



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 17, 2020

CONTACT: Anna Peterson, [Anna@TheMountainPact.Org](mailto:Anna@TheMountainPact.Org)

## **Congratulations to Representative Haaland, President-Elect Biden's Nominee for Interior Secretary**

*The Mountain Pact Thrilled to Work with Public Lands Champion at the Department of The Interior*

Today, President-Elect Biden nominated New Mexico Representative Deb Haaland to be the next Department of Interior Secretary. In response, some mountain West local elected officials in the Mountain Pact network from New Mexico and Colorado released these statements:

**Santa Fe County Commissioner Anna Hansen, said,** "Representative Deb Haaland is exactly the type of experienced public lands champion we need leading the Department of Interior. It will be a wonderfully historic event to finally have the first Indigenous person to serve as Secretary of Interior and a New Mexican."

**Mayor Linda Calhoun, Town of Red River, New Mexico, said,** "With the coronavirus pandemic making access to outdoor spaces more important than ever, and climate change threatening our planet, we need a leader like Representative Haaland running the Department of the Interior."

**Mayor Sarah Smith-Hymes, Avon, Colorado, said,** "I am proud and gratified that Representative Deb Haaland has been nominated for this critical role. As an indigenous woman, a Westerner, and a champion of public lands, she is the ideal choice. Her extensive experience protecting and managing America's most majestic landmarks is exactly the leadership needed at the Department of Interior."

**Mayor Pro Tem Emeritus and City Councilor District 5, Las Cruces New Mexico Gill M Sorg said,** "Representative Haaland has been nominated to the position of Secretary of the Interior in the Biden administration. She is a perfect fit for the position and will honor New Mexico in the Department. She will well represent the Indigenous population of our nation which at long last is needed. She will respect climate change and work to move us to a fossil free energy economy."

**Town Councilor Darien Fernandez, Town of Taos, New Mexico said,** "As the Secretary of Interior, Representative Haaland will be in the position to chart a new path forward between the United States' government and Indigenous nations on tribal and public lands issues."

**Anna Peterson, Executive Director of The Mountain Pact, an organization that works with local elected officials across the west on federal climate and public lands policies, said:** "For the last four years the Department of Interior has sold off America's public lands and natural resources to Secretary Bernhardt and William Perry Pendleys' friends and former clients while draining the agencies of their experienced staff. Our country is lucky to have Secretary Haaland at the helm to be able to correct so many wrong doings from the Trump administration."

###

*Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](http://TheMountainPact.org) mobilizes local elected officials in over 75 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.*