



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, March 30, 2023

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Western Local Elected Officials Respond to Bureau of Land Management Announcement

Today, The Mountain Pact, an organization that works with local elected officials across the West, responded to an [announcement](#) from the Department of Interior of a “*Public Lands Rule lays groundwork for conserving wildlife habitat, restoring places impacted by wildfire and drought, expanding outdoor recreation, and thoughtful development.*”

Anna Peterson, Executive Director of [The Mountain Pact](#) said, “[Over 120 local elected officials from western states](#) have called on the Biden administration to protect more Bureau of Land Management lands as part of the administration’s America the Beautiful initiative. We look forward to the BLM using this rulemaking 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.”

Santa Fe County Commission Chair Anna Hansen said, “The destruction of petroglyphs within the Caja del Rio ACEC should be a call-to-action for the BLM. It is time to ensure that no further damage is done, and I am hopeful we can honor the stewardship of the Puebloan people and protect these areas for generations to come.”

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.”

City of Flagstaff Council Member, Jim McCarthy said, “Many of our Western communities are being devastated by the impacts of the climate crisis. As a result, many of the areas important to Westerners and visitors are at risk of being unnecessarily degraded or lost, especially since many of the BLM lands in our communities are not permanently protected. We hope that through this rulemaking process, as the largest land manager in the nation, the Bureau of Land Management will play a leading role in protecting more of these lands and waters, and in turn, our communities for the future.”

Nevada State Assemblyman Howard Watts said, “Many of our communities are located near Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, which include traditional homelands of Indigenous populations, vital watersheds for downstream communities, and outstanding fish and wildlife habitat. They also provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, including camping, hiking, paddling, hunting and fishing. I was happy to join with over [100 of my colleagues](#) in encouraging the BLM and the administration to do more to protect these important places and we hope the BLM will work with communities across the state to implement these new rules in upcoming plans.”

Town of Truckee, California Vice Mayor David Polivy said, “Our nation’s protected public lands are tremendous assets to our Western communities. They play a critical role in our way of life and support our outdoor recreation and tourism economies, health, and well-being. They help make the communities where we live what they are while contributing to a healthier and better tomorrow for future generations. We must protect and restore more of these Bureau of Land Management lands and hope this rule-making process will be an opportunity for western voices to be heard.”

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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.