

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Secretary Burgum:

We are writing to you to express our concern over President Trump's sudden decision to terminate several thousand employees at the Department of the Interior (DOI). We are concerned about the merit and reasoning for these firings, and how a sudden loss of staff will impact Nevadans, our communities, and the critical work performed on public lands around the state. Nevada has the highest percentage of land managed by DOI – more than any other state. Specifically, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages over 60 percent (approximately 48 million acres) of Nevada's land. Nevada is also home to prominent lands managed by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), National Park Service (NPS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). We are concerned that these firings could pose immediate risks to the safety and livelihoods of Nevadans, as well as the health of sensitive habitats and ecosystems across the state.

We are often told by constituents that DOI's various agencies do not have the requisite staff to complete their mandated functions, many of which are critical to the prosperity and growth of our state's economy, particularly in rural communities. Through the Bureau of Land Management, DOI manages the permitting of grazing allotments, facilitates land transactions and appraisals across the state, and oversees the siting and permitting of energy projects on public lands, a process that is currently experiencing a large backlog that is slowing down the diversification of the State's economy. In the Lower Colorado River Basin, BOR is critical in its role as water master of the river and in the ongoing negotiations over the future allocations of water to states from the Colorado River. USFWS manages the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the largest such complex in the lower 48 states, which is home to the majestic Big Horn Sheep, the state animal of Nevada. It also manages other prominent units, such as the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, which is home to many endangered and threatened species, and the Pahranaagat National Wildlife Refuge, an essential stopover location for migratory birds that use the wetlands in their seasonal migration path. Finally, NPS manages the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Great Basin National Park, both of which draw thousands of visitors a year for their varied recreational opportunities. DOI also plays a vital role in Nevada's tribal communities through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), acting as a liaison for the federal government in tribal affairs and ensuring that reservation lands are properly maintained for the health and safety of native communities.

We fear that the loss of qualified and experienced DOI staff will delay or bring an end to these critical functions and will have adverse impacts on wildlife habitats and regional economies as well as community safety.

For these reasons we request that DOI provide the following information so the public may understand the impacts to their communities:

- The number of employees terminated from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), National Parks Service (NPS), and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and any other employees located in Nevada.
- A description of the position and responsibilities of each terminated employee.
- A list and description of the projects to which each terminated employee was assigned.
- A description of what information the terminated employees were provided, including if they were provided with the legally required notice under 5 CFR § 315.803(b) or Reductions in Force regulations.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator