

February 20, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

Our companies write today to highlight the critical role the Department of Interior plays in rural economic growth. Historically public land communities depended on resource extraction as their primary economic driver, but today outdoor recreation and the quality of life it provides is bringing growing revenues of all types to cities and towns across the country. The nearly \$900 billion outdoor industry continues to experience strong growth due to the increase in demand for recreation assets across the country on public lands. In addition, a broad range of mainstream companies are seeking locations with high quality of life, bringing jobs and tax receipts to communities with access to the great outdoors. Accordingly, we urge you to substantially increase your support for protecting and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities by improving the mineral leasing process.

A growing number of cities and towns around the country are using the quality of life provided by healthy public lands to attract businesses. This trend is visible from the “Silicon Slopes” tech companies thriving in Salt Lake City, Utah; to well established recreation-based towns like Bend, Oregon. Many up and coming communities like Farmington, New Mexico are also seeking to expand their economic portfolios through recreation amenities. America’s best companies, large and small, are moving to places where access to outdoor recreation helps them attract and retain employees. Elected officials at all levels are taking note and reaching out to local land managers seeking local policies that are recreation-friendly.

Many of the lands essential to the continued success of these communities are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Yet despite their success, your implementation of the Administration’s “Energy Dominance” agenda is threatening the economies of these thriving communities. For example, the BLM recently included Moab, Utah’s world famous Slickrock Bike Trail in an upcoming

oil and gas lease auction, an astounding move that threatens one of the most iconic recreation experiences in the country.

As you know, only 50% of the lands currently leased for oil and gas are in production. As businesspeople we understand the importance of building capacity, but capacity is clearly available in the oil and gas market, making it unnecessary to lease lands with low potential, particularly when the cities and towns in question have clearly found better and higher uses for their public lands.

The Interior Department's aggressive focus on leasing oil and gas lands at the expense of other uses, including recreation, threatens local payrolls and tax receipts. While these business revenues and local taxes do not flow directly through the Interior Department, decisions made by the Department have a direct impact on the economic options available to public land communities, many of whom are working towards more reliable recreation-friendly options.

We urge you to acknowledge the power of the recreation economy, and the Department's obligation to the cities and towns which depend upon it. Instead of permitting Acting BLM Director William Pendley to overuse BLM offices and force quarterly statewide oil and gas lease auctions on low potential lands, we urge you to use the Department's resources to meet the real needs of local communities. These cities and towns are seeking public land partnerships, like the thriving program at the Sand Flats Recreation Area outside of Moab, Utah, home of the now-endangered Slickrock Trail.

You have both the opportunity and the responsibility to assist these communities by supporting access to high quality recreation opportunities on BLM lands. Instead of undermining the economic viability of recreation assets like the Slickrock Trail, the Department of Interior could be assisting these communities in transitioning to 21st century economic drivers—and taking credit for their growth.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with you at your earliest convenience.

Most sincerely,

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Houston, TX

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Bicycle Center
Adam Tamme
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Bicycles Plus
William Cook
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Bicycle Sport Shop
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Bingham Cyclery
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