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Over 80 Colorado Local Elected Officials Urge Bureau of Land Management to Prioritize the Conservation of our Shared Public Lands

Durango, Colorado: Ahead of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed Public Land Rule public meeting in Golden, Colorado on Thursday, [The Mountain Pact](#), an organization that works with local elected officials across the West, released a [letter](#), signed by over 80 Colorado local elected officials urging the BLM to “prioritize the conservation of our shared public lands.” The [letter](#) is in response to a March 30 [announcement](#) from the Department of Interior of a draft “*Public Lands Rule which lays the groundwork for conserving wildlife habitat, restoring places impacted by wildfire and drought, expanding outdoor recreation, and thoughtful development.*”

The letter states: “*As local elected officials in Colorado, we would like to express our commitment to protecting these (BLM) landscapes which provide so much to our communities. We commend BLM on recent agency guidance that prioritizes the health of public lands and encourage the BLM to continue to place conservation at the forefront of the rulemaking.*”

Anna Peterson, Executive Director of [The Mountain Pact](#) said, “Last year we had [over 120 local elected officials from western states](#) call on the Biden administration to protect more Bureau of Land Management lands as part of the administration’s America the Beautiful initiative. Now, over 80 [Colorado local elected officials](#) are responding and looking forward to the BLM using this Public Lands Rule process to conserve and protect our nation’s important public lands, [wildlife](#) and waters in tandem with locally-led efforts to advance conservation across the west.”

Chaffee County, Colorado County Commissioner Keith Baker said, “When used wisely, the Bureau of Land Management conservation mechanisms will support our local economies, tourism, and outdoor recreation as well as provide certainty for our rural and gateway communities so we can make long-term investments. We look forward to this rule-making process and modernizing management policies to allow for increased recreational opportunities and access to nature.”

Chair of the Eagle County, Colorado Board of County Commissioners Kathy Chandler-Henry said, “Colorado’s public lands are deeply valued by Coloradans because they provide important [health and economic benefits](#) to our residents. [The 8.3 million acres of federal public lands within Colorado that are overseen by the Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\)](#) are particularly important. These lands support a diverse array of outdoor recreation activities and create jobs through the tourism sector that are the backbone of many of our communities.”

Colorado State Representative HD 40 Naquetta Ricks said, “My colleagues from across the state and I strongly encourage the BLM to use all the tools they have to protect public lands across the state. In particular, we encourage the BLM to designate new Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The BLM has the authority to ensure that

lands with wilderness character are administratively protected as WSAs. These areas are often the first to be identified by our congressional leaders for legislative designation as wilderness and for many of our communities these are the iconic landscapes that define our state.”

Pitkin County Commissioner Greg Poschman said, “The BLM’s [mission](#) is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.” For years BLM has prioritized extractive uses like oil and gas development while largely overlooking sustaining the health and diversity of BLM lands. It’s time for that to change.”

Chair of the La Plata County, Colorado Board of County Commissioners Marsha Porter-Norton said, “I, and the over 80 fellow Colorado local elected officials look forward to the BLM prioritizing the conservation of our shared public lands and strongly encourage the BLM rulemaking to emphasize ecological integrity, preservation of vulnerable resources, and maintaining access to outdoor recreation. These efforts at the national level will positively impact BLM lands in our communities and across Colorado.”

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in nearly 100 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.

MORE INFORMATION

General: The [BLM’s 75-day comment period on the draft Public Lands Rule runs through June 20th](#). The BLM’s meeting in Golden on Thursday, the 2nd of five meetings, will provide detailed information about the proposal. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions that facilitate a deeper understanding of the proposal. **Details:** Thursday, May 25: Denver, Colorado from 5-7 p.m. MT - Denver West Marriott, 1717 Denver West Blvd, Golden, Colorado.

The Mountain Pact: The Mountain Pact and local elected officials from across the west have been urging the Bureau of Land Management to do more to protect BLM public lands for years.

Letters:

- [Over 120 local elected officials from western states](#) call on the Biden administration to protect more Bureau of Land Management lands as part of the administration’s America the Beautiful initiative.
- [Colorado River Valley letter](#)
- [Big Game Mountain Pact letter](#)

Opinion pieces, media releases, and statements:

- Chaffee County Commissioner in [Ark Valley](#)
- [Glenwood Springs, Colorado Mayor Jonathan Godes in Grand Junction Sentinel](#)
- Mountain Pact Executive Director Anna Peterson about [Colorado wildlife](#) in the Durango Herald
- [Instruction Memorandum on Habitat Connectivity on Public Lands](#)
- [Release](#) on the Public Lands Rule announcement