



For America's Heritage

## Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

August 20, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
United States Senate  
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate  
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

I am writing on behalf of the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) requesting a hearing be held by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on the implications of the proposed reorganization by the Department of the Interior to functionally dismantle the headquarters component of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) located in Washington, D.C.

As we stated in our letter to you of July 22, 2019, the PLF is strongly opposed to the proposal and feels it is imperative that the BLM Director, Assistant Directors, and professional multi-disciplinary resource support staffs continue to be located in Washington, D.C. where Federal agency policy, budget, and oversight functions occur and decisions are made that affect all Americans in the management of our national public lands.

The Department on August 15, 2019 announced that the BLM will begin implementing the plan, since the 30-day congressional review period had passed without objections from Congress. It should be noted, however, that much of the 30-day notice to Congress occurred during the August recess. It is extremely disappointing and unfortunate that the Department is moving forward so quickly with relocation of the BLM Headquarters without adequate transparency or sufficient analysis of the overall costs and impacts to the long-term management of the public lands.

The consequences of the decision to proceed ahead with the plan are huge and will have long lasting impacts to stakeholders, employees, and public land management that are not well understood. This plan is so radical that we question whether it was studied or analyzed by non-political budget analysts or organizational experts and whether career BLM senior management were involved or consulted. In short, we believe this plan will result in the BLM serving only the short-term wants of locally powerful stakeholders to the detriment of all other constituents and the long-term needs of the public lands. The breakup of the Washington Office structure will promote parochial, local interests, over the national interests in the management of the public lands.

The PLF is a national non-profit organization with more than 600 members, comprised principally of retired, but still dedicated BLM employees with a unique body of experience, expertise and knowledge of the multiple-use management of the public lands as prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. Many of our members have 30

years or more of experience in resource management and have worked in multiple locations. They know and understand the collaboration and coordination required when making decisions that affect multiple resources and the impact those decisions have on the various users of the public lands and resources.

The PLF would be happy to discuss our concerns or assist in any way possible to discuss organizational options that maintain the integrity of the BLM as a highly functioning agency managing the public lands for multiple uses consistent with the national interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward W. Shepard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" being more prominent than the last name "Shepard".

Edward W. Shepard, President

cc:

Hon. Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations

Hon. Patrick Leahy, Vice-Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations

Hon. Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

Hon. Tom Udall, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies

Hon. James E. Risch (ID)

Hon. Tim Kaine (VA)