August 20, 2020

Honorable David L. Bernhardt  
Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

We are pleased to hear that the President has decided to withdraw Mr. William Perry Pendley’s nomination to be director of the Bureau of Land Management. We have grave concerns, however, with reports that Mr. Pendley will continue to lead the bureau through his current position as deputy director, exercising the authority of the director. For the same reasons that Mr. Pendley is unfit to be confirmed as director, he is unfit to exercise the authority of the director without being confirmed, and we ask that you remove Mr. Pendley from this position. We also call on the President to nominate a qualified director for consideration through the regular confirmation process.

Mr. Pendley’s long public record of advocacy for selling off public lands and reducing access to them, attempts to undermine tribes and tribal sovereignty, and denial of climate change make his beliefs and actions antithetical to either role. His role in the mismanagement of public assets during his first tenure at the Department of the Interior raises serious questions about his fitness for any federal position. The Bureau of Land Management requires a qualified leader who supports public lands and the bureau’s critical role in administering them for the American people.

We urge you to remove Mr. Pendley from his position leading the Bureau of Land Management.

Sincerely,

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Joe Manchin  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator