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Elected officials call on Biden to act on climate

More than 100 local elected officials across the West are calling on the incoming Biden administration and 117th Congress to address the climate crisis, protect public lands and support Western mountain communities.

A letter sent recently to President-elect Biden, Congress and Representative Deb Haaland includes calls to halt new oil and gas leases and industry bailouts; support local governments in relief packages; restore protections for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante national monuments and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; increase environmental and public health safeguards; and work to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. The Mountain Pact organized the letter.

Local signatories include Chaffee County Commissioner Keith Baker, Salida Mayor P.T. Wood and Councilman Harald Kasper.

The letter states: “While the catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for our Western mountain communities, our public lands have also been a bright spot, providing a refuge from the pandemic with our residents and visitors finding solace in the outdoors more than ever.

“Public lands are the backbone of our mountain communities and vital for our way of life.

“As local elected officials tasked with helping our regions’ economies recuperate, we know that protecting our public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities, along with taking bold climate action, will boost the economy as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19.”

The full letter and list of officials who signed it is at <http://www.themountainpact.org/biden-transition-letter>.