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## **Congratulations to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland**

### ***The Mountain Pact Overjoyed to Work with Public Lands Champion, Secretary Haaland at the Department of The Interior***

Today, New Mexico Representative Debra Haaland was confirmed as the next Department of Interior Secretary. In response, The Mountain Pact network released these statement:

**Anna Peterson, Executive Director of [The Mountain Pact](#) said,** *“We are beyond thrilled to have Secretary Haaland, the first indigenous woman as the head of the Department of Interior. We are lucky to have someone with such extensive experience protecting our public lands to now be at the helm of America’s most majestic places. Public lands are the backbone of our Western mountain communities and vital for our way of life. She will lead our country’s management of public lands into the future by addressing the climate crisis; reviewing our antiquated and broken federal oil and gas leasing program; and putting us on a path to protect more of our lands and waters for future generations.”*

**Santa Fe County, New Mexico Commissioner Anna Hansen said,** *“What a grand historic event to have a woman of Debra Haaland’s heritage as the first Indigenous person and a New Mexican to serve as Secretary of Interior. We are honored to have a woman that values land based knowledge and respect for Mother Earth as a public lands champion leading the Department of Interior.”*

**Mayor Linda Calhoun, Town of Red River, New Mexico said,** *“A lot more people have gotten outside in the past year to find solace and recuperate from the pandemic. People love our public lands and protecting them is more important than ever as we grapple with the devastating impacts of climate change. Our country’s future is looking much better with a leader like Secretary Haaland running the Department of the Interior.”*

**Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes, Avon, Colorado said,** *“As an indigenous woman, a Westerner, and a champion of public lands, Secretary Haaland is the ideal person to lead the Department of Interior. Secretary Haaland will help us diversify our economy, transition away from the boom and bust cycles of fossil fuels, and invest in good paying clean energy jobs of the future.”*

**Mayor Pro Tem Emeritus and City Councilor District 5, Las Cruces, New Mexico Gill M Sorg said,** *“As an Indigenous woman and New Mexican with extensive experience, Secretary Haaland is a perfect fit to lead the Department of Interior. 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, Deb Haaland is now in the position to chart a new path forward between the United States’ government and Indigenous nations on tribal and public lands issues. What a stark contrast and welcome change from the past administration.”*

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 80 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.