

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 10, 2020

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express opposition to Mr. Pendley's nomination to the position of Director of the Bureau of Land Management. Mr. Pendley's public record, including his advocacy for reducing public lands and access to them, routine attempts to undermine tribes, and climate change denial makes him unfit for the position. The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for stewarding vast expanses of public lands. It needs a leader who reflects the values of the American people and their support for access to public lands. Mr. Pendley's record lays bare his decades of opposition to those values.

Mr. Pendley's first tenure at the Department of the Interior under Secretary James Watt was fraught with controversy. The Department's coal leasing program under Mr. Pendley's management was described by the Chairman of the Commission on Fair Market Value Policy for Federal Coal Leasing (the Linowes Commission) as "deficient in all of its functions," and found that administrators of the leasing program "had acted unwisely and had made significant decisions involving many millions of taxpayers' dollars with significant impact on the environment without adequate documentation."¹

Over the years, Mr. Pendley has consistently called for selling off public lands, which runs contrary to the balanced approach to managing public lands policy in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. He has even gone so far as to say that, "the Founding Fathers intended all lands owned by the federal government to be sold."² As recently as January 2019, Mr. Pendley retweeted an article entitled, "Confirmed: President Trump Can Sell Federal Land To Build The Wall," and commented, "After all, it is what the Founders intended!"³ Mr. Pendley has also sought to privatize public streams and rivers, such as in a lawsuit to overturn Montana's stream access law in 2000.⁴ Mr. Pendley's rejection of public lands protections also extends to calling on Congress to repeal the Antiquities Act, the bedrock conservation statute that authorizes Presidents to designate National Monuments.

Mr. Pendley has on many prior occasions mischaracterized, mocked, or undermined tribes' experiences, rights, and religion. This includes arguing against legal precedent that views tribal members as members of sovereign political entities, rather than as a racial group,⁵ and including text in a 2006 book⁶ that romanticizes settlers' relationships with tribes in the early days of the United States. Mr. Pendley's problematic history is particularly concerning given the Bureau's statutory and treaty responsibilities regarding consultations with tribes.

In addition, Mr. Pendley has previously denied climate change. This includes likening climate change to unicorns, claiming "neither exists"⁷, and tweeting that it is "political science or junk science, not real science, and it is, as with

¹ [New York Times](#), February 9, 1984, p. A1.

² William Perry Pendley, "[The Federal Government Should Follow the Constitution and Sell Its Western Lands](#)," 2016.

³ William Perry Pendley, [Twitter](#), 2019.

⁴ "[Landowners take on state's Stream Access law](#)," 2000.

⁵ Sean Cavanagh, "[Teacher-Training Grants for American Indians Questioned](#)," 2004.

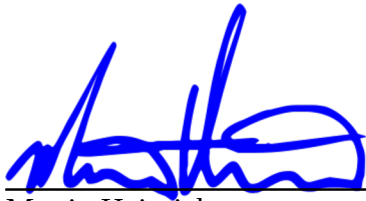
⁶ William Perry Pendley, *Warriors for the West: Fighting Bureaucrats, Radical Groups, And Liberal Judges on America's Frontier*, 2006.

⁷ William Perry Pendley, [Twitter](#), 2019.

real science, far from settled!”⁸ Bureau of Land Management decisions must be guided by science, including climate change data that greatly impacts America’s public lands.

We are confident that the nomination process will demonstrate the need for a different nominee. We urge you to identify a new, qualified candidate for this critical position – one who supports public lands and the mission of the Bureau of Land Management.

Sincerely,




Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Joe Manchin
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



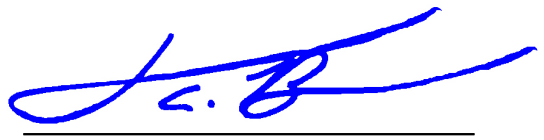
Mazie Keiko Hirono
United States Senator



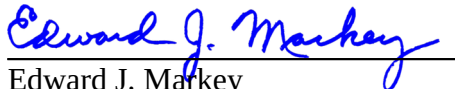
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator

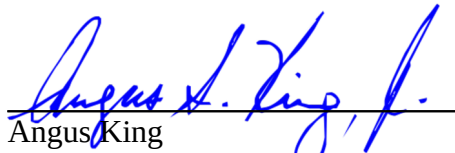


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

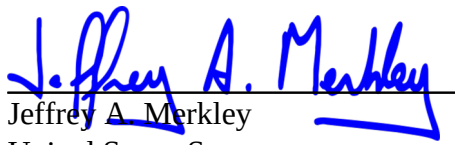
/s/ Sherrod Brown

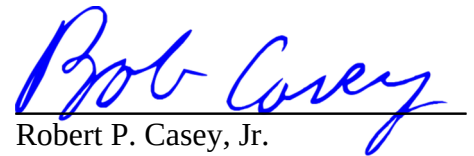
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Angus King
United States Senator




Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator




Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator




Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



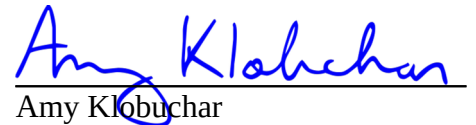
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Kamala Harris
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Debbie A. Stabenow
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



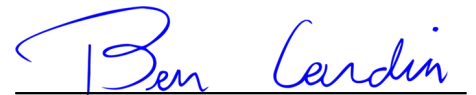
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator




Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



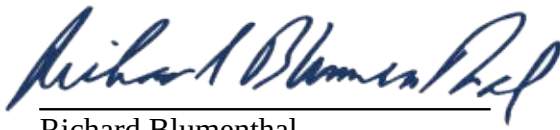
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

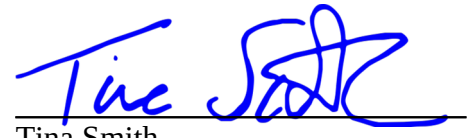



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Tom Carper
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Tina Smith
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

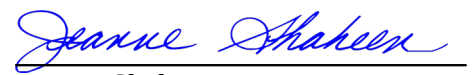

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Gary Peters

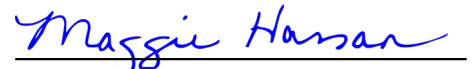
Gary Peters
United States Senator


Jon Tester
United States Senator

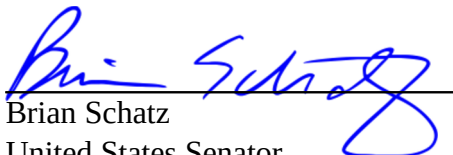

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



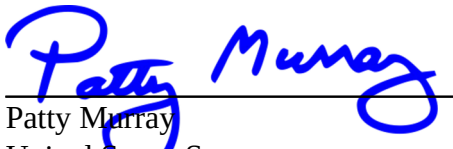
Maggie Hassan
United States Senator




Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Chris Murphy
United States Senator




Patty Murray
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator