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New Mexico 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 Albuquerque on Tuesday night, [The Mountain Pact](#), an organization that works with local elected officials across the West, released the following statements from New Mexico Local elected officials urging the BLM to prioritize the conservation of our shared public lands. On March 30, the Department of Interior [announced](#) 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 public meeting is the third of five.

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 New Mexico local elected officials are looking 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 New Mexico.”

Santa Fe County Commission Chair Anna Hansen said, “The world class hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities Bureau of Land Management lands provide New Mexicans, and our state’s culture, heritage and way-of-life are forever connected to these protected lands. In Santa Fe County, the destruction of petroglyphs within the Caja del Rio Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) should be a call-to-action for the Bureau of Land Management. It is time to ensure that no further damage is done, and I am hopeful a strong Public Lands Rule from the BLM can honor the stewardship of the Puebloan people and protect these areas for generations to come.” -

Albuquerque, New Mexico City Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn said, “The lands that are overseen by the Bureau of Land Management within New Mexico include some of the most stunning in the country and play a critical role in helping New Mexico remain the “land of enchantment.” I commend the Bureau of Land Management on the recent agency guidance that prioritizes the health of public lands and places conservation at the forefront of the proposed Public Lands Rule. This is the direction we must pursue to maintain our vital public lands in the future.”

City of Las Cruces Council Member Becky Corran said, “As a Las Cruces City Councilor, I am committed to protecting our Bureau of Land Management lands like National Monuments, National Scenic and Historic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Areas because they are important to all aspects of life within New Mexico. Our BLM lands provide so much to communities like Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. Our desert,

mountains and river are the heart of Las Cruces and deserve protection. I urge the BLM to prioritize the conservation of our shared public lands that emphasizes ecological integrity, preservation of vulnerable resources, and maintaining access to outdoor recreation.”

Taos County, New Mexico County Commissioner Darlene Vigil said, “Bureau of Land Management lands hold cultural significance, provide recreational opportunities, contribute to the economy, and sustain the natural ecosystems that support a healthy environment in New Mexico. In Taos County, Bureau of Land Management lands like Río Grande del Norte National Monument are so important to residents and visitors. The mighty river and dramatic gorge often welcome many visitors to our community. New Mexico’s public lands will continue to benefit from increased protections and the BLM must adopt a strong Public Lands Rule to accelerate the scope and pace of conservation.

Doña Ana County, New Mexico County Commissioner and Vietnam Veteran Shannon Reynolds, said, “Our county is grateful to have many Bureau of Land Management lands, including two national monuments, right in our backyard. Our local and regional economy has greatly benefited from the increased tourism generated by these national treasures. Every day residents enjoy being able to recreate, rejuvenate, and recuperate in BLM lands so close to home. I’m encouraged by the proposed Public Lands Rule and hope that the agency will adopt a strong rule that will further protect public lands both because they add a competitive economic advantage in southern New Mexico but also so that future generations may enjoy them as we have.

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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:](#) Albuquerque, New Mexico from 5-7 p.m. MT - Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th Street NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The BLM’s meeting in Albuquerque is the 3rd of five meetings and 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. The BLM manages 13.5 million acres in New Mexico, yet only 2.5% or just under 2 million acres are durably protected. Currently, there are BLM planning processes underway or upcoming in the Rio Puerco, Carlsbad, Farmington, and Tri-County field offices as well as Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

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.
- 84 Colorado local elected officials urging the BLM to “prioritize the conservation of our shared public lands via a [letter](#) in May, 2023. This was covered by the [Colorado Newswire](#), [Ark Valley Voice](#), [Vail Daily](#) and [Summit Daily](#).
- [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