

**To:** Kelhart, Megan <[MKelhart@usbr.gov](mailto:MKelhart@usbr.gov)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Desal plant in Arizona

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Megan,

Can you help me arrange a briefing for me on the status, operations, of the Yuma desalting plant ([https://www.usbr.gov/lc/yuma/facilities/ydp/yao\\_ydp.html](https://www.usbr.gov/lc/yuma/facilities/ydp/yao_ydp.html)) we are working on an idea and I need to get a better understanding of this resource.

**Tim Charters**

Senior Advisor

Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-04)

202-480-7931 – Remote

**From:** [Charters, Tim](#)  
**To:** [RezaeeroD, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Hippie Hole  
**Date:** Friday, July 30, 2021 2:00:15 PM

---

Thanks!

---

**From:** RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 30, 2021 1:57 PM  
**To:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Kodis, Martin <[martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov)>; Jones, Lisa M <[lisa\\_m\\_jones@fws.gov](mailto:lisa_m_jones@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Hippie Hole

Hey Tim,

Connecting you with USFWS congressional affairs team.

Best,

Paniz RezaeeroD  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

---

**From:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 30, 2021 1:33 PM  
**To:** RezaeeroD, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeeroD@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Hippie Hole

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Paniz,

I need help connecting with USFWS Congressional. We have a state grant on the line that BLM and USFWS delays are threatening to force our local folks to return, all for a few hundred yards of ROW for a power pole. Here is a few of the recent email exchanges that folks have had, as you

can see if you read from the bottom.

**Email to our staff from Supervisor Irwin (bolding is emails below, again bottom up)** – They have been working on getting this done for a while, twice they were giving the sense that approval was coming (Feb and June) only to get the bait and switch. They get told they are ready to go forward, then get the rug pulled out from beneath them.

**Finally, they start to get the process done with BLM** - BLM manages the land for BOR, as you can see the BLM processed the permit for the ROW with others, to the point where BLM said quote “Thank you for addressing USFWS concern...” So good we are good to go, fees paid plans submitted, done right!?

**Email from APS to Supervisor** - Then APS working for our local community on this flags the additional concerns from USFWS.

**Now full requirement from USFWS for a CD** - The FWS Statement which says “ “While BLM can do the ROW on behalf of the FWS, we need to complete a Compatibility Determination (CD).”

As you can see by the attachment, this is a short power line running from the EXISTING POWER on the refuge along a BOR (managed by BLM) levee road to the recreational facility. If this new CD requirement delays this process significantly it is likely the county will lose the state recreational grant and this project may never get done. Thank you for your attention to this.

## Tim Charters

Senior Advisor

Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-04)

202-480-7931 – Remote

**From:** [Bryant.Shontz@aps.com](mailto:Bryant.Shontz@aps.com)

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 28, 2021 11:19 AM

**To:** [Holly Irwin](#)

**Subject:** RE: BLM Offer Letter - APS 12kV Hippie Hole

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning,

The below statement is from Elaine Johnson, Refuge Complex Manager.

“While BLM can do the ROW on behalf of the FWS, we need to complete a Compatibility Determination (CD). A CD helps ensure that any project on a refuge does not interfere with our mission (to conserve, manage, and restore wildlife and wildlife habitat) or interfere with



the purpose for which Cibola NWR was established. Relative to that, who would be the person to speak with about that kind of preventative actions or features of the utility line that could be or are being included to reduce the possibility of bird strikes.

We are working on the CD but a little more information will be useful in completing it.”

They have our sketches, pole and wire heights etc. This is the first we had heard of the issue or Compatibility Determination they are performing, her email came in Monday.

Thanks,  
Bryant

**From:** [Bryant.Shontz@aps.com](mailto:Bryant.Shontz@aps.com) <[Bryant.Shontz@aps.com](mailto:Bryant.Shontz@aps.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, July 26, 2021 10:55 AM

**To:** Holly Irwin <[hirwin@lapazcountyz.org](mailto:hirwin@lapazcountyz.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Checking in

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Holly,

I have mixed news on the hippie hole permit, we got the ROW offer from BLM last week, the permit fee was paid and we should have a ROW permit in hand for that shortly. However, we are having an issue with the Refuge Complex Manager as they are now requiring some sort of Compatibility Determination for the refuge. They have not required this on any of the other line extensions we have done for the refuge in the past. Hopefully that hiccup gets handled by lands shortly. Elaine Johnson is the manager of over Cibola NWR.

Thanks,  
Bryant

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa <[vbriceno@blm.gov](mailto:vbriceno@blm.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 9:45 AM

**To:** [Paul.Baumgardt@aps.com](mailto:Paul.Baumgardt@aps.com); [Timothy.Parke@aps.com](mailto:Timothy.Parke@aps.com)

**Cc:** Parsons, Benedict <[bparsons@blm.gov](mailto:bparsons@blm.gov)>; Lopez, Arturo <[A9Lopez@blm.gov](mailto:A9Lopez@blm.gov)>; Holly Irwin <[hirwin@lapazcountyz.org](mailto:hirwin@lapazcountyz.org)>; King, Aron C <[acking@blm.gov](mailto:acking@blm.gov)>

**Subject:** BLM Offer Letter - APS 12kV Hippie Hole

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Email #1

Hello Paul,

Thank you for addressing USFWS concern regarding the pole height and hopefully your response was sufficient. Attached is an electronic copy of the offer letter and grant. Please remember grant document copies mailed must have an original signature and cannot be signed off electronically as it is a binding document. In the hopes attachments go through I will send them in two separate emails.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you,

Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist

Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)

Yuma Field Office

7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365

Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: [vbriceno@blm.gov](mailto:vbriceno@blm.gov)

[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)

**From:** Holly Irwin <[hirwin@lapazcountyz.org](mailto:hirwin@lapazcountyz.org)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 20, 2021 11:01 AM

**To:** Penny Pew <[penny.pew@icloud.com](mailto:penny.pew@icloud.com)>

**Cc:** Charters, Tim <[Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tim.Charters@mail.house.gov)>

**Subject:** Hippie Hole project

Good morning Penny,

I am currently working on developing a County park and I have reconceived a grant in 2018 from the AZ State Parks in the amount of \$ 143,000 to put in electrical infrastructure. The County has already received \$ 75,000 from AZSP back in 2016 to start this project which paid for ramadas, trash cans, picnic tables, rock base for RV pads and staging area for OHV recreation and this is also a designated spot for the Arizona Peace Trail that I am now the Chairman for this non-profit.

Here is the issue: APS has to be the recipient of the permit to pull power to this location. We have already spent out of the grant \$20,000 for their engineering which is a requirement of APS. The closest power pole is located on the Cibola Wildlife Refuge. Things were moving along until we were told that another entity can not access power from the Wildlife Refuge. So we were trying to find an alternative source we believe to be in the BLM ROW but since last year they (BLM) has been going back and forth with BOR and the Refuge and twice; once in February and June it was determine that is BLM only to have them retract there decision and have been giving the County the run a round.

I did not want to involve Congressman Gosar's office but I am extremely frustrated and running out

of time on my grant, I have already had to get an extension.

My question is this: Is there anyway to allow for the County to just pull the power from the existing pole that is located on the Refuge? That would be the best resolution to this issue. We are talking approximately ½ a mile or less from where we need the power to go.

I have attached the APS engineering work performed. Please let me know if you need additional documents on the grant. Thank you for your time in this matter

**Holly Irwin**  
**La Paz County**  
**Supervisor District #3**  
**1108 Joshua Ave**  
**Parker, AZ 85344**  
**Office-928-669-6115**  
**Fax-928-669-9709**  
**Cell-928-916-7161**

**Tim Charters**

Senior Advisor

Rep. Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S. (AZ-04)

202-480-7931 – Remote

**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#); [Rezaeerood, Paniz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 6:00:18 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)

---

Please put me down and also Ben Stout. We both will be attending.

**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 5:34 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>; Rezaeerood, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerood@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerood@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

Quick Q:

BLM needs a list of names for the air tanker event/tour at the air center.

Have the congresswoman down

Should I put you also? Or another staff member?

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 8:58 AM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Rezaeerood, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerood@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerood@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

Thank you very much Drew and Paniz.

We appreciate the invite and all your help.

I will be on the ground as well with the Congresswoman.

My cell phone is below.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 8:20 AM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>; Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

Thanks Paniz -

To confirm the discussion in re: Friday's events, right now we are planning on these times. If there are any changes will let you know. I will be in CO for the event.

9AM – 10AM Secretary meeting with BLM employees (internal DOI-only meeting)

1030AM – 12PM Secretary meeting with invited GJ community leaders at Colorado Mesa University re: BLM in GJ (Congresswoman invited, closed press)

1215 – 1PM Site inspection Grand Junction Air Center with walking tour, discussion on fire response (Congresswoman invited, closed press)

1PM – 130PM Press availability at Grand Junction Air Center (Congresswoman invited)

-Drew  
202-257-2729

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 6:05 PM  
**To:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**Cc:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

CC'ing Drew so y'all know how to reach each other.

Cheers,

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

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**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 4:14 PM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

Great. Look forward to speaking with you then.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



---

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 4:13 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

Sure

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 4:07:44 PM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Connecting

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Hi Paniz,

I can make that work.

Want to just call my cell then?

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)

Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)

Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)

<https://boebert.house.gov>



**From:** Rezaeero, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 3:47 PM

**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>

**Subject:** Connecting

Can you chat at 6pm tonight?

Paniz Rezaeero  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**From:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**To:** [Rezaeerod, Paniz](#)  
**Cc:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Formal Invite to Secretary Haaland to visit Grand Junction  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 6, 2021 4:57:55 PM

---

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 6, 2021, at 2:54 PM, Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Hi Jeff,

Thank you for the kind words, and thank you for checking in earlier. I will keep you in the loop on updates regarding potential trips to Colorado.

Best,

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 6, 2021 4:49 PM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Formal Invite to Secretary Haaland to visit Grand Junction

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Paniz,

Thanks for taking my call and hope you feel better soon.

Wanted to follow-up on this letter as I mentioned and see if you could provide a status update or if you knew anything in terms of potential timing for a visit?

We saw the Secretary is expected to be in Utah on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Jeff

---

**From:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 8:57 AM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Formal Invite to Secretary Haaland to visit Grand Junction

Confirming receipt.

Paniz Rezaeerod  
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

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**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 15, 2021 7:58 PM  
**To:** Rezaeerod, Paniz <[paniz\\_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov](mailto:paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Formal Invite to Secretary Haaland to visit Grand Junction

Paniz,

Please see the attached invite from U.S. Representative Lauren Boebert (CO-03), the Mesa County Commissioners and the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce formally inviting the next Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to visit the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters in

Grand Junction, CO.

Congratulations on today's confirmation.

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>  
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[<image002.png>](#)

[<image003.png>](#)

[<image004.png>](#)



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AUG 07 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
Representative  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar,

I write in response to your correspondence of August 3, 2020, in which you describe a request by another member of Congress for vehicle entry passes to Yosemite National Park. My office has reviewed the material, and as a result, I intend to convey to Secretary Bernhardt our advice that the Department should consider disseminating clear guidance to National Park Service staff regarding the disbursement of limited tickets and passes to elected officials.

Separately, regarding your request for correspondence, complaints, or filings by National Park Service personnel with respect to the incident that you describe, we have not identified any responsive documents within the Office of Inspector General.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-208-5745, or your staff may contact Nancy DiPaolo, Director, External Affairs, at 202-208-4357.

Sincerely,

  
Mark Lee Greenblatt  
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable T.J. Cox, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,  
Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Dan Jorjani, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AUG 07 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
Representative  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar,

I write in response to your correspondence of August 3, 2020, in which you describe a request by another member of Congress for vehicle entry passes to Yosemite National Park. My office has reviewed the material, and as a result, I intend to convey to Secretary Bernhardt our advice that the Department should consider disseminating clear guidance to National Park Service staff regarding the disbursement of limited tickets and passes to elected officials.

Separately, regarding your request for correspondence, complaints, or filings by National Park Service personnel with respect to the incident that you describe, we have not identified any responsive documents within the Office of Inspector General.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-208-5745, or your staff may contact Nancy DiPaolo, Director, External Affairs, at 202-208-4357.

Sincerely,

  
Mark Lee Greenblatt  
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable T.J. Cox, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,  
Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Dan Jorjani, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
<https://www.blm.gov>



December 7, 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of September 30, 2020, to Secretary of the Interior Bernhardt regarding a manganese ore stockpile near Wenden, Arizona. The Secretary asked me to respond on his behalf.

The 322,000 metric tons stockpile is located on public domain lands under a right-of-way (AZA 11515) to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), U.S. Department of Defense. The right-of-way was renewed January 1, 2015.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) anticipates that this stockpile will be of use as technology continues to improve in extracting minerals from low-grade ores. Since the minerals have been severed from the public lands, the stockpile is the property of the Defense Logistics Agency. Under the terms of the existing right-of-way, the DLA may remove the materials or submit a right-of-way plan of development to process on site. The BLM is prepared to work with the DLA on finding efficiencies and opportunities regarding this mineral stockpile.

Thank you again for your interest regarding this important issue. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (970) 256-4900, or your staff may contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief, at (202) 631-6346.

Sincerely,

William Perry Pendley  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs

cc:  
BLM Lake Havasu Field Office



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
<https://www.blm.gov>



December 7, 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your letter of September 30, 2020, to Secretary of the Interior Bernhardt regarding a manganese ore stockpile near Wenden, Arizona. The Secretary asked me to respond on his behalf.

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Thank you again for your interest regarding this important issue. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (970) 256-4900, or your staff may contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief, at (202) 631-6346.

Sincerely,

William Perry Pendley  
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs

cc:  
BLM Lake Havasu Field Office



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AUG 07 2020

The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
Representative  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gosar,

I write in response to your correspondence of August 3, 2020, in which you describe a request by another member of Congress for vehicle entry passes to Yosemite National Park. My office has reviewed the material, and as a result, I intend to convey to Secretary Bernhardt our advice that the Department should consider disseminating clear guidance to National Park Service staff regarding the disbursement of limited tickets and passes to elected officials.

Separately, regarding your request for correspondence, complaints, or filings by National Park Service personnel with respect to the incident that you describe, we have not identified any responsive documents within the Office of Inspector General.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-208-5745, or your staff may contact Nancy DiPaolo, Director, External Affairs, at 202-208-4357.

Sincerely,

  
Mark Lee Greenblatt  
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable T.J. Cox, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,  
Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Dan Jorjani, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior

**From:** [Treadwell, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter from Rep. Cawthorn to Sec. Haaland  
**Date:** Thursday, August 26, 2021 8:28:48 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[haaland letter .pdf](#)

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Hello Andrew,  
Please find attached a letter from Rep. Cawthorn to Sec. Haaland.  
I appreciate your time,  
Catherine

**Catherine Treadwell, Esq.**

Legislative Director and Counsel  
U.S. Congressman Madison Cawthorn (NC-11)  
O: (202) 225-6401  
102 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515





*Madison Cawthorn*  
*11<sup>th</sup> District of North Carolina*



*Congress of the United States*  
House of Representatives

August 26, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary of Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Haaland,

I write to you today on a subject of great importance and great sensitivity. Our nation is at a crisis point. Rising Sino imperialism and colonialism, revanchist Russian ambitions, illegal immigrants pouring across an undefended border, rising inflation, a diminished America on the world stage, and the prospect of American honor being lost in a craven retreat from the Taliban in Afghanistan, all of these are issues that are demanding our attention. These times of crisis require intelligence, competence, hardiness, and firm hands at the tiller of the ship of state. The job, “Leader of the Free World”, is not a position granted from sympathy, whimsy, or genetic caste, it is a job for which sober-minded citizens select from amongst themselves an individual that is best-suited to defend them from enemies foreign or domestic. The job, President of these United States, is a sacred trust granted to very few in the hopes that they will protect the legacy of this country and the lives of those who inhabit it.

It brings me no pleasure to report this, but I have become increasingly convinced that President Biden is no longer capable of discharging the duties of his office. The crises that I mentioned above requires a President that is operating at the peak of his cognitive powers. It seems obvious now that this is no longer the case, President Biden is not the Joseph R. Biden of even two years ago. If we, those kindly disposed to our country and its defenders take notice, what will our adversaries and rivals say? Surely, they are awaiting opportunities to exploit this executive-level vulnerability both interpersonally and in their propaganda. America, the best hope of the world, cannot afford a weakness so obvious and glaring. To ask Americans to refuse the obvious evidence of their eyes is a mistake.

Every day that passes witnesses another entry in the ledger of decline. The President of the United States frequently calls for press conferences while refusing to take questions. The President of the United States vacated the White House during a national emergency. According to the Wall Street Journal the commander-in-chief (against the advice of his own senior advisors and the military) insisted on a reckless withdrawal from Afghanistan that we are now reaping bitter fruit from. The President of the United States campaigned for the office from his basement, and he struggles without a Teleprompter. The President of the freest country on earth attempted to guarantee the security of American citizens through negotiations with the Taliban.

The gaffes – once lovable-are both ominous and voluminous now. The fires are burning around the world and President Biden is inert, not even doing us the courtesy of fiddling. President Biden is hapless while we are helpless.

*Madison Cawthorn*  
*11<sup>th</sup> District of North Carolina*

It is worth noting that the weakness embodied by this current President is no longer merely theoretical. Terrorists – sizing on the weak and insensible policy of surrender and humiliation that President Biden insisted on- have murdered United States Servicemembers and civilians as we rush to evacuate them from a disaster of our own making.

What then must be done? The Constitution provides us a remedy – Section 4 of the 25th Amendment lays out the process by which the sitting President may be removed from office for inability to “discharge the powers and duties of his office.” According to this section, “the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide” may with a written declaration inform the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that the President is unfit, and upon receipt of that declaration the Vice President will then take the reins of office. It is this grim remedy that I strongly urge you to avail yourself of.

I remind you of the costliness of obfuscation and direct lies to the American people. Hiding from concerned citizens the vast apparatus required to provide an increasingly flimsy illusion of competence is a recipe for irreversibly destroying confidence in our government. American citizens deserve the truth from their government and competence from their leaders. You must speak the truth and bear witness to what you have surely seen with your own eyes.

Against the charge of partisanship, I remind you that the opposition party sought to make use of this remedy as well. Just this year, then-Senate Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Adam Kinzinger all called for the invocation of the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment on the specious grounds of maladministration, we request that the 25th Amendment be invoked for its true purpose: inability to perform the duties of the Presidency.

I recognize the enormity of this request, yet that enormity is dwarfed by the scale of the consequences that face our country should this constitutional remedy be discarded on the grounds of political expediency. America is of more value than any personality, any individual legacy or place in history, any partisan advantage, or political career. Those of us engaged in affairs of state would do well to remember that. For the protection of our citizens, the preservation of our good name abroad, and the furtherance of this great experiment in liberty and democracy, I bid you find your courage and do nothing more and nothing less than your duty.

Sincerely,



Madison Cawthorn  
Member of Congress

CC: The Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
The Honorable Lloyd Austin  
The Honorable Antony Blinken  
The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
The Honorable Janet Yellen  
The Honorable Merrick Garland  
The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
The Honorable Marty Walsh  
The Honorable Xavier Becerra

**Madison Cawthorn**  
*11<sup>th</sup> District of North Carolina*

The Honorable Marcia Fudge  
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
The Honorable Denis McDonough  
The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
The Honorable Michael Regan

**To:** [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov)  
**Subject:** embargoed release  
**Date:** Friday, September 17, 2021 2:53:51 PM

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Hi Jeff,  
Good to connect earlier, here's the embargoed release.  
-Drew

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9.17 AT 3:30PM ET**

## **Secretary Haaland Outlines Next Steps to Rebuild Bureau of Land Management**

*Announces plans to restore national headquarters to Washington, D.C.; Western headquarters will be expanded*

**WASHINGTON** – Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland today outlined steps that the Department plans to take to rebuild and strengthen the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) following years of transition and upheaval among the workforce. These changes, which will be done in coordination with Congress, will improve the function of the bureau, help provide clarity for the BLM's more than 7,000 employees across the country, maintain and increase access for stakeholders, and enable the bureau to better serve the American public and fulfill its mission as the steward of nearly one-fifth of the nation's public lands.

In a meeting with BLM employees today, Secretary Haaland announced her intention to restore the BLM national headquarters to Washington, D.C., ensuring the bureau has a presence in the nation's capital. Under this plan, the BLM's current presence in Grand Junction, Colo., will grow and expand as the bureau's official Western headquarters. This office will reinforce western perspectives in decision-making and have an important role to play in the bureau's clean energy, outdoor recreation, conservation, and scientific missions, among other important work as a leadership center in the West.

"The Bureau of Land Management is critical to the nation's efforts to address the climate crisis, expand public access to our public lands, and preserve our nation's shared outdoor heritage. It is imperative that the bureau have the appropriate structure and resources to serve the American public," said **Secretary Haaland**. "There's no doubt that the BLM should have a leadership presence in Washington, D.C. – like all the other land management agencies – to ensure that it has access to the policy-, budget-, and decision-making levers to best carry out its mission. In addition, the BLM's robust presence in Colorado and across the West will continue to grow."

"The past several years have been incredibly disruptive to the organization, to our public servants, and to their families. As we move forward, my priority is to revitalize and rebuild the BLM so that it can meet the pressing challenges of our time, and to look out for our employees' well-being," added **Secretary Haaland**. "I look forward to continuing to work with Congress, Tribes,

elected officials and the many stakeholders who care about the stewardship of our shared public lands and healthy communities."

The Department intends to locate the Bureau Director and other key leadership positions in the national headquarters where they can ensure coordination with Congress, other federal agencies, and stakeholders that visit Washington, D.C. Additional senior personnel will operate from the Western headquarters, as part of the more than 95 percent of BLM employees that are already located outside of Washington, D.C.

The Secretary's vision for the BLM comes after substantive engagement with employees, Tribal consultations, and meetings with local, state, and federal leaders. The Secretary visited Grand Junction in July, and pledged to provide clarity and direction. Additional logistics and planning will occur in the months to come in close coordination with BLM employees, Congress, Tribes, and elected leaders.

The Department plans to take a number of additional steps, in coordination with leaders in Congress, to ensure that the BLM is best positioned to serve the American public. This includes establishing a new BLM Foundation – as authorized in legislation – to support the bureau's efforts and to help build new partnerships. The BLM will strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes by supporting Tribal Liaisons in each state. The BLM will also seek to improve coordination and capacity to implement clean energy projects.

The previous administration relocated the BLM headquarters to Grand Junction, Colo., a move that failed to deliver promised jobs across the West and drove hundreds of people out of the agency. Of the 328 positions moved out of Washington, D.C., only 41 of the affected people relocated, with 3 moving to Grand Junction. This led to a significant loss of institutional memory and talent. The headquarters transition will be conducted with a goal of minimizing further disruption to employees and their families. Outside of the aforementioned core leadership positions, the BLM does not plan to require employees to relocate.

###

Andrew G. Wallace  
Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)

**From:** [Flanagan, Denise A](#)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Follow-up on reprogramming letter  
**Date:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 2:08:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

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Denise Flanagan  
Director of Budget  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW, Room 4108  
Washington DC 20240  
202-208-5309 (Direct Line)  
202-316-1383 (Cell)  
[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)

---

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 2:00 PM  
**To:** Flanagan, Denise A <[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Follow-up on reprogramming letter

Thank you!

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
Enewsletter Signup [HERE](#)  
<https://boebert.house.gov>



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**From:** Flanagan, Denise A <[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 1:35 PM  
**To:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Cc:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Follow-up on reprogramming letter

Jeff,

Hi, yes I am, hope you are as well. I understand you reached out to Drew as well and he informed me your request is under consideration. Thanks, Denise

Denise Flanagan  
Director of Budget

Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW, Room 4108  
Washington DC 20240  
202-208-5309 (Direct Line)  
202-316-1383 (Cell)  
[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)

**From:** Small, Jeff <[Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 3, 2021 5:14 PM  
**To:** Flanagan, Denise A <[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Follow-up on reprogramming letter

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Denise,

Hope you are doing well.

Reaching out to see if I can get a copy of the Bureau of Land Management reprogramming letter you recently sent to Appropriators?

Sincerely,

Jeff Small | Chief of Staff  
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (CO-03)  
Longworth 1609 | (202)870-6264 (cell)  
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<https://boebert.house.gov>

