

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies considers priorities for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Appropriations bill, we write to request that you include at least \$25 million for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) cultural resources account and at least \$78 million for National Conservation Lands.

The BLM manages the largest and most diverse body of cultural, historical, and paleontological resources of any federal land management agency. However, BLM has surveyed only about 12 percent of the lands it manages. An increase in funding for BLM's cultural resources management account of \$4.9 million over the FY2023 level will help the BLM fulfill its statutory requirements to inventory and protect important cultural and paleontological resources, as well as improve government-to-government relations with Tribes. This modest increase will also support good paying jobs in Western states and rural communities, giving the BLM resources to hire additional cultural resource managers.

We also ask that you provide BLM with \$78 million to manage the system of National Conservation Lands, which encompasses more than 37 million acres of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas (NCAs) and similar designations, as well as Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Since its inception in 2000, the National Conservation Lands have nearly doubled in size, adding over 100 units and 12 million acres of lands to be managed for conservation, largely as the result of acts of Congress. Funding to manage the National Conservation Lands, however, has not kept pace with the growth of the system. This increase in funding will allow increased inventory, monitoring and protection of cultural resources; enhance proper management of all resources; and provide a quality visitor experience. Furthermore, additional funding will ensure that units in the National Conservation Lands system are adequately staffed with land managers, law enforcement officers, and cultural resources experts. This requested increase for FY2024 brings funding in line with the growth of the National Conservation Lands system, with the opportunity to increase funding in subsequent fiscal years as additional designations are signed into law.

Our nation's public lands contain remarkable and irreplaceable ecological, historical, and cultural resources that reflect thousands of years of human connection to our lands. We look forward to working with your staff on the FY2024 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

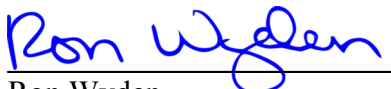
Sincerely,



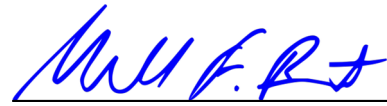
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



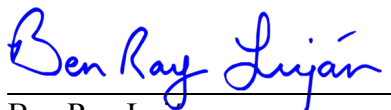
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator