

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

November 19, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair McCollum:

As negotiations begin on the final FY 20 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to prohibit the use of funds under any authority to relocate the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) headquarters outside of the National Capital Region (NCR). The proposed relocation is designed to harm public lands and limit congressional oversight.

On July 16, 2019, the Department of the Interior (DOI) announced its plans to relocate and establish a new headquarters for the BLM in Grand Junction, Colorado, well after the House passed its FY 20 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The main argument, used by proponents of this move, is that headquarters staff will be closer to stakeholders. However, 97% of BLM staff are already located outside of the NCR, undoubtedly because of where land under BLM jurisdiction is located. It is necessary that the roughly 300 D.C.-based staffers stay in the NCR to continue assisting Congress in writing laws and engaging in oversight by providing unvarnished facts to lawmakers.

On September 10, 2019, the House Committee on Natural Resources held an oversight hearing entitled *BLM Disorganization: Examining the Proposed Reorganization and Relocation of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado*. During that hearing the DOI failed to provide documentation on the cost-benefit analysis used, admitted consultation was not done with all stakeholders and did not provide employees an opportunity for input.

Since the hearing, our concerns have only grown. On September 20, 2019, BLM announced that they had selected 760 Horizon Drive in Grand Junction, Colorado for national senior leadership and support staff, including the agency's Director, Deputy Director for Operations and several Assistant Directors. This building also serves as the home to a Chevron corporate office, a branch of the Colorado Oil and Gas Association and Laramie Energy, an independent natural gas exploration company, giving these companies direct access to the agency tasked with overseeing the public lands they seek to privatize.

With only a fraction of reassigned employees opting to relocate, we are extremely concerned that moving forward with the relocation would increasingly jeopardize oversight, not to mention the protection of public lands from oil and gas interests. Only 27 BLM staffers are expected to move to Grand Junction and hundreds more will be scattered across the West. Even

the DOI's own website concedes that "the total cost of the move is unknown at this time." This move is opposed by Western Values Project, The Public Land Foundation, the Western Colorado Alliance for Community Action and former BLM employees.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

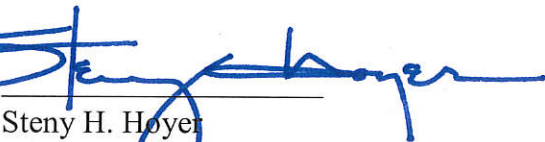
Sincerely,



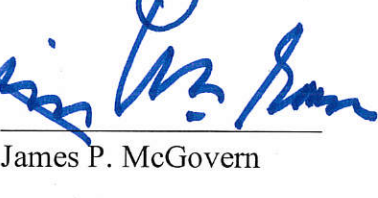
Eleanor Holmes Norton



Anthony G. Brown



Steny H. Hoyer



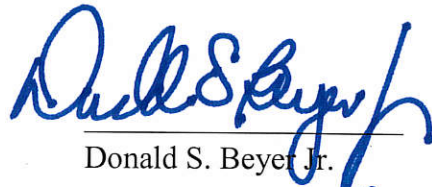
James P. McGovern



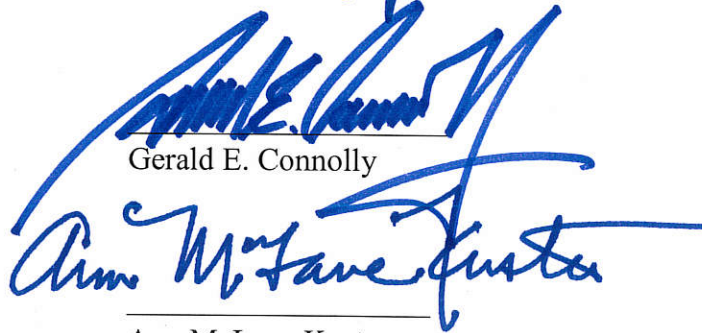
John P. Sarbanes



Jennifer Wexton



Donald S. Beyer Jr.



Gerald E. Connolly



Ann McLane Kuster



Jamie Raskin



David Trone