

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2015

The Honorable Neil Kornze
Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665
Washington DC 20240

Dear Director Kornze,

We understand that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering combining the Arizona and New Mexico state BLM offices and wish to share with you our concerns over this plan and the troubling precedent it establishes.

We believe that having state BLM offices in states with a high proportion of BLM land ownership is essential to maintaining healthy relationships between states, local stakeholders, and the BLM. BLM State Directors wield a tremendous amount of decision-making authority, regulating the public's access to hundreds of millions of acres of federal land in the west. As such, it is imperative that they maintain a continuous presence in the public land states they oversee. A combination of these particular state offices would be detrimental to the longstanding relationships that have been developed within these states. Combining these two offices will minimize the interactions between the BLM and stakeholders within these states.

We understand that the BLM has previously merged state offices, but those cases involve one state with significant portions of BLM land and others with relatively low quantities. In this circumstance, both Arizona and New Mexico have significant BLM lands that vary tremendously and therefore deserve their own BLM office. Otherwise, the BLM's responsiveness to state and local concerns will suffer.

We are also concerned that this potential consolidation is part of a larger move by the BLM to create more multi-state offices in the west. We believe this is a poor model and should be abandoned. The United States Forest Service (USFS) has a similar model that is unmoored from state boundaries and local accountability. That has turned out to be disastrous as many USFS regions are consumed by lengthy backlogs and suffer from a lack of collaboration with local stakeholders.

We recommend that the BLM suspend any consideration of merging the Arizona and New Mexico state offices until they have engaged stakeholders within those states and more thoroughly studied the impacts such a decision will have.

Sincerely,



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar
Member of Congress



Cynthia Lummis
Member of Congress



Martha McSally
Member of Congress



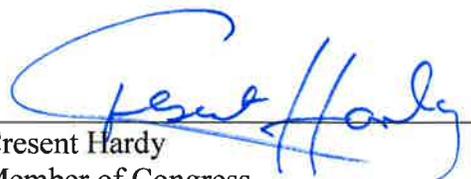
Trent Franks
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Doug Lamborn
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Mark Amodei
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Cresent Hardy
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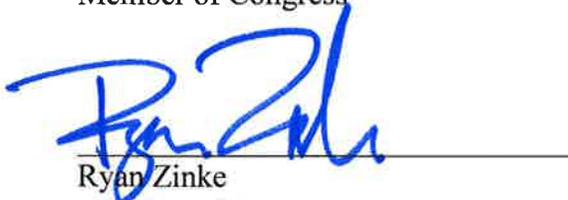
Chris Stewart
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Ann Kirkpatrick
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Scott Tipton
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Ryan Zinke
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Matt Salmon

Matt Salmon
Member of Congress