

May 11, 2017

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As members of several of the Department of the Interior's Resource Advisory Committees (RACs), we are writing to request the immediate reinstatement of RAC meetings in order to ensure ongoing public input regarding the management of our public lands. This is particularly important in light of your recent announcement of an expedited comment period for all of the national monument designations currently under review. We believe it is inappropriate to cancel an essential mechanism for public input and oversight in advance of a massive call for public input.

As you know, the Department of the Interior (DOI) recently cancelled all RAC activities nationwide without any explanation, guidance, or further information for members of the public. Our limited understanding is that the purpose of this cancellation is for the Administration to review all public advisory bodies and functions currently in place at DOI. While we appreciate the need to ensure DOI has appropriate mechanisms for public input, we are deeply concerned that cancelling all public advisory committee activities until further notice fundamentally undermines trust in the public process, and eliminates a vital opportunity for public input in the management of our public lands.

RACs are composed of a broad cross-section of the local public, with members representing interests ranging from mineral resources, livestock grazing, and wild horses to conservation, recreation and archaeology, as well as seats for tribes and the public-at-large.

These advisory bodies serve multiple key purposes. First, they serve as mechanisms for BLM and other agencies to communicate regularly and substantively with representatives of the public, sharing important information, providing more in-depth education on issues through field trips and presentations by issue experts, and fielding questions. Second, they serve as mechanisms for representatives of the public to share what they have learned with their communities. Third, they serve as mechanisms for representatives of the public to provide perspectives on behalf of their communities that inform and educate BLM and other agencies about the local public's concerns and priorities. This interaction helps bridge the gap between DOI and members of the public, making RACs a valuable tool for public engagement and dialogue.

RAC members represent diverse public interests, engage in thoughtful debate, and provide meaningful management recommendations to the BLM and other land management agencies with local perspective. As a result, RACs have made invaluable contributions over the last two

decades, including recommending improvements to BLM grazing management, review and input on critical energy development proposals, and suggestions for the thoughtful management of increasing recreational demands on our public lands.

We strongly believe that public awareness, discussion, and input are crucial to DOI's decision-making, and advisory bodies like the RACs instill greater cooperation between the public and public land management agencies. As the BLM website articulately explains, "Advisory committees are invaluable to the BLM because consensus-driven recommendations often lead to sustainable outcomes that benefit natural resources and often enjoy a high level of public support."

That is why we have each volunteered and made the commitment to serve on our respective RACs. It is a responsibility we all take seriously and we are concerned about being cut off from this public input process. Cancelling the meetings of these essential public advisory bodies shuts off an effective and principal conduit for public land managers to engage with public stakeholders and constituents, and for our communities' to provide public input to public land management agencies.

We support building trust and improving public input mechanisms; however, cancelling RAC activities runs counter to this goal. To that end, we urge you to immediately reinstate RAC meetings and engage RAC members in determining how these advisory bodies can be strengthened and supported.

We applaud the dedicated DOI staff across the country for their thoughtful stewardship of our public lands, and we appreciate the opportunity to work with them as RAC members, providing public input on land management issues impacting our communities.

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter. We look forward to resuming our duties of representing the public very soon.

Sincerely,

Barbara Marrett
Recreational and Tourism Interests
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Dr. Keith Watts
Education Representative
Grand Staircase-Escalante NM Monument
Advisory Committee

Jamie Stephens
Local Government
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Tim Ballard
Private Timberland Owner
Southwest Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Jason Anderson
Recreation
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

Kenneth R. Poole
Mining and Mineral interests
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Bob Schneider
Environmental
Central Valley Resource Advisory
Committee

John Cornell
Environment and Conservation
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory
Committee

Thomas S. Reeve
Public-at-Large
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Mia Sheppard
Conservation/Environment
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Mariana Maguire
Public-at-Large
California Desert Advisory Committee

David Cooper
Chair
Black Rock High Rock Subgroup of the
Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Committee

Scott Braden
Environment
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

Dan Morse
Environment
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Steve Peerman
Chair
Pecos District Resource Advisory
Committee

Ben Gordon
Environment
John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory
Committee

Joseph Vaile
Conservation
Southwest Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Jim Bishop
Public-at-Large
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Philip S. West
Resources
Pecos Region Resource Advisory
Committee

Thomas C. Reynolds
Recreation and Tourism
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Julie Mach
Environment
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

Anthony V. Popp
Chair
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory
Committee

Norman McKee
Wildlife Biology
Grand Staircase Escalante National
Monument Advisory Committee

Frazier Haney
Environment
California Desert Advisory Committee

John F. Helmer
Dispersed Recreation
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Douglas P. Reagan
Environmental Interests
Grand Staircase Escalante National
Monument Advisory Committee

Nathan Hovekamp
No Financial Interest
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Paul L. Martin, PE
Non-renewable Resources
California Desert Advisory Committee

Kathryn Wadsworth
Recreation
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

Dr. Gene Helfman
Wildlife and ecology
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

David Bilyeu
Statewide Environmental Representative
Steen Mountain Advisory Committee

Jack Callaway
Transportation and Right of Way
Pecos Valley District Resource Advisory
Committee

Rhea Miller
Public-at-Large
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Leon Pielstick
Wild Horse and Burro
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Michael Jonas
History and Culture
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Randall Gray
Dispersed Recreation
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory
Committee

Maxin Levy
Recreational Activities, Off-Road Vehicles
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory
Committee

George Veni, PhD
Natural Resource Management/Natural
Sciences
Pecos Valley District Resource Advisory
Committee

Ellen Cypher
Public-at-Large
Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory
Committee

Barbara Vasquez, Ph.D.
Chair & Representative of Dispersed
Recreation
Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory
Committee

Mike Quigley
Environment
Arizona Resource Advisory Committee

Jon Willers
Emigrant Trails Community Representative
Black Rock High Rock Subgroup of the
Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Committee

Emmett Sturgill
Grazing
Arizona Resource Advisory Committee

Julia Stuble
Environmental Organizations
Wyoming Resource Advisory Committee

Phil Hanceford
Environmental Representative
Grand Staircase-Escalante National
Monument Advisory Committee

Patricia McDaniel
Environmental Organization
Pecos District Resource Advisory
Committee

Michael Khus-zarate
Native American Representative
Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory
Committee

Coby Tigert
Environment
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory
Committee

Jara Johnson
Environment
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

Charles Stuart
Representative of Dispersed Recreation
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory
Committee

Jackie Ferry
Cultural and Heritage Interests
San Juan Islands National Monument
Advisory Committee

Michael Gibson
Outfitters and Guides
Boise District Resource Advisory
Committee

Jimbo Buickerood
Environmental Representative
Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory
Committee

Becky Smith
History and Archaeology
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory
Committee

Craig Deutsche
Public at Large
Carrizo Plain Monument Advisory
Committee

Karen Steenhof
Chair
Boise District Resource Advisory
Committee

Mike Pritchard
Vice Chairman, Dispersed Recreation
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory
Committee

James Kenney
Public at Large
California Desert Advisory Committee

Bill Dvorak
Commercial Permittee Representative
Front Range Resource Advisory Committee

Donald W. Hodge
Rights of Way
Southeast Regional Resource Advisory
Committee

John E. Hiatt
Environment
Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource
Advisory Committee

Anne Hiller Clark
Historical/Archaeological
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Chandra LeGue
Regional Environmental Organization
Coastal Oregon Resource Advisory Committee

Owyhee Weikel-Magden
Local Environmental Representative
Steens Mountain Resource Advisory
Committee

George Newman
Elected Official
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory
Committee

Wes McStay
Grazing
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory
Committee

Luke Schafer
Environmental Representative
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory
Committee

Julie Weikel
Conservation, Wild Horse & Burro
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

Connor P. Coleman
Environment
Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory
Committee

Jason Kesling
Public at Large
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory
Committee

William Gleason
Public-at-Large
Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory
Committee

Cc: Mike Nedd, Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management
Bud Cribley, BLM Alaska State Director
Raymond Suazo, BLM Arizona State Director
Jerry Perez, BLM California State Director
Ruth Welch, BLM Colorado State Director
Karen Mouritsen, BLM Eastern States State Director
Tim Murphy, BLM Idaho State Director
Jon Raby, Acting BLM Montana-Dakotas State Director
Marci Todd, Acting BLM Nevada State Director
Amy Lueders, New Mexico BLM State Director
Jaime Connell, BLM Oregon/Washington State Director
Ed Roberson, BLM Utah State Director
Mary Jo Rugwell, BLM Wyoming State Director