

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

On April 12, 2017, you sent a memo to the Assistant Secretaries of the Department of the Interior directing them to ensure that all bureau heads and office directors report to the Acting Deputy Secretary on all “proposed decisions” that have “nationwide, regional, or statewide impacts,” and that decisions may not be made until the Acting Deputy Secretary has “reviewed the report and provided clearance.” The memo does not describe how “nationwide, regional, or statewide impacts” are to be defined, nor does it indicate whether the Acting Deputy Secretary will potentially require bureaus or offices to change proposed decisions based on his review.

The memo also directs bureau heads and office directors to report to the Acting Deputy Secretary all Fiscal Year 2017 grants and cooperative agreements of \$100,000 or greater before the final award is issued, in order to “assess how we are aligning our grants and cooperative agreements to Department priorities.” It is not clear whether or not the Acting Deputy Secretary retains, or will exercise, the authority to stop or require changes to awards that he decides do not align with Department priorities.

While the memo purports to be in part for the purpose of allowing the Acting Deputy Secretary to learn more about how Departmental decisions are made, the person currently filling the role of Acting Deputy Secretary, Mr. James Cason, served as Associate Deputy Secretary for the Department of the Interior from 2001 through 2009, and would be expected to already have a good understanding about Departmental processes.

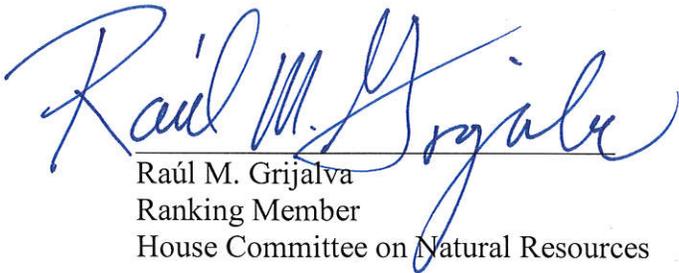
In order for us to better understand how this memo will affect Departmental policy and operations as part of our responsibility as Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, please provide answers to the following questions to Mr. Vic Edgerton, Director of Investigations, House Natural Resources Committee Democratic Staff, by May 26, 2017:

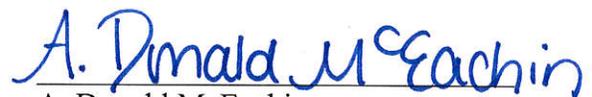
- 1) Has any guidance been provided to bureau heads or office directors regarding what constitutes a decision with “nationwide, regional, or statewide impacts”? If so, please provide that guidance.

- 2) Is the Acting Deputy Secretary maintaining approval or modification authority over the grants, cooperative agreements, and decisions that are provided to him as a result of the April 12 memo?
- 3) Has the Acting Deputy Secretary denied any grants or cooperative agreements, or required or requested changes to the terms of those grants or cooperative agreements, as a result of information provided to him as a result of the April 12 memo? If so, please identify those grants or cooperative agreements, and information regarding why the Acting Deputy Secretary denied or required or requested changes to those, as appropriate.
- 4) Who in the Secretary's office or Deputy Secretary's office, other than the Acting Deputy Secretary, is also reviewing the information provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary as a result of the April 12 memo?
- 5) For all grants and cooperative agreements awarded between April 12 and the date of this letter, please provide the information under items #1 through #11 as provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary under the "Template for Data Call on Fiscal Year 2017 Grants and Cooperative Agreement Awards."
- 6) For all records of decision issued after review by the Acting Deputy Secretary between April 12 and the date of this letter, please provide all information provided to the Acting Deputy Secretary under the "Template for Data Call on Proposed Records of Decision and Other Significant Decision Documents."

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources


A. Donald McEachin
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Subcommittee
on Oversight and Investigations

Cc: Mr. James Cason, Acting Deputy Secretary
Ms. Amy Holley, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget
Ms. Kathleen MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management
Ms. Virginia Johnson, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Ms. Kerry Rae, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
Mr. Mike Black, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs