



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

January 26, 2019

Dear Interior colleagues,

At 9:12:48 PM, on January 25<sup>th</sup>, I was informed the Director of OMB had determined that all federal agencies were reopened and directed that all employees return to work at the start of their next scheduled work day. What a welcome message to receive!

I have greatly appreciated the tremendous degree of professionalism so many of you showed through a very challenging time. I have been exposed to gut wrenching instances of difficult decisions people have personally faced during this time. You are all essential to our mission and valued by your leaders, coworkers, and the public you serve. I welcome you back as we begin the process to reinitiate normal operations.

On Friday, the President was crystal clear that my priority is to make sure that everyone receives their back pay as quickly as humanly possible. To facilitate that effort, we have asked all time keepers and certifiers to amend timecards expeditiously. The Department and bureaus will continue to update us as we work to process your pay for two and in some cases a portion of three pay periods.

In next couple of days, I will send you information regarding the road we are going to be on together during the time I serve as Acting Secretary. If you have any ideas for making the next few weeks optimal, please feel free to submit your thoughts to [ideas@doi.gov](mailto:ideas@doi.gov) and I will read them.

Again, thank you for your patience throughout the partial lapse.

Respectfully,

David L. Bernhardt  
Acting Secretary