

## U.S. House of Representatives

### Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

I am writing to reiterate my significant concerns regarding the Department of the Interior's (DOI) plan to reorganize and relocate the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff based in Washington, D.C., to various locations across the western United States.

As you know, this Committee has voiced numerous concerns this year about the proposed reorganization and relocation of the BLM, sending letters on April 10, July 23, September 25, November 14, and December 4 requesting additional documents and information regarding the BLM's plan. To date, DOI has failed to provide any meaningful analysis or documentation to justify the proposed reorganization of agency staff.

Despite the lack of information justifying this major reorganization of BLM, the agency issued formal relocation notices to 159 Washington, D.C.-based BLM employees on November 13, 2019, requiring them to accept their relocation within 30 days or face termination. The deadline for affected employees to notify BLM of their decision was December 12.

While formal numbers have not yet been made publicly available, reports suggest that more than 80 percent of BLM employees asked to relocate plan to decline the reassignment and leave the agency.<sup>1</sup> This new development demonstrates that our concerns about this reorganization have been justified, and that this hastily planned effort will severely undermine the BLM and the management of our public lands.

To assist this Committee with its oversight activities related to the BLM's relocation plans, please provide the Committee with the following information as soon as possible, but no later than January 6, 2020:

1. The number of Washington, D.C.-based BLM employees asked to relocate that have declined the reassignment;

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<sup>1</sup> Streater, S. (2019, December 12). 80% of D.C. staffers could leave BLM. *Greenwire*. Retrieved from <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2019/12/12/stories/1061793277>

2. The positions that will be vacant because a staffer declined the reassignment or obtained another position outside the BLM; and
3. Documentation of BLM's plans to fill those vacant positions.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact the National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee staff at 202-225-6065. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair

House Committee on Natural Resources