

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 4, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Burgum,

We write with serious concern regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) recent press release¹ announcing BLM's "approval" of mining activity by Dateline Resources within Mojave National Preserve. This action appears to violate federal law, disregards National Park Service (NPS) authority, and sets a dangerous precedent for industrial development in lands that Congress has designated as worthy of inclusion in the National Park System.

Congress created the Mojave National Preserve in 1994 via the *California Desert Protection Act* (CDPA), elevating this cherished landscape to a National Park because of its outstanding ecological and cultural values, including in the Clark Mountain region, which supports rare plant species and critical wildlife corridors. Congress set aside these lands and entrusted them to the NPS for permanent protection, not as a zone for future industrial exploitation.

The CDPA clearly states that any mining within the Mojave Preserve must comply with the *Mining in the Parks Act*, which requires a mineral validity examination and an NPS-approved plan of operations. However, it appears that BLM is attempting to circumvent this law and instead authorize Dateline's project based on a 1985 plan originally approved by BLM for different minerals, under different ownership, and issued before the Preserve existed.

To date, no mineral examination has been completed to validate Dateline Resource's claims. Meanwhile, the NPS has repeatedly objected to Dateline's unauthorized activities on lands within the Mojave National Preserve, including road grading and vegetation clearing, and requested over \$200,000 in damages. Still, BLM appears to have acted unilaterally, greenlighting the company's efforts to evade the law and ignore NPS oversight and review. In May, Dateline announced plans² to begin exploratory drilling, despite lacking a valid NPS-approved plan of operations or proof of a valuable mineral deposit, as required by the *Mining in the Parks Act*. The original 1985 plan was for gold extraction, but Dateline is now touting rare earth elements – a major pivot that lacks any new environmental review or mineral validity determination.

This is not only illegal, but it directly contradicts a commitment you made during your confirmation hearing to "protect every inch of our national parks." Approving a foreign-owned company's speculative mining project inside a national park in this way is clearly inconsistent with that promise and threatens future speculative actions across other national parks.

¹ <https://www.blm.gov/announcement/colosseum-mine-california-given-go-ahead-continue-mining-operation>

² <https://api.investi.com.au/api/announcements/dtr/11c34f04-321.pdf>

Therefore, we urge you to:

- Revoke BLM's reliance on the outdated 1985 plan;
- Affirm NPS's jurisdiction and require compliance with the *Mining in the Parks Act*;
- Conduct a full mineral validity exam; and
- Provide, by June 20, 2025, the Department's legal rationale for this decision, a copy of the 1985 plan of operations, and a clear statement on whether the Department supports industrial mining within national parks.

We strongly urge you to reverse this decision and uphold the integrity of the Mojave National Preserve and the National Park System.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Energy and Natural
Resources



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, House
Natural Resources Committee