Dear Mr. President:

We write to express opposition to Mr. Pendley's nomination to the position of Director of the Bureau of Land Management. Mr. Pendley’s public record, including his advocacy for reducing public lands and access to them, routine attempts to undermine tribes, and climate change denial makes him unfit for the position. The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for stewarding vast expanses of public lands. It needs a leader who reflects the values of the American people and their support for access to public lands. Mr. Pendley’s record lays bare his decades of opposition to those values.

Mr. Pendley’s first tenure at the Department of the Interior under Secretary James Watt was fraught with controversy. The Department’s coal leasing program under Mr. Pendley’s management was described by the Chairman of the Commission on Fair Market Value Policy for Federal Coal Leasing (the Linowes Commission) as “deficient in all of its functions,” and found that administrators of the leasing program “had acted unwisely and had made significant decisions involving many millions of taxpayers’ dollars with significant impact on the environment without adequate documentation.”

Over the years, Mr. Pendley has consistently called for selling off public lands, which runs contrary to the balanced approach to managing public lands policy in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. He has even gone so far as to say that, “the Founding Fathers intended all lands owned by the federal government to be sold.” As recently as January 2019, Mr. Pendley retweeted an article entitled, “Confirmed: President Trump Can Sell Federal Land To Build The Wall,” and commented, “After all, it is what the Founders intended!” Mr. Pendley has also sought to privatize public streams and rivers, such as in a lawsuit to overturn Montana’s stream access law in 2000. Mr. Pendley’s rejection of public lands protections also extends to calling on Congress to repeal the Antiquities Act, the bedrock conservation statute that authorizes Presidents to designate National Monuments.

Mr. Pendley has on many prior occasions mischaracterized, mocked, or undermined tribes’ experiences, rights, and religion. This includes arguing against legal precedent that views tribal members as members of sovereign political entities, rather than as a racial group, and including text in a 2006 book that romanticizes settlers’ relationships with tribes in the early days of the United States. Mr. Pendley’s problematic history is particularly concerning given the Bureau’s statutory and treaty responsibilities regarding consultations with tribes.

In addition, Mr. Pendley has previously denied climate change. This includes likening climate change to unicorns, claiming “neither exists”, and tweeting that it is “political science or junk science, not real science, and it is, as with

real science, far from settled!8 Bureau of Land Management decisions must be guided by science, including climate change data that greatly impacts America’s public lands.

We are confident that the nomination process will demonstrate the need for a different nominee. We urge you to identify a new, qualified candidate for this critical position – one who supports public lands and the mission of the Bureau of Land Management.

Sincerely,

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Joe Manchin
United States Senator

Michael Bennet
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Mazie Keiko Hirono
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Mark Warner
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

8 William Perry Pendley, Twitter, 2019.
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Angus King
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator
Tom Carper  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Tina Smith  
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

/s/ Gary Peters  
Gary Peters  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Doug Jones
United States Senator

Maggie Hassan
United States Senator

Chris Murphy
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator