



August 27, 2019

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The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva:

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) is a national nonprofit membership organization representing Forest Service retirees across the nation. It is dedicated to sustaining the heritage of caring for America's National Forests and Grasslands and helping the U.S Forest Service. Throughout our careers we have also worked closely with highly professional and dedicated Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employees and leaders for the past 70 years with a shared goal of caring for, managing, and protecting America's public lands. We have the utmost respect for them and their increasingly complex and difficult mission.

We are writing to thank you for the oversight hearing on the proposed BLM reorganization scheduled for September 10, 2019. As you know the BLM faces a significant challenge to its future ability to accomplish its mission and possibly its future viability. The proposal to move BLM leadership and staff from Washington DC to various western locations will severely hamstring the agency. That much is clear to almost any leader who has spent his or her career managing public lands. To move its Director and principle staff to a relatively small western community signals either a lack of understanding of the complexity of agency leadership or worse, it signals a deliberate attempt to weaken the agency.

Your oversight is welcomed and desperately needed. The pending hearing will show that the perceived benefits of such a move are simply not real. The importance of the BLM and the resources it manages demand a national headquarters located in Washington DC.

We also firmly believe that an agency altering decision such as this should not be made by an acting director but should be delayed until the BLM has a properly vetted and Senate confirmed permanent Director. As you know the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 requires Senate confirmation of the BLM Director. It is the law and has not yet been followed. At a minimum we urge you to work with your Senate colleagues to ensure this potential dismantling of such a historic and highly successful agency be delayed until a Senate confirmed Director is in place and can be part of the process.

We stand ready to offer our assistance and experience in any manner that might be helpful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James L. Caswell

**James L. Caswell, Chair
National Association of Forest Service Retirees**