



For America's Heritage

## Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

May 26, 2026

The Honorable Joe Neguse  
2400 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
2330 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Neguse, Congressman Huffman and Other Members:

I am the President of the Public Lands Foundation (PLF). We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization founded in 1987 that advocates and works to keep public lands in public hands and supports the career employees at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of our members are former BLM employees who spent their careers managing the BLM-administered public lands located throughout the West. We appreciate your recognition of the value and importance of these public lands to all Americans and your respect for the dedicated professional federal employees who manage these lands for future generations.

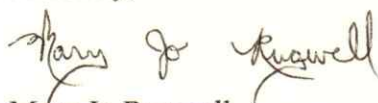
We write to support the Public Lands Workforce Stability Act (H.R. 8523) which you have introduced to prohibit the reduction in force (RIF) or involuntary non-performance related separation of employees within the Department of the Interior, including the BLM, and employees within the U.S. Forest Service. This bill would extend the prohibition on terminations of staff at these agencies through September 30, 2030, that was previously included in FY26 federal agency funding bills. The Public Lands Workforce Stability Act would ensure that further agency reductions in staff would not impact the management of our public lands and resources.

The BLM manages some 245 million acres of public land and some 700 million acres of onshore mineral estate. The BLM has seen continued funding and staffing reductions over the past several years, especially in FY25 and FY26, that has resulted in a significant number of employees leaving the BLM in a wide variety of program areas. Vacancies in the BLM currently exceed 20 percent of the workforce needs. This level of funding and staffing reductions is not sustainable for the future management of the public lands. The current administration has also proposed a 34 percent reduction in the FY27 budget for the BLM. Instead of funding and staffing reductions, robust investments are needed to keep pace with the growing demands on the public lands. Sufficient

funding and staffing are necessary to support the contributions of the public lands to America's economy.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of our views on the need to ensure that adequate resources and staffing are provided to the BLM to manage our public lands for all Americans. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that our public lands continue to serve as a legacy for the future. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [mrugwell@publicland.org](mailto:mrugwell@publicland.org) or at 702-202-7428 if we could be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo Rugwell  
 President  
 Public Lands Foundation  
 P.O. Box 7226  
 Arlington, VA 22207

Copies To:

Congressman Ryan Zinke	Congressman Gabe Vasquez
Congresswoman Debbie Dingell	Congressman Michael Simpson
Congressman Raul Ruiz	Congressman Chuck Edwards
Congresswoman Jennifer Kiggans	Congresswoman Emily Randall
Congressman Troy Downing	Congressman Steven Horsford
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