

Colleagues,

From June through November last year, I conducted more than 150 listening sessions with employees and managers across the BLM with the goal of sharing information, building trust and transparency, and getting your feedback on operational areas where you felt we could improve. I want you to know that I heard each and every one of you and have begun working closely with other Bureau leaders to address many of the areas you highlighted.

Feedback on our discussions centered around nine themes, which I have highlighted below, along with initial steps we have taken to make immediate improvements.

- 1. Recruitment and Onboarding Delays** – I heard a number of concerns expressed regarding how long it takes to recruit and onboard new staff. I asked the Field Committee’s Human Capital Subcommittee, the NOC, and the larger BLM HR community to work together to advance HR process improvements outlined in my [October 21, 2021 All Employee Announcement](#), to include hiring 67 more HR professionals to expedite the hiring of more employees Bureau-wide.
- 2. Staffing Shortages** – We heard you when you said we consistently have to do too much with too little, and so did the administration. Based on the President’s FY 2022 budget, the BLM will have funding to hire an additional 600 staff members in addition to filling our current vacancies. The Field Committee has been tasked with developing a strategy for quick, targeted hiring in priority areas where help is needed most.
- 3. Staff Retention** – I heard concerns that we hire and train people only to have them get hired away by sister agencies. The Bureau is developing a strategy to enhance the use of recruitment and

retention incentives for many of the job series within the BLM, in addition to petroleum engineers and technicians, contracting staff, HR professionals and other positions.

4. **Decision Authority** – There are some concerns that the field does not have enough decision-making authority. The ELT is reviewing the Delegation of Authority manual and ensuring the decision authority across the Bureau is delegated to the lowest level possible. This will give local leaders the authority to make decisions faster with more local accountability.
5. **Vaccine/Mask Mandates and Return to Office** – The pandemic came up in almost all of my conversations. Consistent with the Department, OPM and CDC guidance, the BLM Headquarters, States, and Centers are drafting reentry plans to outline the framework and procedures to guide a safe return to the office with considerations for appropriate use of telework and remote work. We will continue to communicate updates through leadership and BLM's [COVID-19 Portal](#). As you may be aware, on January 21, 2022, a District Court Judge issued a preliminary nationwide injunction prohibiting implementation and enforcement of the vaccine mandate for Federal employees per E.O 14043. The injunction is limited to implementation and enforcement of E.O. 14043, which imposes a vaccination requirement. It has no effect on enforcement of other workplace safety protocols related to vaccination status, such as masking, physical distancing, testing, travel, and quarantine requirements. Until further notice, we have halted all actions related to requiring vaccination and the submission and/or processing of requests for reasonable accommodation, exemption or extension.
6. **Diversity and Inclusion** – I heard from many that the agency needs to diversify. The BLM is on the cusp of releasing the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Strategy, which will be our roadmap to advance these critically important principles in the BLM workplace, culture, and organization. I have also asked each ELT member to develop a local strategy to build a leadership

team and workforce that represent the diversity of the Nation and the people we serve.

- 7. Transparency and Two-way Communications** – Many individuals asked for more and consistent information about what is happening in the agency, especially given new leadership. More listening sessions will be scheduled for this year and regular All-Employee Forums will be hosted to keep us interacting on the issues. The members for the [Employee Advisory Group](#) on the Headquarters relocation were announced last week. BLM’s [Bright Ideas Suggestion Box](#) offers employees the opportunity to submit constructive ideas to improve our business practices and internal processes.
- 8. Embracing Technology** – One of the upsides I heard about the pandemic is that we have embraced technology more as a way to continue our work. Meeting, chatting, and collaborating are now easier than ever with Teams and Zoom, and our desktop products have improved on efficiencies and expanded our remote business capabilities. (More information on these tools can be found at the [DOI Office 365 Portal site](#).) The Bureau-wide adoption of digital signatures, increased use of SharePoint, new electronic forms, and the Data Tracking System (DTS) have helped us to save time and resources. We will continue to look for other ways to work smarter and increase our use of technology.
- 9. Addressing the Climate Crisis** - Many people also expressed concern about how climate change is affecting – and will continue to affect – our ability to successfully manage the lands in our care. In response, we conducted a series of 15 Climate Change Listening Sessions for BLM employees in October and November of 2021. The listening sessions gave a platform for employees to share ideas with leadership through group brainstorming sessions focusing on how we, as a bureau, can best address climate change. In total, 1,578 participants attended the listening sessions providing over 3,000 comments. The ideas and feedback will help inform and influence new

policies and business practices to allow the BLM to tackle the climate crisis consistent with Executive Orders on the topic.

As you can see, based on your feedback we are making progress along many fronts, but we can't stop here. There's more work to be done, more improvements to be made. It can be daunting to think about all the tasks before us -- if we go it alone. But we're the BLM and we're 10,000 strong! Imagine the strength of each of us working together to find and make positive improvements in our workplace.

Tracy, Nada and I recognize and appreciate your contributions and achievements, as individuals and as members of the BLM family. Each day you remind us that working together we are stronger.

Take care and have a wonderful day! :)

Michael D. Nedd
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A thought to consider based on John Wesley's writing "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, while you can!"

Working together we're stronger - BLM Strong" - and our Core Values are "To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference."