



Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

For America's Heritage

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, & Related Agencies
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski:

The Public Lands Foundation (PLF) has reviewed the President's FY 2018 budget for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The document entitled, "A New Foundation for American Greatness" causes PLF members great concern. The proposal results in a \$130 million operations reduction compared to the FY 2017 budget. With the exception of the energy programs, all other activities are reduced. As a multiple use agency, it is important to recognize that the BLM has important natural resources to manage from coal to wilderness, recreation to livestock grazing, and wildlife to wild horses. This budget is moving the needle towards energy, which is very important to the United States, but is currently designed at the expense of many other vital programs that impact the social and economic well being of its citizens.

The National Public Lands administered by the BLM are predominately located in the western United States. These western states are going through significant population growth. In addition, these communities rely on these lands for outdoor recreation, infrastructure, resource use and quality land health. The myriad of uses of the National Public Lands are important for the economic well being of the rural West. This is a period of time where budget increases for resource management agencies would be appropriate to keep in step with the growing demand for services, not a time for devastating funding cuts.

In order to meet this proposed budget reduction, the BLM will have to eliminate 1,000 employees. This type of reduction in staff will have significant consequences on these increased services demanded by the American public especially those in the West. Secretary of the Interior Zinke has issued a secretarial order to expand access to public lands and increase recreation, hunting and fishing opportunities. What the Secretary is asking is important, however, it will not be possible with the funding outlined in the President's budget. This puts the agency in an impossible situation and western communities in a lose-lose scenario.

The proposed budget is not all doom and gloom as it does contain some important features. An increase in oil, gas, and coal funding is appropriate to increase the United States' energy resources and continued independence. Reauthorizing the Federal Land Transfer Facilitation Act (FLTFA) is an important feature to maintain a cost-effective land acquisition program. Fully utilizing the elements of the Wild Horse and Burro Act is important and potentially offers a significant cost savings to our public.

The PLF would like to request that in your deliberations of the FY 2018 budget you enact a budget for the BLM and the National Public Lands they manage for the Nation that returns the operating budget to at least that of FY 2017. The budget cuts contained in the President's budget will be devastating for

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many western rural communities and the public, especially the non-energy States who will feel the brunt of the cuts. Additionally, the agency will be spending an inordinate amount of time and money carrying out staff reductions that will further erode the agency's ability to manage the natural resources, and be responsive to the needs of Western communities regarding our National Public Lands.

The Public Lands Foundation is a nonprofit national organization incorporated in 1987 to support keeping the National Public Lands administered by the BLM in public hands, embracing multiple use management as prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and following sound environmental principles. We are a membership organization whose members are predominantly retired former employees of the BLM. As such, our membership represents a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience in public land management.

We are happy to provide information or assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jesse J. Juen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jesse" and last name "Juen" clearly legible.

Jesse J. Juen, President

Cc: The Honorable Ken Calvert, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Mr. Mike Nedd
Acting Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Room 5665
Washington, D.C. 20240