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**From:** Phil Hanceford  
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[RACReinstatementRequestLetter DRAFT 050517.docx-2.pdf](#)

Dear Secretary Zinke:

Please accept the attached letter from 66 members of RACs from around the West and appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to help advise the Bureau of Land Management. We appreciate your full consideration of this letter and the recommendations therein.

Best regards,

Phil Hanceford  
Representative on the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee

May 11, 2017

Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C. Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As members of several of the Department of the Interior's Resource Advisory Committees (RACs), we are writing to request the immediate reinstatement of RAC meetings in order to ensure ongoing public input regarding the management of our public lands. This is particularly important in light of your recent announcement of an expedited comment period for all of the national monument designations currently under review. We believe it is inappropriate to cancel an essential mechanism for public input and oversight in advance of a massive call for public input.

As you know, the Department of the Interior (DOI) recently cancelled all RAC activities nationwide without any explanation, guidance, or further information for members of the public. Our limited understanding is that the purpose of this cancellation is for the Administration to review all public advisory bodies and functions currently in place at DOI. While we appreciate the need to ensure DOI has appropriate mechanisms for public input, we are deeply concerned that cancelling all public advisory committee activities until further notice fundamentally undermines trust in the public process, and eliminates a vital opportunity for public input in the management of our public lands.

RACs are composed of a broad cross-section of the local public, with members representing interests ranging from mineral resources, livestock grazing, and wild horses to conservation, recreation and archaeology, as well as seats for tribes and the public-at-large.

These advisory bodies serve multiple key purposes. First, they serve as mechanisms for BLM and other agencies to communicate regularly and substantively with representatives of the public, sharing important information, providing more in-depth education on issues through field trips and presentations by issue experts, and fielding questions. Second, they serve as mechanisms for representatives of the public to share what they have learned with their communities. Third, they serve as mechanisms for representatives of the public to provide perspectives on behalf of their communities that inform and educate BLM and other agencies about the local public's concerns and priorities. This interaction helps bridge the gap between DOI and members of the public, making RACs a valuable tool for public engagement and dialogue.

RAC members represent diverse public interests, engage in thoughtful debate, and provide meaningful management recommendations to the BLM and other land management agencies with local perspective. As a result, RACs have made invaluable contributions over the last two

decades, including recommending improvements to BLM grazing management, review and input on critical energy development proposals, and suggestions for the thoughtful management of increasing recreational demands on our public lands.

We strongly believe that public awareness, discussion, and input are crucial to DOI's decision-making, and advisory bodies like the RACs instill greater cooperation between the public and public land management agencies. As the BLM website articulately explains, "Advisory committees are invaluable to the BLM because consensus-driven recommendations often lead to sustainable outcomes that benefit natural resources and often enjoy a high level of public support."

That is why we have each volunteered and made the commitment to serve on our respective RACs. It is a responsibility we all take seriously and we are concerned about being cut off from this public input process. Cancelling the meetings of these essential public advisory bodies shuts off an effective and principal conduit for public land managers to engage with public stakeholders and constituents, and for our communities' to provide public input to public land management agencies.

We support building trust and improving public input mechanisms; however, cancelling RAC activities runs counter to this goal. To that end, we urge you to immediately reinstate RAC meetings and engage RAC members in determining how these advisory bodies can be strengthened and supported.

We applaud the dedicated DOI staff across the country for their thoughtful stewardship of our public lands, and we appreciate the opportunity to work with them as RAC members, providing public input on land management issues impacting our communities.

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter. We look forward to resuming our duties of representing the public very soon.

Sincerely,

Barbara Marrett  
Recreational and Tourism Interests  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Jamie Stephens  
Local Government  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Dr. Keith Watts  
Education Representative  
Grand Staircase-Escalante NM Monument  
Advisory Committee

Tim Ballard  
Private Timberland Owner  
Southwest Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Jason Anderson  
Recreation  
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

Kenneth R. Poole  
Mining and Mineral interests  
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Bob Schneider  
Environmental  
Central Valley Resource Advisory  
Committee

John Cornell  
Environment and Conservation  
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Thomas S. Reeve  
Public-at-Large  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Mia Sheppard  
Conservation/Environment  
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Mariana Maguire  
Public-at-Large  
California Desert Advisory Committee

David Cooper  
Chair  
Black Rock High Rock Subgroup of the  
Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Committee

Scott Braden  
Environment  
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

Dan Morse  
Environment  
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Steve Peerman  
Chair  
Pecos District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Ben Gordon  
Environment  
John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory  
Committee

Joseph Vaile  
Conservation  
Southwest Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Jim Bishop  
Public-at-Large  
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Philip S. West  
Resources  
Pecos Region Resource Advisory  
Committee

Thomas C. Reynolds  
Recreation and Tourism  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Julie Mach  
Environment  
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

Anthony V. Popp  
Chair  
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Norman McKee  
Wildlife Biology  
Grand Staircase Escalante National  
Monument Advisory Committee

Frazier Haney  
Environment  
California Desert Advisory Committee

John F. Helmer  
Dispersed Recreation  
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Douglas P. Reagan  
Environmental Interests  
Grand Staircase Escalante National  
Monument Advisory Committee

Nathan Hovekamp  
No Financial Interest  
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Paul L. Martin, PE  
Non-renewable Resources  
California Desert Advisory Committee

Kathryn Wadsworth  
Recreation  
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

Dr. Gene Helfman  
Wildlife and ecology  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

David Bilyeu  
Statewide Environmental Representative  
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Jack Callaway  
Transportation and Right of Way  
Pecos Valley District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Rhea Miller  
Public-at-Large  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Leon Pielstick  
Wild Horse and Burro  
Steens Mountain Advisory Committee

Michael Jonas  
History and Culture  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Randall Gray  
Dispersed Recreation  
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Maxin Levy  
Recreational Activities, Off-Road Vehicles  
Las Cruces District Resource Advisory  
Committee

George Veni, PhD  
Natural Resource Management/Natural  
Sciences  
Pecos Valley District Resource Advisory  
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Ellen Cypher  
Public-at-Large  
Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory  
Committee

Barbara Vasquez, Ph.D.  
Chair & Representative of Dispersed  
Recreation  
Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory  
Committee

Mike Quigley  
Environment  
Arizona Resource Advisory Committee

Jon Willers  
Emigrant Trails Community Representative  
Black Rock High Rock Subgroup of the  
Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Committee

Emmett Sturgill  
Grazing  
Arizona Resource Advisory Committee

Julia Stuble  
Environmental Organizations  
Wyoming Resource Advisory Committee

Phil Hanceford  
Environmental Representative  
Grand Staircase-Escalante National  
Monument Advisory Committee

Patricia McDaniel  
Environmental Organization  
Pecos District Resource Advisory  
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Michael Khus-zarate  
Native American Representative  
Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory  
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Coby Tigert  
Environment  
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Jara Johnson  
Environment  
Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

Charles Stuart  
Representative of Dispersed Recreation  
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory  
Committee

Jackie Ferry  
Cultural and Heritage Interests  
San Juan Islands National Monument  
Advisory Committee

Michael Gibson  
Outfitters and Guides  
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Jimbo Buickerood  
Environmental Representative  
Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory  
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Becky Smith  
History and Archaeology  
Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory  
Committee

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Carrizo Plain Monument Advisory  
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Chair  
Boise District Resource Advisory  
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Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory  
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Public at Large  
California Desert Advisory Committee

Bill Dvorak  
Commercial Permittee Representative  
Front Range Resource Advisory Committee

Donald W. Hodge  
Rights of Way  
Southeast Regional Resource Advisory  
Committee

John E. Hiatt  
Environment  
Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource  
Advisory Committee

Anne Hiller Clark  
Historical/Archaeological  
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Chandra LeGue  
Regional Environmental Organization  
Coastal Oregon Resource Advisory Committee

Owyhee Weikel-Magden  
Local Environmental Representative  
Steens Mountain Resource Advisory  
Committee

George Newman  
Elected Official  
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory  
Committee

Wes McStay  
Grazing  
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory  
Committee

Luke Schafer  
Environmental Representative  
Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory  
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Julie Weikel  
Conservation, Wild Horse & Burro  
Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

Connor P. Coleman  
Environment  
Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory  
Committee

Jason Kesling  
Public at Large  
Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory  
Committee

William Gleason  
Public-at-Large  
Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory  
Committee

Cc: Mike Nedd, Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management  
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Raymond Suazo, BLM Arizona State Director  
Jerry Perez, BLM California State Director  
Ruth Welch, BLM Colorado State Director  
Karen Mouritsen, BLM Eastern States State Director  
Tim Murphy, BLM Idaho State Director  
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