

American Bird Conservancy • Archaeology Southwest • Athens County's Future Action Network • Basin and Range Watch • Black Hills Clean Water Alliance • Born Free USA • Buckeye Environmental Network • Center for Biological Diversity • Christian Council of Delmara • Clean Water Action • Coalition to Protect America's National Parks • Conservation Council for Hawaii • Conservation Lands Foundation • Conserve Southwest Utah • Cultural Landscapes • Defenders of Wildlife • Desert Tortoise Council • Earthworks • Elders Rising • Endangered Habitats League • Endangered Small Animal Conservation Fund • Endangered Species Coalition • Environment Texas • Environmental LLC • Food & Water Action • Friends of Blackwater • Friends of Rose Creek • Friends of Sloan Canyon • Friends of the Earth • Friends of the Inyo • Friends of the Sonoran Desert • Gaviota Coast Conservancy • Gila Resources Information Project • Grand Canyon Trust • Grand Staircase Escalante Partners • Great Basin Water Network • Great Old Broads • Great Salt Lake Audubon • Greater Hells Canyon Council • Green River Action Network • Greenpeace USA • Healthy Gulf • Heartwood • High Country Conservation Advocates • International Fund for Animal Welfare • International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute • Living Rivers • Living Rivers • Los Padres Forest Watch • Malach Consulting • Mountain Lion Foundation • Native Plant Conservation Campaign • Nevada Conservation League • Northern Alaska Environmental Center • NY4WHALES • Oceanic Preservation Society • Progressive Alliance of Nevada • Public Citizen • Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility • Quite Use Coalition • RESTORE: The North Woods • Rocky Mountain Wild • Rural Utah Project • San Juan Citizens Alliance • Save Our Sky Blue Waters • Save Wolves Now Network • Sheep Mountain Alliance • Sierra Club • Sierra Club Oakland • Southeast Alaska Conservation Council • Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance • Taxpayer Association of Kane County • The Mountain Pact • Turtle Island Restoration Network • Turtle Island Restoration Network • Unexpected Wildlife Refuge • Uplift • Uranium Watch • Utah Audubon Council • Utah Native Plant Society • Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment • Utah Tar Sands Resistance • Waterkeeper Alliance • Western Colorado Alliance • Western Values Project • Western Watersheds Project • Western Watersheds Project • Wild Zone Conservation League • WildEarth Guardians • Wilderness Workshop •

March 19, 2020

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

Re: Request for the suspension of all public comment periods in recognition of the National Health Emergency

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of members and supporters, respectfully request that the Department of the Interior suspend major policy changes, changes to regulations, oil and gas lease sales and public comment periods related to those for the immediate future.

President Donald J. Trump has declared a “national health emergency” to address the COVID 19 virus. The nation’s attention is focused on keeping its families healthy and safe. Many schools are closed, which means parents are focused on childcare. Workplace activities have been disrupted, making it difficult for many people to focus on business-as-usual activities. Many libraries are closed which means citizens without computers cannot review environmental assessment documents.

Commenting on Interior Department proposals for major policy changes, changes to regulations, and oil and gas leases requires concerted focused attention and resources that many people who normally engage in these processes simply do not have right now. Additionally, several field trips and in-person meetings are scheduled that are in conflict with the president’s request to limit public gatherings.

A few of the comment periods in process include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Take of Migratory Birds that proposes to redefine the scope of the Migratory Treaty Bird Act;
- Bureau of Land Management SEISs for Greater Sage Grouse;
- Ongoing oil and gas leases and permits;
- Bureau of Land Management Draft Farmington Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement
- California Desert District Advisory Council Field Trips;
- Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment for Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Wild Horse Management, BLM Wyoming field offices;
- Categorical Exclusion for Pinyon Pine-Juniper Removal;
- Revised proposed critical habitat for the western distinct population segment of the yellow-billed cuckoo

We respectfully request that the Department of the Interior suspend comment periods and oil and gas lease sales during the time of this global pandemic.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy
Archaeology Southwest
Athens County's Future Action Network
Basin and Range Watch
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
Born Free USA
Buckeye Environmental Network
Center for Biological Diversity
Christian Council of Delmara
Clean Water Action
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Conservation Council for Hawaii
Conservation Lands Foundation

Conserve Southwest Utah
Cultural Landscapes
Defenders of Wildlife
Desert Tortoise Council
Earthworks
Elders Rising
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Small Animal Conservation Fund
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment Texas
Environmental LLC
Food & Water Action
Friends of Blackwater
Friends of Rose Creek
Friends of Sloan Canyon
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Gaviota Coast Conservancy
Gila Resources Information Project
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Great Basin Water Network
Great Old Broads
Great Salt Lake Audubon
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Green River Action Network
Greenpeace USA
Healthy Gulf
Heartwood
High Country Conservation Advocates
International Fund for Animal Welfare
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Living Rivers
Living Rivers
Los Padres Forest Watch
Malach Consulting
Mountain Lion Foundation
Native Plant Conservation Campaign
Nevada Conservation League
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
NY4WHALES
Oceanic Preservation Society
Progressive Alliance of Nevada
Public Citizen
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

Quite Use Coalition
RESTORE: The North Woods
Rocky Mountain Wild
Rural Utah Project
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save Wolves Now Network
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Oakland
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Taxpayer Association of Kane County
The Mountain Pact
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unexpected Wildlife Refuge
Uplift
Uranium Watch
Utah Audubon Council
Utah Native Plant Society
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
Utah Tar Sands Resistance
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Colorado Alliance
Western Values Project
Western Watersheds Project
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Wild Zone Conservation League
WildEarth Guardians
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