



September 4, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum

Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Brooke Rollins

Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Establishment of the Make America Great Again Commission, Executive Order 14313

Dear Secretaries Burgum and Rollins:

The sun rises on America at Point Udall, St. Croix, and it sets on Peaked Island, Alaska. In the expanses between are a continent and islands, states and territories, cities and hometowns -- and all are big and beautiful. Today, we celebrate President Donald Trump's continued commitment to conserve America's great outdoors, protect fish and wildlife, and steward our nation's vast natural resources for economic growth through Executive Order 14313 to establish the Make America Beautiful Again Commission.

Western Energy Alliance is the leader and champion for independent oil and natural gas companies in the West. Working with a vibrant membership base for over 50 years, the Alliance stands as a credible leader, advocate, and champion of industry. Our expert staff, active committees, and committed board members form a collaborative and welcoming community of professionals dedicated to abundant, affordable energy and a high quality of life for all.

As producers of oil and natural gas, our industry is especially proud to be the largest funder of federal conservation programs under the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), delivering 95% of the funds available. President Trump in his first term set a vision for restoring cherished public lands and consequently signed into law the largest bipartisan conservation bill in 50 years, and in turn created the National Park and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) to protect our most iconic landscapes.

Revenues for LRF come directly from energy produced on non-park, non-wilderness public lands designated by Congress, the Department of the Interior (DOI), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with robust public input for multiple-uses and sustained yield. LRF funding is made possible because of oil and natural gas developed on public lands across the Alliance's region of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

Since 2020, 1,624 national parks, national forests, and other public lands projects have received \$8.2 billion. Projects span from the Virgin Island's National Park and Acadia National Park in Maine to the East, to the

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, to Guam's War in the Pacific National Historic Park in the West. Examples across our region include:

- **Yellowstone National Park** - \$388 million combined to protect natural assets like Old Faithful, and to increase access around the park by improving boardwalks, trails, bridges, roads, and water and electrical systems
- **Theodore Roosevelt National Park** - \$56 million combined to repair erosion, trails, roadways, and drainage systems to restore and increase access for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians
- **Rocky Mountain National Park** - \$43 million combined to rehabilitate the popular Kawuneeche Visitor Center and water systems serving the Moraine Park Campground, as well as electrical systems, parking and roads throughout the park
- **Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest** - \$11 million to improve day-use facilities at the Pineview Reservoir Recreation Complex, including picnic areas, trails, restrooms and roads
- **Gila National Forest** - \$7 million to reconstruct the roadway that provides access for restoration projects leads to the Gila Wilderness, the Negrito Fire Base, and several recreation sites.

In addition, GAOA fully and permanently funded the popular Land and Water Legacy Restoration Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million annually. Since its inception in 1964, LWCF has funded public lands and parks projects in nearly every community across the country. It is funded entirely by offshore oil and natural gas revenues.

Bottomline is the Great American Outdoors Act is at the confluence of President Trump's Make America Beautiful Again Commission and his agenda to unleash American energy.

The commission is critically needed, and it is well timed. For the past several years public lands have faced a double whammy of bureaucratic mismanagement and damage caused by overcrowding. The National Park Service's maintenance backlog across all 433 units is \$23.3 billion, up from \$13 billion near the end President Trump's first term. A 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report documented numerous problems, including the growing costs to administer programs, conduct environmental reviews, and complete projects. Across all public lands managed by DOI and USDA, the maintenance backlog totals \$33 billion.

While our industry is the leading source of revenues to address the conservation and maintenance needs of national parks and other public lands, the LRF is set to expire at the end of September, at the end of the federal government's fiscal year. That is unless Congress acts quickly. We support the bipartisan America the Beautiful Act introduced by Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) to reauthorize LRF through 2033. Our national parks and other public lands continue to require attention and protection. Thanks to the work of hard-working men and women in the oil and natural gas industry, the revenues will continue to be available from federal energy development to financially sustain LRF for many years to come.

As the commission gets underway, we encourage its members to identify ways to improve the administration of federal conservation programs to bring down costs and make it easier for public land managers to protect these areas for future enjoyment. We also encourage the commission to continue to fully implement President Trump's energy agenda to return the federal oil and natural gas leasing program to regular order so

that companies across the West can continue to deliver the funding utilized by conservation programs under LRF. Lastly, we urge the commission to support reauthorization of LRF and to help Congress again deliver an overwhelmingly bipartisan bill for President Trump to sign.

Should the commission require assistance in developing proposals that meet the president's executive order, the Alliance and its members offer their support. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Melissa Simpson
President