



March 15, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As representatives of Colorado's business community, we are writing in support of the U.S. Department of Interior's planned reorganization and the proposed relocation of several agency headquarters from Washington, D.C. area to the Western United States.

Our organization, Vital for Colorado, is a coalition of more than 80,000 citizens and community groups led by a board of state business leaders that includes the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry, Colorado Concern, Colorado Farm Bureau and the Colorado Business Roundtable. We support domestic oil and natural gas production, and an "all of the above" approach to energy, because the energy sector is a mainstay of the state economy and a pillar of Colorado's business community.

Colorado is absolutely the right destination for the relocation of Interior agencies. While controversial in some corners, the move enjoys broad support across the political spectrum in our state, and Colorado's unique economic and environmental attributes make it an ideal headquarters for any regulatory agency focused on Western lands.

Ever since U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) raised the idea of moving the headquarters of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at your confirmation hearing last year, a wave of bipartisan support for the reorganization has been building here in Colorado.

Within weeks of your confirmation hearing, Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) endorsed the relocation of BLM headquarters to Colorado, stating "I think there's too much concentration of decision making in Washington already." U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) also announced his support last year: "I'm all for it, I think it would be great. I think anything we can get out of Washington, D.C. and into Colorado, I'm for."

From your own time in Congress and in your current role as Interior Secretary, you are no doubt aware of the broad range of political views in the Colorado congressional delegation. And yet, no less than six House members from Colorado support legislation to relocate the BLM to a Western state: U.S. Reps. Scott Tipton (R), Ken Buck (R), Ed Perlmutter (D), Doug Lamborn (R), Mike Coffman (R), and Jared Polis (D).

"We would welcome the BLM with open arms," said Rep. Polis, who is a candidate for Colorado governor this year. "With the agency closer to the vast public lands we all cherish and share, they would have better insight into what the lands mean to the western way of life." While our elected

Secretary Zinke
March 14, 2018
2 of 2

officials disagree about many things, they are united in their support of your reorganization and relocation plans for Interior Department agencies.

We also understand that many local officials from across the state have expressed interest in the relocation of Interior agencies to Colorado, yet another sign of the broad and bipartisan support you can expect here for any upcoming move.

In addition to this support, we believe Colorado is the logical and most cost-effective choice as the headquarters for the federal agencies overseen by the Department.

Our state is a model for integrating natural resource development, agriculture, recreation, hunting, fishing and tourism into a diverse and thriving economy with many other sectors, including manufacturing, information technology, financial services, aerospace and healthcare. On energy production, in particular, Colorado is an “all of the above” powerhouse: We are the fifth largest natural gas producing state in the nation, seventh in oil production, and seventh across all energy sources, according to data compiled by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Within our four borders, on federal, tribal, state and private land, the connection between economic prosperity, environmental beauty and the types of activities regulated by Interior agencies is clear to everyone. For this reason alone, you will not find a better place to headquarter these agencies than Colorado, because we share their mission and put their values into action every single day.

Beyond these factors, however, Colorado also has a compelling economic case to make. Our commercial and residential real estate markets are large, diverse, growing and ready to meet your needs. Our transportation links between Washington, D.C. and other Western states are second to none. For employees relocating from the nation’s capital, Colorado has an unparalleled quality of life, and as your agencies look to recruit new professionals over time, they will have a massive pool of highly educated workers right at their doorstep.

Simply stated, we believe Colorado can support the mission and the needs of Interior agencies like no other Western state can. If you choose to relocate these agencies to Colorado, you can count on the strong support of the state’s business community, among many other key stakeholders.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and please let us know if we can assist you and your staff in any way.

Sincerely,

