

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 2, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

As members of the Senate Western Caucus and the Congressional Western Caucus, we represent the states with the largest portion of federal lands. The ability to access the land and the resources associated with the land is critical to the way of life in our states.

Under the Obama Administration, the Department of Interior has routinely circumvented Congress and the public in an effort to enact policies that limit the multiple-use nature of federal lands and silence the voices of those who work and recreate on the public lands. Specifically, the amount of activity with regards to Wilderness, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Wilderness Values, and Wilderness Quality Lands has been alarming. The Department's withdrawal of 77 oil and gas leases in Utah, the Department of Interior generated Treasured Landscape memorandum, and Secretarial Order 3310 (Wildlands) are some of the most egregious actions taken in this regard.

More recently, the Department is pushing the envelope yet again by administratively implementing unpopular policies that have already been overwhelmingly rejected. We have been made aware of a number of new policy manuals recently released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)ⁱ. The manuals appear to mirror the same rejected policies of the Wildlands Secretarial Order and corresponding guidance documentsⁱⁱ, which concerns us deeply. The manner in which the manuals were released is equally troubling, as they were crafted without public input and were simply posted on a BLM website without public notice.

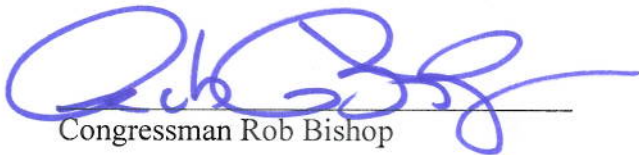
As you know, Congress prohibited the use of federal funds to implement the rejected Wildlands policy. We were pleased when you abided by the Congressional order and reaffirmed your commitment to the American people that this policy would not be implemented. However, we are deeply troubled with the issuance of the new BLM manuals, which appear to be the latest rendition of the controversial Wildlands proposal. We are equally troubled that our offices and the public were not afforded the courtesy to provide input and that we were not notified of their existence— some of which appear to have been in place since March. The Wildlands policy was an unpopular policy then, and it remains an unpopular policy now. The mere fact these new handbooks were developed and released without public notice only affirms our deep skepticism for the motives behind the underlying directives.

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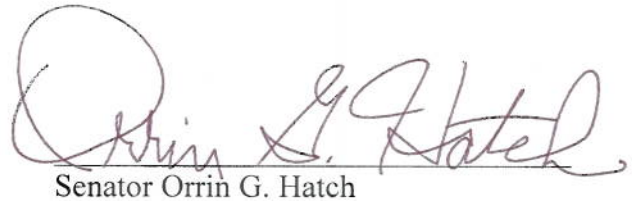
You have stated on more than one occasion that it is important that both you and the Department work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. This sentiment was reaffirmed when you met with many of us following the fallout of the Wildlands Secretarial Order. The Department's recent actions greatly undermine both your commitment to working with us, your duty to follow both the letter and spirit of the Congressional mandate to withhold funding for the Wildlands policy, and the Obama Administration's commitment towards being the "most transparent" in history.

We urge you to withdraw BLM Manuals 6310 and 6320 immediately, and create a public process for crafting these manuals that are so vital to the management of western public lands. To that end, we request a briefing with you to discuss when Manuals 6310 and 6320 were posted on the internet, the extent to which Manuals 6300-1 and 6300-2 were used in crafting Manuals 6310 and 6320, and the Department's plan to withdraw and reissue new manuals in an open and transparent process.

Sincerely,



Congressman Rob Bishop




Senator Orrin G. Hatch


¹ BLM Manual 6310—*Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands* retrieved July 31, 2012 from http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/wo/Information_Resources_Management/policy/blm_manual.Par.383.37.File.dat/6310.pdf. BLM Manual 6320 —*Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands*. Retrieved July 31, 2012 from http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/wo/Information_Resources_Management/policy/blm_manual.Par.524.65.File.dat/6320.pdf

ⁱⁱ BLM Manual 6300-1 – *Wilderness Inventory*. Retrieved July 31, 2012 from <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=116071>. 6300-2 - *Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process* retrieved July 31, 2012 from <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=117194>

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Congressman Cynthia Lummis


Senator John Barrasso



Congressman Steve Pearce


Senator Lisa Murkowski


Congressman Paul Gosar


Senator Mike Crapo

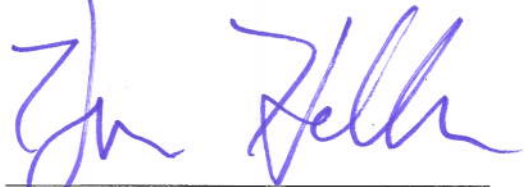

Congressman Jason Chaffetz


Senator Jim Risch


Congressman Jeff Denham


Senator Mike Lee

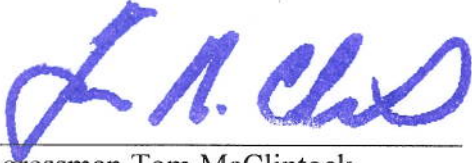

Congressman Jeff Flake


Senator Dean Heller


Congressman Mark Amodei


Senator Jon Kyl

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Congressman Tom McClintock

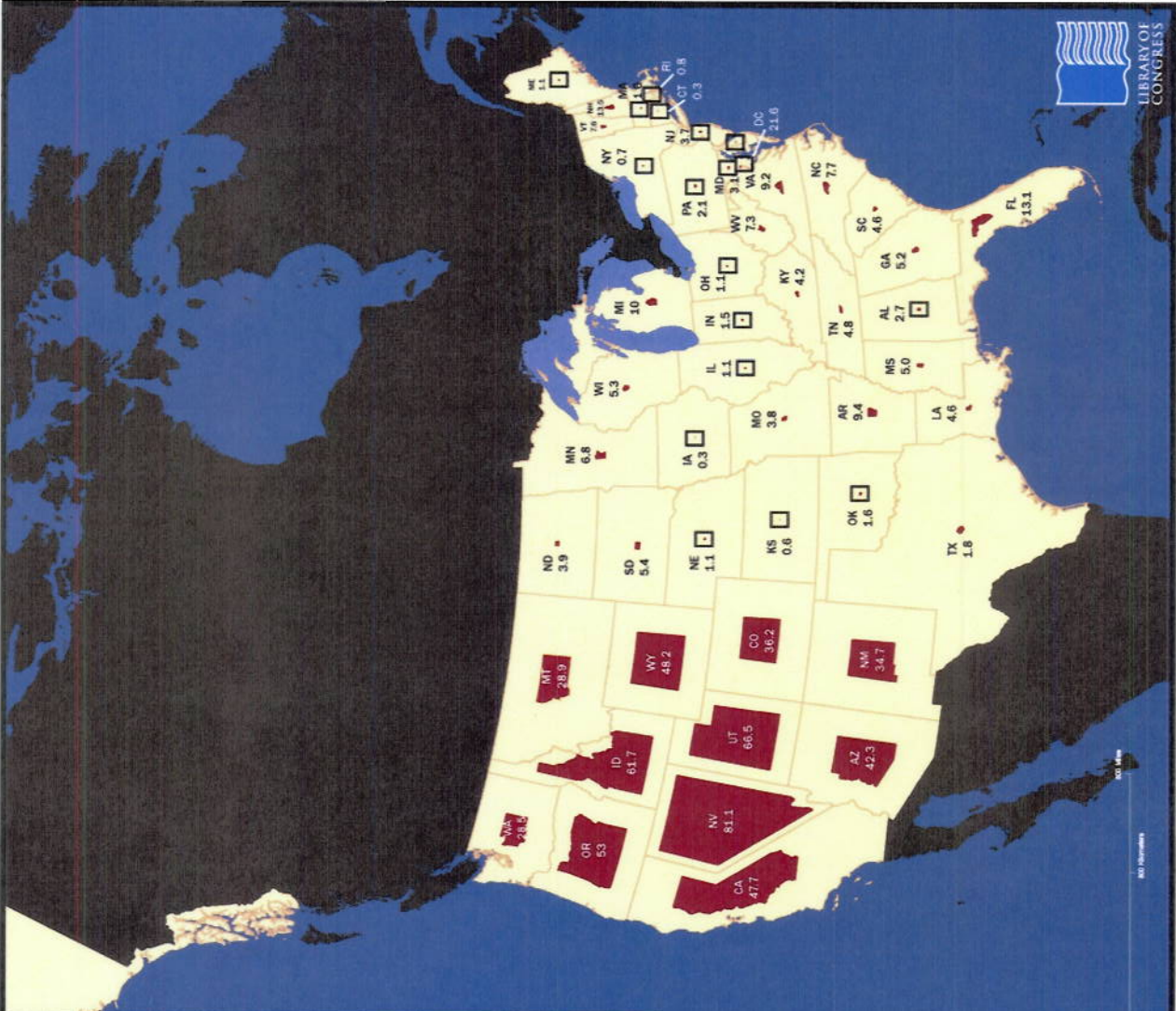
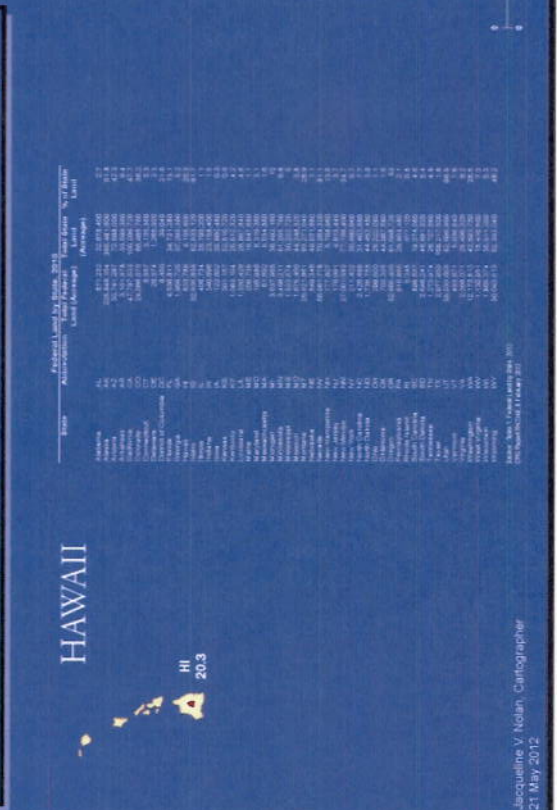


Senator Mike Enzi



Congressman Raul Labrador

PERCENTAGE OF FEDERAL LAND OWNERSHIP BY STATE



Jacqueline V. Nolan, Cartographer
21 May 2012