

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Zinke,

In June when you appeared before House and Senate committees, you testified that the Department of Interior staff would be reduced by about 8%, and that many offices would be moved or relocated¹. In public appearances and interviews, you have stated that your “goal is reorganizing the department for the next 100 years.”² Apparently, several Senior Executive Service (SES) career staff members have been reassigned as part of this reorganization.

Yet, you have provided Congress with no notice or plan that outlines your broad goal of reorganizing the Department of Interior for the next 100 years. Moving operations from Washington, DC to Denver, Colorado or 13 other potential Joint Management Areas³ without notice to or input from Congress is troubling, especially when moves could affect tens of thousands of public servants and cost millions of dollars.

In August, you rescinded the National Park Service (NPS) Director’s Order 100 (DO-100). The purpose of DO-100, signed last year, was to articulate policies and actions to support resource stewardship across the NPS in the 21st Century. It would seem that a policy designed to move an agency into the next 100 years of stewardship would offer a helpful roadmap for any realignment plans that might need to be undertaken. The policy is comprehensive, examining resilience, science, planning across the landscapes, sustaining and diversifying workforces, and allowing adaptive management practices across the park system.

Director’s Order 100 is a major update to help the NPS fulfill its mission, and continue to protect and preserve resources for future generations. In part, the DO recognized that continual change impacts all units of the NPS and that through the integration of management systems, including traditional ecological knowledge, provided by local communities and tribal nations, our parks and landscapes would be better managed.

¹ Secretary Zinke House Committee on Appropriations Testimony, June 8, 2017; Secretary Zinke Senate Energy and Natural Resources Testimony, June 20, 2017; Secretary Zinke, House Committee On Natural Resources Testimony June 22, 2017.

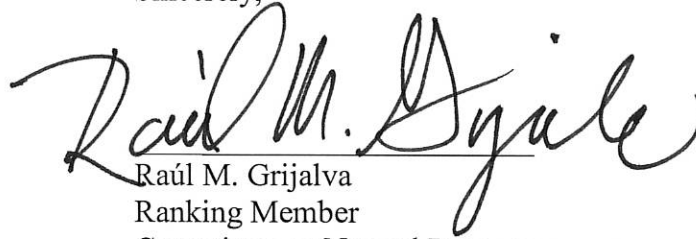
² Zinke Pledges big changes at Department of the Interior, Missoulian, Rob Chaney March 10, 2017

³ Zinke looks to move 3 agencies’ headquarters to Denver, Greenwire, August 15, 2017

Since you are rolling back guidance that provides agencies with the information they need to operate for the next 100 years, reassigning career staff members, and holding meetings detailing the moves of at least three agencies moves from Washington, I would like to know what your plan is to replace NPS Director's Order 100, your plan to reorganize other land management agencies at the Department of the Interior and the cost to move the employees.

Please provide documentation regarding your reorganization plans and the content of any new Director's Order intended to replace DO 100 at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources